

Urban Transformations

Newsletter of the Department of Health Policy and Management
in the School of Community Health and Policy at Morgan State University

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From the Department Chair

Jonathan B. VanGeest, PhD

Greetings! As this edition of *Urban Transformations* goes to press, we are basking in the afterglow of another successful year. Despite on-going budget concerns and a relatively small number of faculty, the DHPM met its interim strategic goals in all areas of academic endeavors, positioning the Department for growth across the traditional areas of academics, service, and scholarship. Students also achieved notable successes, including Ms. **Sharon Barrett's** invited keynote presentation at the *Diversity in Health 2010 Conference* in Melbourne Australia (see story, page 3).

With regards to teaching and instruction, we had a lively intellectual year. Policy courses addressed directly the national debate on meaningful health care reform. Our classes were also graced with a number of guest lecturers, including Maryland Delegate Bill Bronrott, Vinny DeMarco (Maryland Citizen's Health Initiative), Dr. Harry Goodman (Maryland DHMH), Clarence Davis (former Maryland State Delegate), and Dr. Timothy Akers (MSU SCMNS). Their presentations offered students and faculty new perspectives on important issues in health policy and practice. The DHPM has also proposed new academic initiatives centered on important intersections between public health and urban planning and public health and criminal justice. We are also exploring new opportunities in areas related to applied
(Continued page 2)

Alumni

Remain connected with the Department! Help us keep you and your fellow alumni informed of events and happenings important to you. Send us news about your life, your work, recent achievements, or simply update your contact information. Please send information to Dr. Jonathan VanGeest at: jonathan.vangeest@morgan.edu



From the Department Chair (continued):

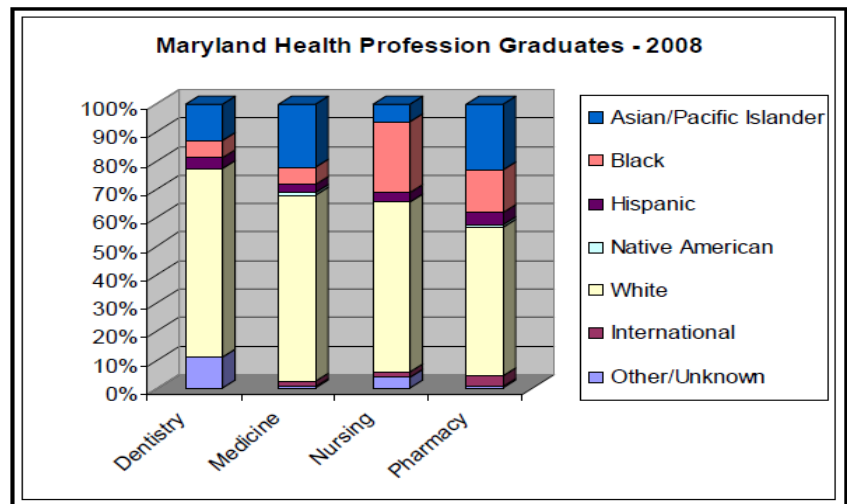
interdisciplinary informatics and evidence-based health policy.

As evidenced by the table of contents, the focus of this issue is on diversity and its importance in health. As a HBCU, Morgan State plays a key role in addressing health disparities. The SCHP and its DHPM are committed to preparing a diverse group of public health professionals specifically equipped to address minority health needs in our state and across the nation. We are also unique in our focus on community engagement and student service-learning in some of our most at-risk communities.

With our dedicated faculty and students, the SCHP-DHPM continues to make progress. While the upcoming academic year may pose some fiscal challenges, the DHPM remains focused on growth. We will continue to respond effectively to the needs of the communities we serve. We invite you to explore ways to partner with us in this important endeavor.

Diversity in the MD Health Professions

In May, Morgan State University's School of Community Health and Policy (SCHP) joined with nine other academic health institutions in signing a Memorandum of



Source: Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Understanding officially launching the **Maryland Alliance to Transform the Health Professions**, an initiative spear-headed by the Sullivan Alliance and its Chair, former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. Louis Sullivan. The Maryland Alliance seeks to address the state's growing need for a more racially and ethnically representative health care work-force.

Nationally, the health care workforce has not kept pace with the increasing diversity of the U.S. population. In spite of increased awareness and national interventions to increase workforce diversity, racial and ethnic minorities remain vastly under-represented in all health professions, including public health. This is why the American Public Health Association and the Council on Education for Public Health are both emphasizing the need for greater diversity.

In Maryland, diversity needs, which mirror those experienced nationally, affect access to and the delivery of health services. The Governor's Workforce Investment Board recently highlighted the

need to increase diversity and cultural competence in health care professionals and to appropriately address the health needs of the state's increasingly diverse population.

Because racial and ethnic minority health care professionals are more likely to serve in underserved communities, increasing the number of underrepresented groups in the health professions will help to reduce or eliminate health disparities. Since more than 90% of our current enrollment are under-represented minorities, the MSU-SCHP is uniquely positioned to address this critical need as we train public health professionals specifically for this role.

The Sullivan Alliance

The Sullivan Alliance to Transform America's Health Professions was organized in 2005 for the purpose of increasing the diversity of the U.S. Healthcare Workforce. The Alliance is based at the Health Policy Institute of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Diversity in Health 2010 Conference

Sharon E. Barrett, MS

The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health, which provides information, training, and support on cultural diversity and wellbeing, hosted the 2010 Diversity in Health Conference in Melbourne Australia, June 7-9. The conference focused on three major themes: Cultural Integrity in Service Delivery, Right to Health, and Modern Multiculturalism. It also highlighted many of the health-related challenges faced by minority populations, including immigrants and refugees, including limited health literacy, which plays a significant role in their well-being.

As the only invited keynote speaker from the United State, I had the opportunity to discuss health literacy as it relates to informed choice and patients' rights. I also participated in two "hypotheticals," one panel on language services and the other on health information technology. In each of these sessions, a moderator created a hypothetical scenario to which panel members responding based on their areas of expertise.

In addition to presenting at the conference, I was invited to meet with staff at the Department of Health and at the Office of Children's Health. Each organization separately convened a meeting of about 20-25 individuals who work to promote health literacy. They acknowledged that this was the first

time such a diverse group had come together to discuss health literacy.



Ms. Sharon Barrett is a doctoral student in the MSU-SCHP. A former Director of Minority and Women's Health in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), she has over 30 years of leadership in the areas of administration, program development, and public health practice.

While in Melbourne, I also toured two community health clinics, the Western Regional Medical Center and the North Richmond Community Health Center. I met with staff to discuss programs and activities related to health literacy, language and culture. These clinics, similar to those in the U.S., provide health services to the "disadvantaged." In Australia, this term applies to recent immigrants and refugees who often face language barriers.

Currently, 60% of Australians are functionally health illiterate. Immigrants to Australia are at considerably greater risk of having limited health literacy, with only 26% having a health literacy rating of "satisfactory" or higher. The Australian government has recognized limited health literacy as an important barrier to participation in one's own health, and has elevated health literacy as a driving factor in ongoing health reform activities.

The clinics I toured provide a wide range of health-related services, including dental services and HIV care. Clinic staff and outreach workers typically rely on the "teach back" method to assess and improve patient understanding. The clinics are also innovative in their use of interpreters and telephonic language services to meet the various language needs of different cultures; this approach may serve as a model for addressing similar needs in the United States.



DHPM Faculty and Research Interests

Dr. **Yutaka Aoki** (Environmental Health Sciences) researches the health impacts of pesticides and mercury. Other interests include non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, asthma, thyroid disorders, innovative use of biomarkers and statistical methods, and racial and ethnic health disparities. Dr. **Anita Hawkins** is interested in health communication and HIV risk behaviors and prevention. Dr. Hawkins is also the Principal Investigator on the National Minority Male Health Project. Dr. **Anne Marie O'Keefe's** focus areas include tobacco control, women's health, social marketing and health disparities. Dr. **Andrea Kidd Taylor** (Environmental Health

Sciences) is interested in occupational and environmental health, pesticide exposure, indoor air quality, environmental justice, and minority worker health and safety. Dr. **Jonathan VanGeest** is known for his work on racial and ethnic disparities in health care, health literacy and professional and care outcomes associated with structural changes in medicine.



DHPM faculty clockwise from top left, Drs. Anita Hawkins, Andrea Kidd Taylor, Anne Marie O'Keefe, and Yutaka Aoki.

APHA Update

The 138th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA) will take place in Denver, Colorado, November 6-10, 2010. The APHA represents more than 50,000 health professionals, students and others working to promote health, prevent disease and ensure conditions in which we all can be safe and healthy. This year's meeting theme is **Social Justice: A Public Health Imperative**. Social Justice lies at the heart of public health. It is central to its mission and is frequently described as public health's core value. Annual

Meeting sessions will explore why certain populations bear a disproportionate burden of disease and mortality and what the public health community can do to address the causes of these inequities. Information on the 2010 Annual Meeting is available online at: <http://www.apha.org/meetings/>.

This year, the DHPM will be represented by a number of faculty and students who will be presenting their work:

L. Edwards & **A. Hawkins**. "Till death do us part: Life experiences of married HIV-positive women" (214958/Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2010)

A. Hawkins et al. "Community academic education partnerships: Training socially responsible public health leaders." (227468/Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2010)

A.M. O'Keefe, Y. Aoki, & J. Bishop. "Black, White and Hispanic pregnancies: Clues to the social etiology of low birth weight and infant mortality." (216613/Monday Nov. 8, 2010)

O. Olorunnishola, A. Kidd Taylor, & L. Byrd. "Occupational injuries and illnesses in the solid waste industry: A call for action." (229160/Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2010)

J. Sligh. "Deamonte Driver Dental Project provides social justice for the underserved: A community-based model." (229152/Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2010)

J. VanGeest (session co-organizer/moderator) "Epidemiology Criminology: A new paradigm promoting innovative practice and policy-based solutions for social justice" (4091.0/Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2010) (see box)

Overall, faculty and students in the MSU School of Community Health and Policy (SCHP) will be making over 15 professional presentations during this year's meeting. For additional information regarding MSU-SCHP activities at the 2010 APHA Annual Meeting, please contact Dr. Eduardo Velasco, SCHP Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs.

APHA Invited Sessions

For the third year in a row, faculty in the DHPM will be collaborating with the APHA Epidemiology Section in organizing special sessions for the Annual Meeting on *Epidemiological Criminology*; an emerging paradigm at the intersection of public health and criminal justice.

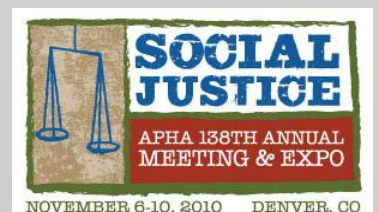
Session 4023.0 (Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2010: 8:30 AM). *Epidemiological Criminology: An Emerging Framework to Address Social Justice as a Public Health Imperative*

Presenters: Paul Juarez, PhD (Meharry Medical College), Robin Pollini, PhD, MPH (University of California, San Diego), and Juarlyn Gaiter, PhD (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Session 4091.0 (Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2010: 10:30 AM). *Epidemiological Criminology: A New Paradigm Promoting Innovative Practice and Policy-Based Solutions for Social Justice*

Presenters: Scott Burris, JD, LLD (Temple University), Eve Waltermauer, PhD (State University at New York), and Timothy Akers, MS, PhD (Morgan State University).

Additional information on these sessions is available via the APHA's online program: <http://apha.confex.com/apha/138am/webprogram/start.html>



Diversity Rx Update

As first noted in the spring edition of Urban Transformations, this year's **National Diversity Rx Conference on Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations** will be held October 18-21 in Baltimore. The conference will highlight state and national policy initiatives and their implications for improving care for diverse patients and communities. It will also feature cutting edge initiatives in the areas of language access, cultural competence, and disparities reduction.



National Conference Series on

Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations

Plan to attend the Seventh National Conference Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace October 18-21, 2010

DHPM faculty will present at the Diversity Rx Conference on the following topics:

J. VanGeest & V. Welch. "Exploring the business and clinical cases for screening for health literacy in primary care: A case study using the NVS."

Y. Aoki. "Potential need for race-specific diagnostic criteria and healthcare delivery for thyroid hormone abnormalities."

Conference and registration information are available at the Diversity Rx Conference website: www.diversityconference.org. SCHP students and alumni are encouraged to attend.

For more information on SCHP Diversity Rx activities, or to inquire how you might support this important initiative, please contact SCHP liaison Dr. Ian Lindong at 443-885-3127 or ianlindong@gmail.com.

Health Reform and Health Disparities

The health care reform bill may have been signed into law, but the debate is hardly over. It is important that all public health professionals remain informed and engaged as the new law is translated into regulations and implemented. Below are some key resources to help shape the ongoing debate and health disparities solutions:

[Health Disparities: A Case for Closing the Gap](http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/healthdisparities/) (<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/healthdisparities/>)

[Ensuring that Health Care Reform Will Meet the Health Care Needs of Minority Communities and Eliminate Health Disparities](http://raceandhealth.hhs.gov/Assets/pdf/Checked/1/ACMH_HealthCareAccessReport.pdf), A Recommendation Report from the HHS Advisory Committee on Minority Health (ACMH), July, 2009. (http://raceandhealth.hhs.gov/Assets/pdf/Checked/1/ACMH_HealthCareAccessReport.pdf)

[Race, Ethnicity, and Health Care Reform: Achieving Equity in Our Lifetime](http://www.jointcenter.org/hpi/sites/all/files/raceethnicityandhealthcarereform.pdf), by Dennis P. Andrulis, Nadia J. Siddiqui, Jonathan Purtle, Lisa Duchon, December, 2009. (<http://www.jointcenter.org/hpi/sites/all/files/raceethnicityandhealthcarereform.pdf>)

[Moving Towards Health Equity: Health Reform Creates a Foundation for Eliminating Disparities](http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/health-reform/minority-health/moving-toward-health-equity.pdf), by Families USA Minority Health Initiatives Issue Brief, May 2010. (<http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/health-reform/minority-health/moving-toward-health-equity.pdf>)

[Maryland Plan to Eliminate Minority Health Disparities \(Preliminary Copy\)](http://dohmh.maryland.gov/hd/planelimdisp.html). (<http://dohmh.maryland.gov/hd/planelimdisp.html>)

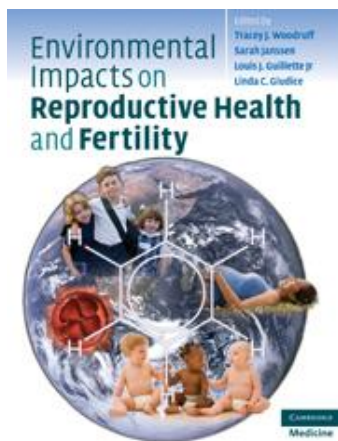
Details and summaries of the health reform law, as well as commentary, are available at the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (<http://healthreform.kff.org/>). Implementation details and updates are also available through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and George Washington University (<http://www.healthreformgps.org/>).

Information on Maryland's Health Care Reform Coordinating Council, which is charged with advising Governor O'Malley administration on policies and procedures to implement health reform, is available at <http://www.Healthreform.maryland.gov/>.

Department Publications & Presentations

PUBLICATIONS:

Fox MA, Aoki Y. (2010). *Environmental Contaminants and Exposure*. In Environmental Impacts on Reproductive Health and Fertility. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.



Hawkins A, O’Keefe AM, James X. (2010). Healthcare access and utilization among ex-offenders in Baltimore: Implications for policy. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 21:649-65.

Sydnor K, Hawkins A, Edwards L. (2010). Expanding research opportunities: The fit between HBCUs and CBPR. *Journal of Negro Education*, 79:79-86.

Sheikhhattari P, Burke JG, O’Keefe AM, Bazargan-Hejazi S. Sustaining relationships between communities and local health systems: Two Northern Iranian villages. *Journal of International Development*. (In Press – epub ahead of print)

Olorunnishola O, Kidd Taylor A, Byrd L. (2010). Occupational injuries and illnesses in the solid waste industry: A

call for action. *New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health*, 20:211-23.

Joubert A, Kidd Taylor A, Christopher G, et al. Complementary and alternative medical practice: Self-care preferred versus practitioner based care among patients with asthma. *Journal of the National Medical Association*. (In press).

Kidd Taylor A, Esdaille K. (2010). Integrated pest management policies in America’s schools: Is federal legislation needed? *New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health*, 20:73-80.

VanGeest JB, Welch VL, Weiner SJ. (2010). Patients’ perceptions of screening for health literacy: Reactions to the Newest Vital Sign. *Journal of Health Communication*, 15:402-12.

PRESENTATIONS:

VanGeest, JB. *Developing Distance Education Initiatives: Beginning the Journey*. Distance Education Faculty Workshop, Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD.

Hawkins, A. *Beauty is Only Skin Deep: The Mirror’s Reflection*. 5th Annual AAHMI Research to Practice Conference, Hampton University, Hampton, VA.

Section and its activities can be found at: <http://www.apha.org/membergroups/sections/aphasections/medicalcare/>

Dr. Jonathan VanGeest worked with an interdisciplinary campus team headed by Dr. Melissa Littlefield (MSU School of Social Work) to develop a proposal for the *National Library of Medicine* to fund a community-based intervention to improve health literacy among African American youth and reduce disparities.

Dr. Anita Hawkins monitored implementation of Project AHEAD 2010, the annual summer nutrition and fitness camp managed by the National Minority Male Health Project.

Alumni News

Ms. Sheena Pierce (MPH graduate) recently took a new position with Noblis, a nonprofit science, technology and strategy organization, in their Health Innovation Department.

Ms. Sherria Owens Reid (MPH graduate) received an Integrated Technology Transfer Network fellowship at California State University San Bernardino.

Department "Briefs"

Dr. Jonathan VanGeest was nominated to run for election to the Governing Council of the American Public Health Association’s *Medical Care Section*. Information on the

About the Department

The **Department of Health Policy and Management** at MSU-SCHP includes two content areas: 1) Health Policy and Management and 2) Environmental and Occupational Health. Graduates of the Department are prepared to assume leadership roles in designing and implementing effective policies and programs to eliminate health disparities, including initiatives addressing community and environmental factors impacting urban underserved populations and people of color.

For more information about the Department, please call the School of Community Health and Policy at 443-885-3238.

Our faculty and Staff:

Yutka Aoki, PhD

Anita Hawkins, PhD

Andrea Kidd Taylor, DrPH

Anne Marie O'Keefe, PhD, JD

DHPM Chair: Jonathan B. VanGeest, PhD

SCHP Dean: Allan S. Noonan, MD, MPH

UT Editor: Anne Marie O'Keefe, PhD, JD



Consider a Career in Public Health

Public health is a dynamic field, made up of individuals from a wide array of educational backgrounds and specializations. Public health professionals confront diverse and complex health issues, such as eliminating health disparities, chronic disease prevention, improving access to health care, substance abuse, and reducing environmental health hazards. They also serve at local, state and national levels, partnering with communities and providing leadership in finding answers to our more pressing health issues. If you are interested in learning more about careers in public health, contact Dr. Jonathan VanGeest at the address below:

Jonathan VanGeest, PhD

Chair, Department of Health Policy and Management

School of Community Health and Policy

Morgan State University

1700 E. Cold Spring Lane, 301-B Portage Building

Baltimore, MD 21251

jonathan.vangeest@morgan.edu



School of Community Health &
Policy
Morgan State University
1700 E. Cold Spring Lane
Portage Avenue Campus
Baltimore, MD 21251

