

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

The year 2010 will be remembered in the SCHP-DPHM as a year of new beginnings. Morgan State University celebrated the arrival of its 12th President, Dr. David Wilson. Dr. Wilson immediately challenged all faculty and students to new heights. This includes academic outcomes consistent with Morgan State's designation as a research intensive institution and our role as the State's designated urban academic institution. His vision for Morgan State University is "Growing the future, leading the world."

Within the SCHP and the Department, 2010 has also been a year of new initiatives. In the summer edition of *Urban Transformations*, we highlighted the CDC-funded Center for Health Informatics, Planning and Policy (CHIPP). This new Center will apply the science of informatics to inform innovative *community-level* policy and planning solutions that address health disparities. Other developments include, but are not limited to, the Health Policy and Management concentration proposal currently under review at

the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and additional support for the expansion of our evaluation of Maryland's problem-solving courts.

Faculty and students in the SCHP-DPHM have been instrumental in making this all happen. Students, in particular, have made highly valued contributions. For instance, Mr. **Jared MacKenzie** (MPH student) is working with Dr. Mary (Continued page 2)



CHIPP is located in the Earl S. Richardson Library, Suite 225, Morgan State University

From the Department Chair (continued):

Anne Akers (Dean of Morgan's School of Architecture and Planning) to help plan and design instruments for the upcoming biennial Baltimore homeless census (see related story). Mr. MacKenzie, along with Ms. **Tracey Ralph** (MPH student), is also volunteering time at CHIPP on a Baltimore health indicators project.



Mr. Jared MacKenzie (MPH student) is working with Dr. Mary Anne Akers, Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning, on the Biennial Baltimore Homeless Census.

Ms. **Jasmine Sligh** (MPH student), has continued her excellent work with the Deamonte Driver Dental Van Project (see related story); another example of the exciting activities ongoing within the Department as we strive to put our students on paths to success and leadership.

As always, I encourage you to learn more about the Department of Health Policy and Management at Morgan State University. We have an excellent faculty and staff who are committed to training professionals and improving the communities we serve. Join us by becoming a part of our future!

APHA Annual Meeting

Andrea Kidd Taylor, DrPH

The 138th American Public Health Association's Annual Meeting, held in Denver, CO, was a tremendous success. With more than 12,000 public health professionals, scientists, and practitioners in attendance, and a meeting theme of "Social Justice: A Public Health Imperative," the opening session featured an inspirational keynote by Dr. William Jenkins, currently with the University of North Carolina Institute of African American Research and formerly with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where he helped end the infamous Tuskegee Study. Jenkins was followed by a passionate presentation from Dr. Cornel West, well-known author and professor at Princeton University.

The meeting provided a forum for participants to address a wide range of issues including health reform implementation, climate change and health, fast-food marketing, public health advocacy, emergency preparedness, and international health. Over 1000 scientific sessions were presented, covering the emerging issues in public health research, practice and policy. Participants were also able to visit and take advantage of the 2010 Public Health Expo where more than 650 companies, universities, government agencies, and NGOs exhibited.

APHA's Governing Council, its representative legislative body, met and worked in a special

breakout session to identify priorities for the Association's revised strategic plan developed by the Executive Board. The Council also elected new members to the Executive Board and approved 17 new policies. Some of the approved policies address protecting abortion coverage in health reform, requiring clinical diagnostic tools and bio-monitoring of exposures to pesticides, a maternal child health policy, and securing the long-term sustainability of state and local health departments. Approved policies will be explained in the upcoming issue of *"The Nation's Health"*.

Newly elected Executive Board members to the Association include: Dr. Melvin Shipp, Dean and Professor at Ohio State University's College of Optometry; Dr. Diane Downing, adjunct faculty member at Georgetown University's School of Nursing and Health Studies; Thomas Quade, Assistant Health Commissioner of Ohio's Summit County General Health District; and Joyce Gaufin, Executive Director of the Great Basin Public Health Leadership Institute in Utah. Dr. Barbara Giloth, Vice President for the Advocate Charitable Foundation of Chicago was elected by the Governing Council to serve for a second term its Speaker. Dr. Richard Cohen, President and CEO of the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation, was elected Treasurer. Dr. Andrea Kidd Taylor, Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at Morgan State will continue to serve on the Executive Board through the end of her 4-year term in December 2011.

The Annual Meeting marked the beginning of the one-year term of APHA President Dr. Linda Rae Murray, Chief Medical Officer of the Cook County Health Department in Chicago, IL.

The annual meeting ended on high note, as it had began, with speakers: Dr. John Colmers, Maryland Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene; Dr. Paul Jarris, Executive Director of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials; Sarah Rosenbaum, JD, Chair of George Washington University's Department of Health Policy; and Joanne Silberner, former health policy correspondent at National Public Radio.

APHA Invited Sessions

For the third year in a row, faculty in the DHPM collaborated with the APHA Epidemiology Section to organize special invited sessions at the Annual Meeting on *Epidemiological Criminology*; an emerging paradigm at the intersection of public health and criminal justice. This new paradigm is being developed at Morgan State University (MSU) by Dr. Timothy Akers.

One of the special sessions focused on practice and the other on policy. The sessions were well received, with more than 50 attendees at each. Presenters included: Dr. Paul Juarez, Meharry Medical College; Dr. Jennifer Wood, Temple University; and Drs. Juarlyn Gaiter and Karen Bouye,

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Also presenting were Dr. Kevin Daniels and Ms. Stacy Smith of the MSU School of Social Work.



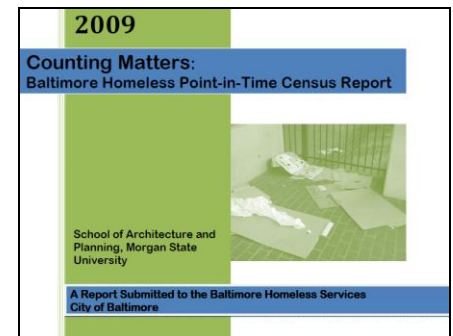
This year, the sessions were preceded by a reception, where panelists, discussants, and session organizers met to explore the new paradigm and its impact. The reception was sponsored, in part, by the Morgan State University National Center for Health Behavioral Change (a Kellogg-funded Center) and faculty affiliated with MSU's Center for Health Informatics, Planning and Policy (CHIPP).

Having back-to-back invited sessions at the APHA Annual Meeting is a real coup for MSU in our efforts to position Morgan State as a leading research institution. The APHA is the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world. The APHA Annual Meeting & Exposition is also the premier Public Health Educational Forum.

Dr. Akers has a new textbook forthcoming on *Epidemiological Criminology* from Wiley/Jossey-Bass. For more information on this exciting new paradigm, contact Dr. Akers by phone at x3724 or via email at timothy.akers@morgan.edu.

Homelessness in Baltimore

Despite ongoing efforts, homelessness in Baltimore remains an important public health concern. As reported in the fall 2009 edition of *Urban Transformations*, faculty and students in Morgan's School of Architecture and Planning (SA+P) conducted the city's most recent biennial homeless census under the direction of Dr. Mary Anne Akers, Dean of SA+P. This project was in response to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development mandate that cities provide data on homelessness. The one-night census found the numbers of homeless in Baltimore to be rising, with 3,419 homeless people identified living on the streets or in shelters, a 12% increase from the 2007 Census.



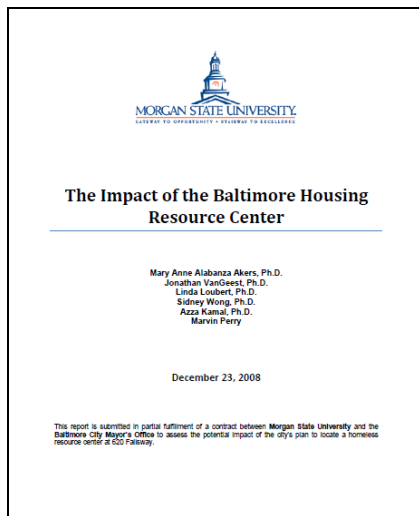
The 2009 Homeless Census Report to Baltimore Homeless Services

This year, faculty and students in the SChP-DHPM and the Center for Health Informatics, Planning and Policy (CHIPP) are partnering with Dr. Akers to conduct the next biennial Baltimore homeless census. MPH student Mr. Jared Mackenzie is already working with Dr. Akers in support of the project. Dr. Jonathan VanGeest will also

serve as a co-investigator on this inter-disciplinary endeavor.



These initiatives are part of a larger effort to engage the University in efforts addressing homelessness in the City of Baltimore, consistent with Morgan's role as the Maryland's designated urban academic institution.



The 2009 Impact Assessment for the Baltimore Housing Resource Center

Student volunteers are needed the morning of **Tuesday, January 25th**, between 1 AM and 6 AM, to assist in the 2011 census and survey. During this period, groups of volunteers, led by trained professionals, will be conducting a count of unsheltered homeless individuals and families in

Baltimore and will be conducting a brief survey with the participants.

For more information, please contact Sean Hall, Program Administrator, Mayor's Office of Human Services, Homeless Services Program at 410.545.3014. You can also contact Mr. Marvin Perry, MSU Office of Sponsored Programs at 443.885.3749.

New Surgeon General's Report Focuses on Tobacco

Exposure to tobacco smoke – even occasional smoking or secondhand smoke – causes immediate damage to your body that can lead to serious illness or death, according to a report released today by U.S. Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin. The comprehensive scientific report – Benjamin's first Surgeon General's report and the 30th tobacco-related Surgeon General's report issued since 1964 – describes specific pathways by which tobacco smoke damages the human body and leads to disease and death.

The report, *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease*, finds that cellular damage and tissue inflammation from tobacco smoke are immediate, and that repeated exposure weakens the body's ability to heal the damage.

"The chemicals in tobacco smoke reach your lungs quickly every

time you inhale causing damage Immediately," Benjamin said in releasing the report. "Inhaling even the smallest amount of tobacco smoke can also damage your DNA, which can lead to cancer."

"Over the last two years we have stepped up efforts to reduce tobacco use, including implementing legislation to regulate tobacco products, investing in local tobacco control efforts and expanding access to insurance coverage for tobacco cessation" said Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius. "This will remain a key priority of this Administration."

The report also explains why it is so difficult to quit smoking. According to the research, cigarettes are designed for addiction. The design and contents of current tobacco products make them more attractive and addictive than ever before. Today's cigarettes deliver nicotine more quickly and efficiently than cigarettes of many years ago.

Tobacco smoke contains a deadly mixture of more than 7,000 chemicals and compounds, of which hundreds are toxic and at least 70 cause cancer. Every exposure to these cancer-causing chemicals could damage DNA in a way that leads to cancer. Exposure to smoke also decreases the benefits of chemotherapy and other cancer treatments. Smoking causes more than 85% of lung cancers and can cause cancer almost anywhere in the body. One in three cancer deaths in the U.S. is tobacco-related.

The report describes how the delicate lining of the lungs becomes inflamed as soon as it is exposed to the chemical mixture in cigarette smoke. Over time, the smoke can cause chronic obstructive pulmonary disease including emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can cause cardiovascular disease and could trigger acute cardiac events, such as heart attack. The report describes how chemicals from tobacco smoke quickly damage blood vessels and make blood more likely to clot. The evidence in this report shows how smoking causes cardiovascular disease and increases risks for heart attack, stroke, and aortic aneurysm.

Smoking causes many other harmful effects throughout the body, including making it harder for diabetics to control their blood sugar. Smoking makes it harder for women to get pregnant and can cause a miscarriage, preterm delivery, low birth weight, as well as damage to fetal lungs and brain tissue. Babies who are exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome, the report finds.

“This report makes it clear – quitting at any time gives your body a chance to heal the damage caused by smoking,” the Surgeon General said. “It’s never too late to quit, but the sooner you do it, the better.”

Fortunately, there are now more effective ways to help people quit than ever before. Nicotine replacement is available over the counter and doctors can prescribe

medications that improve the chances of successful quit attempts. Smokers can also call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for help.

To help communicate the report findings as widely as possible, the Surgeon General unveiled an easy-to-read guide with practical information about how tobacco smoke causes disease, *A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: What It Means to You*.

Copies of the full report, executive summary, and the easy-to-read guide may be downloaded at www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/tobaccosmoke/index.html. To order printed copies of these documents, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco> and click the Publications Catalog link under Tools & Resources.

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Deamonte Driver Project Update

Jasmine Sligh (MPH Candidate)

Following the death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver from dental caries that abscessed to his brain, a spark was ignited among a group of area dentists in the National Dental Association. They vowed that such an unnecessary and preventable death like his would never again happen in their backyard, and they set about to ensure oral health care for children in Prince George’s County, Maryland regardless of insurance coverage or ability to

pay. With nearly \$300,000 from the State to purchase and customize a mobile dental van, and thousands of volunteer hours, the Dental Project was launched at the Foundation School Deamonte had attended before he died.

During its first year, the Project provided dental screenings at Title I elementary and middle schools throughout the county, and referrals for treatment to area dentists. The Project provided 1,634 screenings to 1,446 children during the Spring 2009 and Fall 2009 school terms, identifying and referring approximately 18% of them as having “Immediate Need,” i.e., being in as poor health as Deamonte had been.

Deamonte Driver Dental Project



The Robert T. Freeman Dental Society Foundation

In November of this year, the Deamonte Driver Dental Van began its first tour to provide on-sight, service delivery at the same Title I schools where children had been screened and referred last year. Data collection and analysis will continue to provide the evidence base for the value of this approach. Dr. Harry Goodman, Director of Maryland’s Office of Oral Health, considers the Project to be a “consummate public-private partnership” that can serve as a national model.

Department Publications & Presentations

PUBLICATIONS:

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

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. (2010). Complementary and alternative medical practice: Self-care preferred versus practitioner based care among patients with asthma. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 102:562-9.

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, Welch, V. "Exploring the business and clinical cases for screening for health literacy in primary care: A case study using the NVS." Diversity Rx Conference, Baltimore, MD.

Y. Aoki. "Potential need for race-specific diagnostic criteria and healthcare delivery for thyroid hormone abnormalities." Diversity Rx Conference, Baltimore, MD.

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

L. Edwards & **A. Hawkins**. "Till death do us part: Life experiences of married HIV-positive women" American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

A. Hawkins et al. "Community academic education partnerships: Training socially responsible public health leaders." American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

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." (American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

O. Olorunnishola, A. Kidd Taylor, & L. Byrd. "Occupational injuries and illnesses in the solid waste industry: A call for action." American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

J. Sligh. "Deamonte Driver Dental Project provides social justice for the underserved: A community-based model." American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

T.A. Akers, K. Daniels, S. Smith & **J. VanGeest**. "Where two worlds collide: A social justice imperative for youth gang violence prevention through an epidemiological criminology disparities framework." American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

J. VanGeest (session co-organizer/moderator) "Epidemiology Criminology: A new paradigm promoting innovative practice and policy-based solutions for social justice" American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

veying health care professionals for a forthcoming textbook on survey research methods.

Dr. **Jonathan VanGeest** is a co-Investigator on the 2011 Baltimore Homeless Census. This census is being conducted to get an accurate picture of the number of Baltimore City residents who are homeless, assess what services are needed, and ensure Baltimore receives its share of federal funding to assist the homeless (see related story).

Ms. **Krin Cameron**, MPH student in MSU SCHP (Dr. **Yutaka Aoki's** advisee), has worked as a Summer Intern for Social Security Administration in their Student Temporary Employment Program. During her summer experience she was instrumental in the design and implementation of a Video on Demand (VOD) series addressing standards in nursing care for each of SSA's Employee Health Centers nationwide. Her work impressed not only her supervisor but it caught the attention of the Associate Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources. And despite budget constraints for Fiscal Year 2011, Krin's federal appointment was extended for an additional year.

Department "Briefs"

Dr. **Jonathan VanGeest** was asked to co-author a chapter on sur-



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.

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



Volunteers Needed!

Help Make a Change in Your Community!

Volunteers are needed for the morning of Tuesday, January 25th, between 1 AM and 6 AM to help count and survey homeless persons in Baltimore. A mandatory meeting for all participants will be held on January 19th, 2011 at 5:00 PM in the MSU Student Center. For more information, contact Mr. Marvin Perry, MSU Office of Sponsored Programs, by phone at 443.885.3749.

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