



# Urban Transformations

**Department of Health Policy & Management  
School of Community Health & Policy**

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**HIGHLIGHTS:** From the Department Chair • National Minority Male Health • APHA Annual Meeting • DHPM Faculty on APHA Board • Student Highlight • Virtual EpiCrim Center • Publications and Presentations • Recent Textbooks • Department “Briefs” • About the Department

## *From the Department Chair*

Jonathan B. VanGeest, PhD

Burr! Welcome to the Winter 2008 issue of *Urban Transformations*. Despite the cold, this is an exciting time for the Department of Health Policy and Management (DHPM) and the School of Community Health and Policy (SCHP). Our Public Health Program is currently under review for re-accreditation by the *Council on Education for Public Health* (CEPH). Faculty members in the SCHP-DHPM have been working over the last year to provide information critical to our re-accreditation efforts. We also completed our first strategic plan for the DHPM, identifying both near- and long-term goals. This exercise identified new areas for potential development, including creating a health management track and exposed unique opportunities to partner with MSU's Urban Planning Department for the betterment of public health.

Ours is a dynamic Department, supported by increasingly accomplished faculty. In this issue of *Urban Transformations*, we are happy to share with you some of the recent accomplishments of DHPM faculty and students. For instance, I am pleased to report that we completed the policy paper on homelessness for the Baltimore Mayor's Office.



We have also completed data collection for the impact analysis of the city's plan to locate an emergency resource center at 620 Fallsway in East Baltimore. Both projects are being conducted in collaboration with MSU's new School of Architecture and Planning and Morgan's Institute for Urban Research. Additionally, Drs. Anne Marie O'Keefe and Yutaka Aoki completed their analysis of African American women and their pregnancies (a secondary analysis of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data) for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services. DHPM faculty had a very successful American Public Health Association annual meeting in San Diego, California, with an invited session on Epidemiological Criminology and three professional presentations. Drs. Andrea Kidd Taylor and Anita Hawkins represent the School and Department through their service on the APHA's Executive Board (see below) and Equal Health Opportunity Committee respectively.

We have continued to make progress on grant submissions and other scholarly activities, with a proposal for a distance learning certificate program

submitted to the Maryland Higher Education Commission in support of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiative and a proposal (to be considered in the 2010 Maryland legislative session) to fund development of a center to address policy solutions to racial and ethnic disparities in health and health care. We also came close to meeting our publishing goals for the academic year.

The DHPM continues to increase its contributions to the education, health and welfare of underserved populations in the city, state and region. Through these efforts, we also enhance the educational and training opportunities we offer to our students and our community. The goal, as always, is to position the SCHP-DHPM as a policy resource that makes real differences; moving “*from invisible to invaluable.*” We look forward to partnering with stakeholders and community groups to achieve lasting public health solutions. I invite alumni and others to become involved in this effort by contacting us and becoming a member of the DHPM family. Finally, I get to wish all of our readers a merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

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## ***Update: National Minority Male Health Project***

Anita Hawkins, PhD

Under a grant from the Office of Minority Health, MSU-SCHP provides technical assistance and other support to community-based organizations to enhance their outreach to minority men and to plan and promote health fairs and other screening events to serve them. Morgan has also collected data on health care knowledge and service utilization of African American men in Baltimore. The National Minority Male Health Project (NMMHP) is a multidisciplinary, multi-institutional collaborative promoting healthy lifestyles among minority males through a “comprehensive program of research, education and service.” The NMMHP

is implemented by a consortium of five HBCUs (including Morgan State, Bowie State, Lincoln and Wilberforce Universities) under the leadership of Morehouse College, with each institution having its own tailored program.

In 2008, events supported by MSU’s NMMHP reached over 500 men with health-related information and screening. The project sponsored 12 health education workshops (four on campus and eight in the community), operated a summer nutrition and fitness camp, and provided health education and referral services for men living in transitional housing after being released from prison. Evaluation data has been collected at each of these events to assess health knowledge and health care utilization and to identify barriers and challenges to effectively reaching males of all ages with needed information and services.



With the receipt of a new five-year grant award this fall, the Consortium is taking on a new focus on translational research. The original demonstration grant supported building collaborative relationships within the community to reach and engage minority men. The success of earlier efforts created a significant knowledge base of the barriers and challenges, and identified promising practices for reaching this population. The new focus will utilize these relationships to design, implement, and evaluate evidence-based interventions to improve health.

In 2009, the NMMHP at MSU will implement two interventions promoting healthy eating and physical

activity. One project – Project AHEAD (Approaches to Health Exercise and Diet) – will focus on an enhanced version of the 2008 summer nutrition and fitness camp. A second intervention will focus the Healing Zones curriculum developed by the National Center and Caucus on Black Aged on African American men 45 years of age and older. The NMMHP at Morgan will also continue to provide support and technical assistance to community organizations in implementing health screening and health education events.

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## ***APHA Holds its 136<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA***

**Andrea Kidd Taylor, PhD**

The American Public Health Association (APHA) held its 136<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Exposition in San Diego, CA, from October 15<sup>th</sup> through the 29<sup>th</sup>. The theme of this year's meeting was "Public Health Without Borders," with over 12,600 public health practitioners, researchers, and policymakers in attendance. The major focus of this year's meeting was cross-border issues impacting health, including ways to solve today's global health challenges.

The APHA Public Health Expo featured over 700 booths of public health products, services and institutions, including schools of public health and the Morgan State University SCHP Public Health Program's joint display with the Consortium of African American Public Health Programs. The Expo also featured presentations and scientific poster sessions including those of MSU-SCHP students and faculty, Dr. Ava Joubert, Cynthia Johnson, LaKaisha Yarber, and Dr. Lorece Edwards. Hundreds of scientific and educational sessions were presented during the course of the Annual Meeting, including programs on the global burden of disease, the role of the media and health communication in promoting public health, the health of the nation's immigrants, and the potential for pandemic influenza. A final highlight was the

closing general session entitled "Becoming the Healthiest Nation: A Dialog with the Former Surgeons General." Drs. Jocelyn Elder, David Satcher, and Richard Carmona participated in a very spirited and enriching panel discussion moderated by Robert Ross, President and CEO of the California Endowment.

APHA Sections, Caucuses, SPIGS (Special Primary Interest Groups), Forums, Committees, and Affiliates used the event to hold their business meetings. The APHA Governing Council (GC) of member-elected representatives also held its business meetings, which included the election of APHA's incoming president-elect and three new Executive Board members. The GC also adopted nine new APHA policies which serve as the Association's official policy stances on public health issues. These policies were proposed by APHA members and sections and vetted in public hearings led by the Association's Joint Policy Committee. They include policies:

- to reduce the burden of poor health and health inequities through transportation and land-use policies;
- to strengthen health systems in developing countries;
- supporting the fluoridation of all community water systems in the U.S.;
- calling for education and research into Vitamin D deficiency/insufficiency;
- addressing the current world food crisis and preventing the next one;
- maintaining and enforcing the legal drinking age at 21;
- calling for a global ban on lead use in residential indoor and outdoor paints and all nonessential uses in consumer products, especially children's products; and
- discouraging smoking in movies to avoid influencing young people to smoke.

All official APHA policies are available for review on the APHA website ([www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org)). Many APHA policies are used to influence legislative policy decisions of federal, state, and local governments, and help direct the policy activities

and strategic planning of the APHA Executive Board and staff.

Next year's Annual Meeting and Exposition will be held November 7-11 in Philadelphia, PA. The focus will be on Water and Public Health. Information on the 137<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting is available at [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org).

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## ***DHPM Faculty on APHA Executive Board***

At this year's APHA Annual Meeting, **Dr. Andrea Kidd Taylor** completed the first year of her four-year term on the APHA Executive Board (EB). The EB consists of 24 members including the President-Elect, President, and Immediate Past President of the Association. The primary responsibilities of Executive Board members include follow-up on actions taken by the APHA Governing Council, organizational improvement, strategic planning, and financial planning. The Board also oversees the Executive Director's management of APHA programs, policies, staff, and administration. Dr. Taylor said this about her experience, *"It is indeed an honor and a pleasure to represent the 30,000 members of APHA by serving on the Executive Board. The work of the Board is extremely important, challenging and time-consuming; but being able to provide input to the strategic direction of the Association and having a direct influence on the policies that are adopted and implemented by the APHA are challenges that I welcome."*

Dr. Taylor is an Assistant Professor in the DHPM, with more than 20 years experience in occupational and environmental health and safety. In addition to her service with the APHA, Dr. Taylor serves as a member of the Beyond Pesticides/National Coalition against the Misuse of Pesticides Advisory Board; she formerly served as a member of the U.S. Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, and as a health representative on the National Advisory

Committee on Occupational Safety and Health. She has authored articles that highlight minority workers, chemical safety, and disease and injury prevention. Her research interests are occupational and environmental health and safety interventions and policies, indoor air quality in public schools, minority workers, and the prevention of environmental exposure to pests and pesticides.



Dr. Andrea Kidd Taylor

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## ***Student Highlight – Ms. Sheena Pierce***

Ms. Sheena Pierce, a Master's student in the Department of Health Policy and Management, is a recent recipient of the Gates Millennium Scholarship. The Gates Millennium Scholars Program (GMSP) facilitates academic achievement among minority populations by removing financial barriers to higher education. The scholarship provides up to \$20,000 for graduate school, with funding available for students in computer science, education, engineering, library and information science, mathematics, public health, and science. Students stay connected with the program by giving updates on their professions, attending leadership conferences, assisting as mentors for new scholars, and serving as ambassadors for the GMSP in their communities.

In September and October, Ms. Pierce served as a mentor at the GMSP Leadership Conference and

she presented at her high school. She also recently completed her MSU-SCHP Practice Internship with Sinai Hospital where she had the opportunity to learn the dynamic of a health care system while considering the potential for incorporating public health initiatives. Ms. Pierce describes her interest in hospital interaction with their communities through their Emergency Departments. "Focusing my efforts out of the Emergency Department has allowed me to incorporate interventions to increase community members' ability to access emergent health care that meets their needs," she said.

Congratulations Ms. Pierce!

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## ***Virtual EpiCrim Center***

Dr. Timothy Akers (SCHP-DHPM) is collaborating with faculty at the University of Central Florida to launch the nation's first **Virtual Center for Epidemiological Criminology (VCEC)**. This center seeks to promote the concept of Epidemiological Criminology or "EpiCrim" (see Fall edition of *Urban Transformations*), which is the integration of public health and criminal justice. Most, if not all, of the problems facing society today can be subsumed under these two substantive domains. The VCEC seeks to provide funding and research opportunities for faculty and students who are interested in helping solve societal problems through explicit and reciprocal linkages between the two fields.

Epidemiological Criminology has already garnered considerable interest from the academic and policy-making arenas. In our last edition, we highlighted the APHA special session on the topic at the 2008 Annual Meeting. This session was so successful that in the future there will be a standing session dedicated to EpiCrim. There are also a series of upcoming publications exploring the concept, including a forthcoming analytical essay, entitled "**Coming Full Circle: Epidemiological Criminology**," in the January 2009 edition of the

*American Journal of Public Health* by Dr. Akers and his co-author, Dr. Mark Lanier.

The VCEC represents an important step in the continuing development of this new paradigm, promoting linkages between methods and statistical models common to public health and criminal justice. The VCEC will provide a forum linking epidemiological analogies, theories, and models to their criminological equivalents. Policy examples highlighting the disciplinary similarities are already featured in areas related to HIV/AIDS and human trafficking. For additional information, visit the VCEC website at:

<http://www.epidemiologicalcriminology.com/>



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## ***Publications and Presentations***

### **PUBLICATIONS:**

**Akers T, Lanier M.** Coming full circle: Epidemiological criminology. *American Journal of Public Health*. In Press.

### **PRESENTATIONS:**

**Hawkins, A.** (2008, October). Promoting Healthy Behaviors and Appropriate Health Care Utilization Among African American Men Recently Released from Incarceration. American Public Health Association, San Diego, CA.

**Hawkins, A.** (2008, October). Expanding the Capacity of Community-based Organizations to Address Health Disparities through Service Learning Partnerships with Academic Public Health

Institutions. American Public Health Association, San Diego, CA.

**Akers, T.** (2008, October). Epidemiological Criminology. American Public Health Association, San Diego, CA.

**Akers, T.** (2008, October). Developing a New Interdisciplinary Paradigm: Epidemiological Criminology at the Crossroad. American Public Health Association, San Diego, CA.

**VanGeest, JB.** (2008, November). Clinical Screening of Patients' Understanding to Improve Quality and Reduce Disparities. RWJF Finding Answers Annual Grantee Meeting, Chicago, IL.

**VanGeest, JB.** (2008, November). Dissemination and Translation of Research into Practice. RWJF Finding Answers Annual Grantee Meeting, Chicago, IL.

**VanGeest, JB.** (2008, November). Perceptions of Health Literacy Screening in an African American Patient Population. North American Primary Care Research Group, Puerto Rico.

## REPORTS:

**O'Keefe AM, Aoki Y.** African American Women and their Pregnancies: An Epidemiological Study. Report submitted to the Actuarial Research Corporation.

**VanGeest JB, Kamal A, Loubert L, Perry M, Akers MA.** Homelessness in Baltimore: Causes, Urban Planning, and Service Design. Policy report submitted to the Baltimore Mayor's Office.

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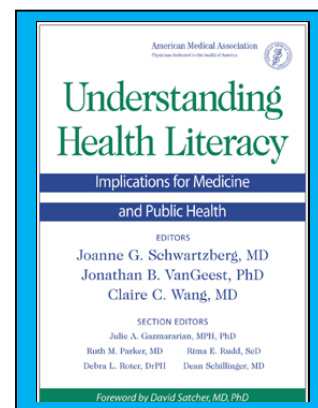
## *Recent Textbooks*

### Addressing Health Literacy

With an estimated 90 million adults struggling to understand basic health-related information, the

issue of low or limited health literacy has emerged as an important public health and health policy issue. Published in 2005 by the American Medical Association Press, ***Understanding Health Literacy: Implications for Medicine and Public Health*** is one of the first comprehensive texts to address the issue at the intersection of medicine and public health. By presenting a summary of research into health literacy and its impact on health outcomes, this resource aims to help physicians and public health practitioners improve the care for patients (and population groups) who have difficulty understanding communication regarding medications, tests, procedures, and informed consent.

The book is edited by Joanne G. Schwartzberg, MD, Jonathan B. VanGeest, PhD (SCHP DHPM), and Claire Wang, MD. Organized into four distinct sections, the text provides an overview of literacy in healthcare. The book discusses patient-physician communications and related issues involving healthcare delivery. It also examines major surveys of health literacy, health literacy tests, and patients' use of the Internet to find health information. The volume provides examples of communication problems and offers samples of clear and simplified communication with patients. It is an ideal tool for students of public health, sociology, medical sociology, physicians, nurses, and others.



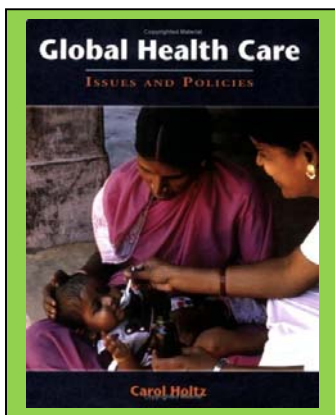
Though more than two years in print, the text remains one of only a few specifically addressing the issue of health literacy at the intersection of health services delivery and public health practice. *Understanding Health Literacy* is available from the

AMA Press website at: <https://catalog.ama-assn.org>. The text can also be purchased at Amazon and other retailers.

## Global Health Issues and Policies

In an effort to address today's rapidly changing and complex healthcare systems, as well as the many issues confronting health professionals and policy makers globally, ***Global Health Care: Issues and Policies*** provides up-to-date information exploring a variety of global health topics and perspectives: culture, religion and health, health research, ethics and health, reproductive health, infectious diseases, chronic diseases, nutrition, mental health, environmental health, aging, ambulatory care, economics and health care, healthcare insurance, and more.

Published in 2008, this innovative text prepares students with basic perspectives and summaries of health policy issues throughout various geographical regions and how they are affected by significant world events.



Faculty in the SCPH-DHPM contributed to a number of chapters in this innovative text. *Global Health Care Issues and Policies* is available from the Jones and Bartlett website at: <http://www.jbpub.com>. It can also be purchased at Amazon and other retailers.

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## Department “Briefs”

Drs. **Timothy Akers** and **Jonathan VanGeest**, with Drs. Kathryn Doherty and Timothy Rainey in the Office of Academic Affairs, submitted a proposal for a distance education certificate program that was submitted to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the BRAC Higher Education Investment Fund.

Dr. **Andrea Kidd Taylor**, in collaboration with the MSU Urban Research Institute staff and the SCHP’s practice coordinator, organized and conducted a community conference entitled: “What You Don’t Know Could Kill You”. The conference focused on housing environmental hazards, and was held on Saturday, November 22, at the New Student Center. Ten individuals, representing the Baltimore City Health and Fire Departments, HUD, Maryland DHMH, the Sheet Metal Workers Training Fund, and the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning were guest speakers. Dr. Taylor was interviewed for a half-hour segment on WEAA radio to advertise the event.

Dr. **Jonathan VanGeest** was invited to serve on the Leadership Team for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Finding Answers Disparities Research for Change Program Dissemination and Translation Working Group

Dr. **Anne Marie O’Keefe** assisted with media relations for the launch of the Deamonte Driver Mobile Dental Van Project.

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## Faculty Search

The DHPM is excited about the possibility of adding a new assistant professor position this academic year. We are interviewing for public health professionals in the areas of environmental health and health policy a joint position with the

Department of Public Health Analysis. For information regarding this opportunity, please contact Dr. Anne Marie O’Keefe, Chair of the SCHP Recruitment Committee, at [Annemarie.okeefe@verizon.net](mailto:Annemarie.okeefe@verizon.net).

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## ***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 or visit the School’s website at <http://schp.morgan.edu>.

### **Our faculty and Staff:**

Timothy Akers, MS, PhD  
Yutaka 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

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### **Please detach and mail to:**

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