GSPH Addresses Critical Issues in Global Health
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 Several numbers reflect this excitement. Our research funding has increased more than 20 percent per year for the past two years; our student enrollment is growing; and we have increased interactions with local, state, and national health agencies. Due largely to the extraordinary strength and productivity of the Epidemiology Data Center led by Dr. Katherine Detre, we have taken a significant step toward addressing some of our space needs through approval of a proposed expansion of Parran Hall.

Yet all of these positives for our school are occurring in the context of a widening gap between what the health of the public is and what it could be. Just consider the increasing number of Americans without health insurance, or, at the risk of sounding flippant, the size of our waistlines. In both cases, the evidence for a significant adverse public health impact is unequivocal. Yet in neither case is there sufficient urgency to take advantage of what we know or to move forward in addressing the crucial uncertainties that are hindering advances in public policy. Yet all of these positives for our school are occurring in the context of a widening gap between what the health of the public is and what it could be. Just consider the increasing number of Americans without health insurance, or, at the risk of sounding flippant, the size of our waistlines. In both cases, the evidence for a significant adverse public health impact is unequivocal. Yet in neither case is there sufficient urgency to take advantage of what we know or to move forward in addressing the crucial uncertainties that are hindering advances in public policy. Yet all of these positives for our school are occurring in the context of a widening gap between what the health of the public is and what it could be. Just consider the increasing number of Americans without health insurance, or, at the risk of sounding flippant, the size of our waistlines. In both cases, the evidence for a significant adverse public health impact is unequivocal. Yet in neither case is there sufficient urgency to take advantage of what we know or to move forward in addressing the crucial uncertainties that are hindering advances in public policy. But we are growing these goals.

Despite the fact that human populations are remarkably similar genetically, there is a significant public health role for understanding gene-environment interactions. Our Department of Human Genetics, which we believe is the only such department in a school of public health, has been at the forefront of developing methods that will eventually help us answer one of the oldest human questions about disease: “Why me?” This department’s collaboration with other departments in GSPH and with programs through the academic health center is notable.

Attacking core public health challenges requires combining the strengths of our school in fields as diverse as basic biology, epidemiology, biostatistics, health communication, and health policy, among others. We are growing these strengths, developing multidisciplinary approaches to the challenges, and educating a new generation of students in what we can proudly call the exciting field of public health.

Public health is not generally termed “exciting.” We tend to have a musty odor to our topics. Luckily this is changing—and not just because bioterrorism and other social and environmental challenges have suddenly made public health seem more relevant. In this issue you will read about a sampling of new programs and individual accomplishments of our faculty, students, and alumni—all of which I would categorize as exciting.
**Mortality Rate from Type 1 Diabetes Higher among African Americans**

Preliminary results of a study of deaths related to type 1 diabetes were presented by Zsolt Bosnyak, a GSHP research fellow, at the American Diabetes Association's 62nd Scientific Sessions in San Francisco, Calif., on June 17, 2002. The study found that while the rate of deaths related to type 1 diabetes is declining in the overall population, mortality among African Americans remains higher than in Whites. Acute complications such as diabetic coma were to blame.

The study examined the cause of death for 206 type 1 diabetic patients from among a cohort of 1,261 patients diagnosed with type 1 diabetes between 1965 and 1979. Fifteen percent of the African American patients, as compared to 6 percent of the White patients, had died by a 20-year follow-up. Mortality from acute complications was seven times higher in African Americans.

“When these results, while preliminary, suggest an inadequacy in care for African Americans with type 1 diabetes,” said the study’s senior researcher Trevor Orchard, MD, professor and interim chair of epidemiology. “This could be the result of issues such as access to care, or the availability of monitoring supplies and appropriate education about diabetes. It is critical that further studies are undertaken to identify the reasons for this disparity.”


**Controlling Systolic Blood Pressure Early Prevents Heart Disease in the Elderly**

Hypertensive elderly individuals who begin blood pressure therapy before signs of heart disease appear may completely avoid the associated cardiovascular problems, according to Kim Sutton-Tyrrell, PhD., associate professor of epidemiology, who presented these findings at the American Heart Association’s 42nd Annual Conference on Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention, Honolulu, Hawaii, April 2002. Available online at aha.agona.com/about/abstractviewer.

The SHEP trial lasted four and a half years, after which participants who had been taking placebo were encouraged to see their doctors and begin medication therapy. GSHP researchers continued to follow all of the Pittsburgh SHEP participants for 12 years to determine the number of cardiovascular events occurring in each group, regardless of whether or not the participants had continued, stopped, or started medication. Only 60 percent of the participants originally taking the medication remained on the therapy. Still, that group had significantly fewer cardiovascular events 12 years later, indicating that even four and a half years of therapy in one’s 70s can have protective effects a decade or more later.

“All too often, physicians focus on diastolic blood pressure, and isolated systolic hypertension is not treated, particularly when patients are older,” said Tyrrell. “This study demonstrates that even for individuals who are at an advanced age, treating systolic hypertension is vital to avoiding deadly cardiovascular diseases that can result.”


**No Increase of Cancer Deaths Among TMI Residents at 20-Year Mark**

More than 20 years after the partial meltdown of a nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island (TMI) near Harrisburg, PA, GSHP researchers have found no significant increase overall in cancer deaths among residents living within a five-mile radius of the disaster.

The long-term study, from 1979 to 1998, is significant because it covers the normal latency period for most cancers, said Evelyn Talbott, DrPH, professor of epidemiology and the study’s principal investigator. While an upward trend in breast cancer risk related to radiation exposure the day of the accident had been noted in an earlier follow-up at the 13-year mark, Talbott reported in the current study that the relationship is no longer statistically significant.

The findings were published November 1, 2002, on the Web site of Environmental Health Perspectives, a journal of the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The paper will appear in the March 2003 issue of the journal. The study did find a slight increase in the risk of lymphatic and hematopoietic cancers among men that was not related to lifestyle factors, such as smoking and education, or to natural background radiation. This trend may be related to radiation released on the day of the accident, but the findings were not statistically significant.

Conversely, the study noted an increased risk of lymphatic and hematopoietic cancers among women that appears to be related to background radiation in the TMI area, but not linked to radiation exposure from the day of the accident.

“Their findings overall convey good news for TMI residents, the slight increased risk of death from lymphatic and hematopoietic cancers may warrant further investigation,” said Talbott.


**Oxidation of Phosphatidylserine Key in Programmed Cell Death**

Two important steps in the facilitation of apoptosis, the programmed death of a damaged cell, have been determined by a research team headed by Valerian Kagan, PhD, DSc, professor and vice chair of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health.

“Aptosis is a very important mechanism to protect the body from disease,” said Kagan. However, the end products of apoptosis must be eliminated efficiently so that they don’t cause damage to healthy cells. When apoptosis is induced, Kagan’s team discovered, the phospholipid phosphatidylserine (PS) is attacked by free radicals and oxidized. This oxidation then facilitates the movement of PS from the interior wall of the cell’s plasma membrane to the exterior.

The oxidation of PS is key to the second part of this process as well—safe elimination of apoptotic cells. “We have found that macrophages, cells which engulf and destroy apoptic cells, more effectively recognize oxidized PS, enhancing the ‘eat me’ signal of apoptosis,” said Kagan. For an organism to continue functioning, apoptosis and the removal of cell remains must function undisturbed.

Kagan’s findings were published in the July 1, 2002, issue of the Journal of Immunology.

Kidney Disease in Type 1 Diabetes Related to Insulin Resistance

Insulin resistance, a condition commonly associated with the development of type 2 diabetes, is likely a major cause of kidney disease, or nephropathy, in people with type 1 diabetes, according to study results published by GSPI researchers in the September issue of Kidney International, a journal of the International Society of Nephrology.

As many as 40 percent of people with type 1 diabetes develop kidney disease, in which the kidneys’ tiny blood vessels are damaged and unable to filter wastes and excess water from the blood. Untreated, nephropathy leads to end-stage renal disease (ESRD), in which the kidneys’ entire filtration system closes down and the kidneys fail to function. A patient with ESRD requires dialysis or a kidney transplant to live.

“Kidney disease is a major lethal complication for people with type 1 diabetes, particularly those with type 1 diabetes, and until now there has been no clear explanation for its cause beyond blood sugar itself,” said principal investigator Trevor Orchard, MD, associate professor and interim chair of epidemiology. “We now suspect that reducing or preventing insulin resistance may be possible through exercise, weight loss, and drugs, which may help people with type 1 diabetes avoid nephropathy.”

The study analyzed data from the Pittsburgh Epidemiology of Diabetes Complication Study (PEDCS), a 10-year prospective investigation based on a cohort of adults with type 1, or childhood-onset, diabetes. Researchers found that strong relationships existed between nephropathy and insulin resistance through follow-up, unlike other risk factors such as blood pressure and blood lipids, which only predict nephropathy in the short term.

“The good news is that not all people with type 1 diabetes are insulin resistant, and for them the risk of kidney disease now appears to be low,” Orchard said. “Even for someone with type 1 diabetes who is genetically predisposed to insulin resistance, the secret to avoiding nephropathy may well be to prevent insulin resistance through lifestyle changes such as proper diet, exercise, smoking cessation, and perhaps medication.”

Another intriguing finding from this study is that since insulin resistance also predicts heart disease, Orchard continued, “it may explain the longstanding observation that in type 1 diabetes, kidney disease predicts heart disease. In other words, insulin resistance may be the common ground for both complications.”


Modest Elevations in Two Liver Enzymes Related to Increased Mortality in HIV Patients

Better monitoring of liver enzymes is needed to save the lives of people with HIV, according to a GSPI researcher, who presented the findings at the XIX International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain, last summer.

Mild to moderate elevations in two liver enzymes—increments that are commonly ignored by most physicians—are related to an increased risk of death in people with HIV, said Amy Justice, MD, associate professor of health policy and management at GSPI, associate professor of medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and staff physician at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. As many as one-third of HIV patients have mild to moderate elevations (0.5 to 2 times the normal level) in liver enzymes ALT (alanine transaminase) and AST (aspartate transaminase), yet physicians largely disregard the readings unless they are two to four times above the normal range, saidJustice. “Our study shows that even patients whose elevations are mild to moderate have a death rate that is nearly twice that of patients with mid-range normal levels. This association with increased mortality suggests that any elevation in ALT and AST should be addressed.”

Elevations in these enzymes signal injury to liver cells and, in some cases, to other cells in the body. The condition can result from highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART), viral hepatitis, or alcohol abuse, all of which are toxic to liver cells.

“The fact that the most common current cause of death among people with HIV is liver failure suggests that liver injury may be a major limiting factor in the effectiveness of current HIV treatment,” Justice noted.

In a related study of data from the Veterans Aging Cohort Study, the incidence of liver cancer among HIV-positive veterans since the advent of HAART is shown to be nearly twice as high as it is for HIV-negative veterans. Justice and colleagues presented these findings in a poster on display at the Barcelona conference. Possible reasons for the increase, the researchers said, may include drug toxicity and viral hepatitis.

“Chronic viral hepatitis is known to substantially increase the risk of liver cancer,” said Justice. “Additional research must be done to determine whether HAART exacerbates this risk or only helps HIV-positive patients live long enough to suffer the consequences of other chronic diseases such as cancer.”

Cardiovascular Disease Tied to Increased Risk of Dementia

A study showing a correlation between cardiovascular disease and increased risk of dementia was presented at the 2002 annual meeting of the American Geriatrics Society in Washington, D.C., by Anne B. Newman, MD, MPH, associate professor of medicine and epidemiology.

The study, part of the Cardiovascular Health Study, looked at the associations between the risk of dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, and vascular dementia in people who had a history of heart attack, angina, or peripheral vascular disease or the markers for cardiovascular disease, including electrocardiogram (ECG) abnormalities, left ventricular hypertrophy, carotid artery thickness, or carotid stenosis.

“We found that those with cardiovascular disease had an increased risk of dementia of about 30 percent, only partially explained by stroke,” Newman said. “Although the relative risk was moderate, the high prevalence of cardiovascular disease coupled with the high risk of dementia in older adults would suggest that prevention of cardiovascular disease may be the most effective preventive measure we have for the prevention of dementia.”

India, United States Team Up for Research Training in Genetics

The Fogarty International Center (FIC) of the National Institutes of Health has awarded Daniel Weeks, PhD, professor of human genetics and biostatistics, one of six training grants newly funded by the FIC to support international collaborations in human genetic sciences. Weeks and his team will partner with Partha P. Majumder, PhD, and colleagues at The Chatterjee Group (TCG)-Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) Center for Population Genomics in Calcutta, India, to train pre- and postdoctoral Indian candidates as multidisciplinary statistical geneticists.

As infectious and communicable diseases in India have become increasingly manageable with improved healthcare and public hygiene, attention is being turned toward the management of common diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, that have underlying genetic and environmental components. With large family sizes as well as population groups that are relatively homogeneous genetically and environmentally, India offers the opportunity for genetic epidemiological studies on many diseases that are major public health issues in India as well as worldwide. At the same time, expertise on genetic epidemiology in India is limited. Under the leadership of Weeks, the five-year India-United States Research Training Program in Genetics will fill a significant gap in human genetics research expertise available in India. In 2001, Weeks was awarded the prestigious Mortimer Spiegelman Award from the American Public Health Association for his contributions to the field of health statistics.

This is the sixth Fogarty International Award presented to GSPI faculty. Others include the AIDS International Training and Research Program (AITRP) in Brazil, directed by Lee Harrison, MD, associate professor of medicine, epidemiology, and infectious diseases and microbiology; the International Malaria Training and Research Program in Kenya, directed by D.J. Perkins, PhD, assistant professor of infectious diseases and microbiology; the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Program, directed by Eugene Tull, DPhil, assistant professor of epidemiology; the Indo-U.S. Collabora- tion in Genomic Studies on Diabetes in India, awarded to Dhiraj Sangher, visiting assistant professor of human genetics; and CDB T Cel Mediated Suppression of HIV from India, directed by Phalgum Gupta, PhD, professor of infectious diseases and microbiology. Gupta also directed an Indian supplement of Harrison’s Fogarty AITRP grant.
Model Involves Youth in HIV Prevention Planning

A model for involving youth in HIV prevention planning has been developed by a GSPh Pennsylvania Prevention Project team led by Anthony Silvestre, PhD, associate professor of infectious diseases and microbiology.

At least half of all new HIV infections in the United States are among individuals younger than 25, with nearly 30,000 men and women ages 13–24 having already received AIDS diagnoses.

“It seems clear that the continuing spread of HIV will remain a problem until effective prevention interventions can reduce the barriers related to HIV risk among young people,” the researchers wrote in a paper published in the March/April 2002 issue of the journal Perspective on Sexual and Reproductive Health. “To develop effective prevention interventions for young people, one needs to thoroughly understand their values and experiences and apply this understanding at all phases of intervention development, implementation, and evaluation.”

The model involved four young adult round table discussions in different parts of the state with continuous input into the planning process of a larger community planning committee. The approach was created as part of a response to a request from the Pennsylvania Department of Health for GSPh assistance in developing a planning committee for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Pennsylvania jurisdiction, which includes all of the state except Philadelphia.

Study Shows Decline of Regular Physical Activity in Adolescent Girls

A study published in the September 5, 2002, issue of The New England Journal of Medicine shows that physical activity declines dramatically during adolescence in girls. Sue Y.K. Kim, MD, MPH, professor of family medicine and clinical epidemiology in the School of Medicine was the study’s principal investigator; Andrea M. Kriska, PhD, associate professor of epidemiology in the Graduate School of Public Health, was a co-investigator of the study.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Growth and Health Study followed 1,213 Black girls and 1,166 White girls from the ages of 9–10 to the ages of 18–19. Nine–10 year old girls of both races reported relatively similar levels of activity, but by the age of 16 or 17, 56 percent of the Black girls and 31 percent of the White girls reported no regular leisure activity at all.

Pregnancy was associated with the decline in activity among the Black girls, while in the White girls, cigarette smoking was associated with the decline.

Zinc and Nitric Oxide Can Help Reduce Pulmonary Cell Injury

A GSPh researcher is using five-cell fluorescent imaging technology to study the previously unknown role of zinc and nitric oxide in reducing endothelial cell injury in the lungs. “We’ve always known that zinc had a very important role in stabilizing proteins and regulating enzyme activity,” said Claudette M. St. Croix, assistant professor of environmental and occupational health. “But what we didn’t realize is that protein-bound zinc was regulatable—that it could be released to participate in nitric oxide signaling pathways involved in protecting the cell from toxic stressors.” After iron, zinc is the most abundant trace essential metal. However, said St. Croix, “most of it is bound to proteins.”

New Grant Studies the Genetic Epidemiology of Musculoskeletal Aging

A $2.2 million grant from the National Institute on Aging has been awarded to a team of researchers for a five-year study of the role of genes in influencing bone and muscle composition and function as well as age-related declines in composition and function. Loss of bone mass and muscle mass with age may lead to osteoporosis, resulting in fractures and declines in strength and muscle function. These changes contribute significantly to declines in the ability of older individuals to perform tasks of daily living. The research team, led by Professor of Human Genetics Robert Ferrell, PhD, includes GSPh collaborators Joseph Zmuda, PhD, assistant professor of epidemiology and Candace Kammerer, PhD, associate professor of human genetics, and colleagues from Pitt’s School of Medicine and from Carnegie Mellon University.

The multidisciplinary team will examine the relationship between genes involved in sex-steroid metabolism, growth factors, and cell-signaling molecules and changes in body composition, and link those changes to bone and muscle mass and composition and function.
Sloping gently upward from the Egyptian shores of the Mediterranean, the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina basks gloriously in the sun. It’s a grand structure with a purpose no less lofty than that of the fabled ancient Library of Alexandria—to gather as much of the world’s knowledge as possible.

When Professor of Epidemiology Ron LaPorte, PhD, attended the library’s gala opening last fall—an international event replete with heads of state and ministers of health—an idea took hold. With the Library of Alexandria as the venue and his highly successful Supercourse as a model, he would contribute to the new library’s ambitious effort by collecting “all of science.”

Ron LaPorte doesn’t think small. One of the many hats LaPorte wears is that of codirector of the World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center in Pittsburgh. From 1986 to 2000, LaPorte led the WHO Multinational Project on Childhood Diabetes. With 155 centers in 70 countries, the project came to understand, first hand, that one of the greatest difficulties of international collaboration was communications. A letter to a colleague in Mexico might be sent three times before it arrived, he remembers. Missives sent to Cuba in December were lucky to reach their destination by March.

LaPorte, who is a cognitive scientist as well as an epidemiologist, began to think about the implications of the Internet—an inexpensive way to transfer large amounts of information—for global public health. His musings planted the seed for the concept he’s dubbed telepreventive medicine. “It’s the idea that we can use relatively low-bandwidth information-sharing in order to reach a large number of healthy people with the prevention message,” said LaPorte. “The most cost-effective thing that could improve your health is information, no question about it. That, to me, is the whole future of public health. If we can grasp that, it will have a profound effect upon global health.”

By 1990, LaPorte, with individual colleagues at NASA, the Pan American Health Organization, WHO, and IBM, had begun to work on the first tool in telepreventive medicine, the Global Health Network (GHNet). GHNet’s goal was to link public health officials and researchers, making possible a flowing exchange of information and data.

Tony Villasenor, former director of the NASA Science Internet (NSI), remembers first coming into contact with LaPorte when Villasenor wanted to create a database of leading medical doctors around the world who could provide emergency services if a NASA mission encountered catastrophic problems. “Ron, through his international lecture programs, had already amassed a wealth of health practitioners throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America,” said Villasenor. “[He] radiated incredible energy and enthusiasm that attracted and engaged a wide range of international medical collaborators. Furthermore—and from my perspective this was quite significant—Ron understood the power of the Internet!”

The GHNet led to the development of global public health training, which he tackled with a formidable Web-based collection of PowerPoint lectures. This “Supercourse” (www.pitt.edu/~super1) came about in 1998 as LaPorte’s answer to distance learning. “The traditional distance education approach is the ‘talking head’ model,” he said. “If you want to reach somebody in Kenya, you set up a voice-videosystem and do a video feed. There are several problems with doing that. The first is cost. Those voice-video feeds are typically like the gross national product of Mali—hugely expensive. The cost for training each individual is very high. The other problem is that if you’re teaching the students in Kenya, then you’re not empowering the teachers in Kenya.”

With the Supercourse, a teacher can take a lecture and modify it to suit his or her needs, said LaPorte. Topics cover a wide range of issues: investigation and control of outbreaks of foodborne illness; screening for retinopathy and nephropathy; epidemiology of type 2 diabetes mellitus in the Arab world; colorectal cancer: proposal of a screening program...
The first step toward a possible GSPH program in global health sciences was taken last fall with the introduction of a new multidisciplinary course, Critical Issues in Global Health.

LaPorte is an intense man by nature. But when he talks about international response to the Supercourse, he becomes even more passionate. “It started as the very simple concept that the best way to improve training in the area of prevention worldwide is to share our best PowerPoint lectures,” he recounted. “It happened to be at the time that PowerPoint was just starting to take off. We just happened to be a little ahead of the curve. Then all of a sudden the same thing happened to us and, boom, we took off, too, in the explosion of interest in what we were doing.” Explosion may be too mild a word. By 2002, the Supercourse Web site was averaging an extraordinary 75 million hits a year. There are more than 10,000 global prevention faculty members in 148 countries involved.

The Supercourse reached a milestone last fall with a thousand lectures, and LaPorte estimates the collection to cover 70 percent of public health issues. So how much of a stretch will it be to collect, as he puts it, “all of science?”

“Basically, these lectures are templates from some of the best people in the world, a Nobel Prize winner, people from the CDC,” —LaPorte

“Basically, these lectures are templates from some of the best people in the world, a Nobel Prize winner, people from the CDC. They can make it easier for you to prepare or improve a lecture for your classes. For example, if I want to train my students about HIV infection in Moscow, I would take a lecture from somebody in Moscow and modify it based upon what I want to teach. You can put your own slides in, you can take slides out; you can take slides from other lectures; you can change it anyway that you want.”

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There have been more than 110 articles about it in Nature, British Medical Journal, Lancet, and others as well.

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“I don’t totally nuts,” he laughed. Still, he says, it’s feasible. Ismail Sereglin, the director of the Library of Alexandria, is a solid supporter. For last fall’s opening, he had copies of the Supercourse CD-ROM created and distributed. LaPorte and his colleagues are developing a business plan and exploring funding for the new project.

“In 300 B.C. the Library of Alexandria captured probably 80 percent of the world’s science—700,000 scrolls,” LaPorte said. “I know that there are two or three million lectures that we can get up in a year. They’re there. All we’re going to do is bring them together and make them available to the scientists of the world.”

LaPorte invites everyone involved with prevention to join the Supercourse at super2@pitt.edu. “We will send you a CD with 1,038 lectures from the Supercourse,” he said. “This is a gift that is meant to be given; we ask that you distribute the lectures to at least 5 people.”

For more information go to: www.pitt.edu/~super1.
The students come to realize that it’s very hard to collect medical information in countries where many people aren’t literate. "They don’t know their age or how to spell their name. It is difficult to acquire data under these circumstances using traditional methods."

"But," she added, "there are organizations that are trying to bring technology to the third world—computer systems have been designed that people can operate. Medical personnel are trying to collect information so that when a person goes back to see the physician the second time, there’s some record of what they were seen for the first time."

Twenty students enrolled for this first-time offering, which was cross-listed with Pitt’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPF). The class included students from five GSPH departments, physicians working on MPH degrees, and even two undergraduates. At most sessions, however, 20 chairs weren’t nearly enough. Faculty from GSPH, GSPIA, and the medical school were themselves interested in learning about global health issues and often sat in on the classes. In fact, Karol remembers teasing the class that half of the people in the room were professors. "Seeing this interest is wonderful," she said. "It’s reached a wide audience. Lots of the students are international, too. Their diversity adds much to the presentations and discussions."

In the meantime, a 20-member committee has developed a strategic plan for a larger global health program. The committee’s vision for the program is one that will support interdisciplinary research, teaching, and service directed toward the improvement of global health and healthy communities. Among the strengths that GSPH would bring to such a program are the Epidemiology Data Center, which coordinates and analyzes multicenter clinical trials throughout the world, the Supercourse, an Internet lecture library; an international student body; and an international network of alumni contacts. Perhaps the most convincing argument for the program is the number of ongoing faculty research projects and established partnerships with research collaborators and government officials around the world. Currently there are 31 ongoing international studies, including those in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America.

A more complete description of the Critical Issues in Global Health course, including PowerPoint presentations from the lectures, can be found at www.ceoh.pitt.edu/class.html. The course will be offered next in fall 2003.

### War as a Public Health Issue

Some in the audience couldn’t help but avert their eyes from the terrible bloody images projected onto the screen in the Scaife Hall lecture room. The well-attended talk, a special lecture by Italian war surgeon Gino Strada, MD, cofounder of Emergency, an organization that builds and staffs surgical hospitals in war-weary parts of the world, was part of the new Critical Issues in Global Health course.

This was not Strada’s first visit to the University of Pittsburgh. In the 1980s, he spent two years as a visiting surgeon, training under heart transplant pioneer Thomas Starzl, MD.

In introducing Strada, Alberto Colombi, MD, MPH, a GSPH graduate and adjunct faculty member in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences and corporate medical director of PPG Industries, had asked the audience to consider war as a public health issue. A startling 90 percent of victims of modern-day conflicts, he pointed out, are not combatants but civilians—women, children, and unarmed men. "Public health is not based on fatalism," Colombi said. "Like other public health problems, war is preventable."

Strada had warned the group that he had prepared a “surgically oriented” presentation and that they might find some of the slides “rude.” Indeed, the slides illustrated three typical patterns of injuries caused by land mines, including traumatic amputations of hands and arms, feet, and legs. But even more insistant and disturbing than the destroyed limbs were the eyes of the victims. They drove home another point, Strada’s central message: “It’s the right of each and every one of us to stay alive,” he said. “Land mines are weapons of terrorism towards a civilian population. As a surgeon and a citizen, I fight to have my patients recognized as human beings and not as collateral damages.”
Ovarian Cancer Symposium Draws International Participants

Despite a deluge of last-minute registrations for her symposium on ovarian cancer last May, Director Francesmary Modugno, assistant professor of epidemiology, had to hold firm at 200 participants for a simple reason. It was all the meeting room could hold. This wasn’t a case of poor planning on her part, but rather a testament to the need for such a conference. The symposium, Ovarian Cancer and High-Risk Women: Implications of Prevention, Screening, and Early Detection, had started out as a hallway discussion about putting together an intimate workshop with GSPH faculty who head several important ovarian cancer research projects. Within months, interest and opportunity had turned the modest suggestion into a two-day conference featuring 22 leading researchers attended by scientists, physicians, policymakers, and advocates from the United States, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Israel.

The conference was hosted by GSPH, the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI), and Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC, with support from the National Cancer Institute, the Scaife Family Foundation, the Jewish Health Care Foundation, and the Ladies Hospital Aid Society of Western Pennsylvania. Ovarian cancer, called the “Silent Killer” because of the difficulty of diagnosing the disease in its early stages, is the most common cause of death from a gynecological malignancy in the United States, where last year, it took the lives of 14,500 women.

“There aren’t very good risk models,” said Modugno, whose own work focuses on identifying genetic and environmental factors that put a woman at increased risk for ovarian cancer. Women with a strong family history of the disease or carriers of a mutated gene—BRCA 1/2—are known to be at high risk. “But those only represent 5 to 10 percent of the cases. For 90 percent of the women who are diagnosed with the disease, it’s just out of the blue.”

There’s been little progress in terms of prevention for the last several decades, according to Modugno. Prophylactic oophorectomy—the removal of the ovaries—and the use of oral contraceptives amount to the only preventive measures. The symposium offered an interdisciplinary approach with clinical, scientific, and patient and family care components to the programming. “Cancer is too complex a disease spectrum for any one discipline to really cover,” said Modugno. “You need to have experts from a variety of disciplines.” Sessions included the Epidemiology of Ovarian Cancer; Screening; Biology, Pathology, and Technologies for Early Detection; New Directions in Chemoprevention; A Consumer’s Perspective; and Standards of Care: Health Implications of Surgical Prophylaxis.

Lewis Kuller, MD, DrPH, professor of epidemiology, spoke on the health implications of prophylactic oophorectomy. At the opening of the conference, Kuller had also delivered a heartfelt memorial tribute to pioneering epidemiologist Baruch Modan, MD, DrPH. Modan, an adjunct GSPH faculty member who ran one of the largest case control studies of ovarian cancer ever among Jewish women in Israel, was one of the original inspirations for the conference.

Conference sessions were videotaped. Information on viewing the lectures on the Internet, replete with PowerPoint slides, or purchasing a CD or DVD can be found at www.pitt.edu/~ovarian. The final session, a panel composed of survivors of the disease and representatives from the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance and the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, was the highlight of the conference for Modugno. “In my work, I deal with 2,000 subjects, running statistical analyses, drawing conclusions,” she said. “And that’s wonderful. But I felt it was really important to say there are real faces behind the numbers that we crunch.

I felt it was really important to say there are real faces behind the numbers that we crunch. The conference. When we’re sitting there crunching our numbers, can we remember the Barbara Jankers and the other women for whom we’re really doing this?”

A follow-up conference is on the agenda for 2004. The specifics of the program have yet to be established, but one thing’s for sure: For this one, Modugno’s got her eye on the ballroom.

Further information can be found at www.pitt.edu/~ovarian.
It was no accident that Associate Dean of Public Health Practice and Director of GSPH’s Center for Public Health Practice (GSPH/CPHP) Margaret A. Potter, JD, MS, was able to swing into action so quickly when GSPH got the word that it was being given a $1 million grant last September by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to start an academic Center for Public Health Preparedness.

“Under the smallpox program, for example, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines say that in order to vaccinate one million people, you need to set up 20 sites, operating 16 hours a day for 10 days. The staff responsibilities. “It’s where I want to be. I go to bed at night knowing that I’ve made additional progress every day.”

“It’s exciting,” he said of his new responsibilities. “It’s where I want to be. I go in every day with a little better sense of preparedness. “I want people to understand that we’re working hand in glove with the two state health departments to carry out what they see as needed in the areas of training and education to prepare the workforce,” said Potter. “Emergency response calls for cross-sector cooperation with public health, emergency management officials at the state and federal levels, emergency management technicians, public safety workers, and hospitals. Our approach is to try to educate all of them about public health and to educate public health workers about how to participate in emergency response.”

Piposzar expects to develop a plan for neighborhood emergency help centers that piggybacks on the Red Cross system of emergency shelters. And as former chair of Pennsylvania’s Region 13-Metropolitan Medical Response System and head of Allegheny County Health Department’s environmental, public health, and emergency preparedness programs, he brings a wealth of experience to the challenge.

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Gordon H. DeFriese Receives 2002 Porter Prize

Gordon H. DeFriese, PhD, delivered the 2002 Porter Prize lecture on November 18, 2002, to an attentive audience in Crabtree Hall. DeFriese’s lecture was titled “Prevention as Health Policy Priority: Staying the Course: While Swimming Upstream.”

DeFriese brings a wealth of expertise and insight to his topic. He is a professor of social medicine, epidemiology, and health policy and administration at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as well as president and CEO of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine. He has served on the U.S. Prevention Health Services Task Force and was founding director of the National Partnership for Prevention, a Washington, D.C.-based coalition of private sector business and industry organizations, voluntary health organizations, and state and federal public health agencies.

The Porter Prize was established in 1983 through a gift from The Adrienne & Milton Porter Charitable Foundation to recognize “outstanding and exemplary performance in the field of health promotion.” The recipient of the prize receives a $10,000 award intended to encourage the study, teaching, and practice of health promotion. Since 1999, the Porter Prize has been administered by GSPH and reflects the school’s mission to promote health and prevent disease in individuals and their communities.

Second Foster Lecture Gives Update on Alzheimer’s Disease Risk Factors

With a soft-spoken Scottish accent and gentle sense of humor, Hugh C. Hendrie, MB, ChB, delivered an update on risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease at the second Jay L. Foster Memorial Lecture Series in Alzheimer’s Disease on November 14, 2002. Hendrie is the Albert E. Sterne professor and past chair of the department of psychiatry, Indiana University School of Medicine, as well as the codirector of the Indiana University Center for Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Neuropsychiatric Disorders.

Using his Indianapolis-Ibadan Alzheimer’s Disease Project as a framework for discussion of potential risk factors, Hendrie discussed incidence rates for dementia and Alzheimer’s disease in two diverse elderly community-dwelling populations. The Indianapolis-Ibadan project—a longitudinal study of elderly African American residents in industrialized Indianapolis, Indiana, and Yoruba residents of nonindustrialized Ibadan, Nigeria—is the first epidemiological study designed to determine the environmental risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease.

The Jay L. Foster Memorial Lecture Series in Alzheimer’s Disease is funded by the family of the late Jay L. Foster to enhance the scientific base for preventing and treating Alzheimer’s and to call attention to the devastating effects the disease has on the family as well as the patient.

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(July 1, 2001–June 30, 2002).

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Hugh C. Hendrie

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Department of Epidemiology Hosts
Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: The Keys to a Healthier You

On October 26, 2002, GSPH hosted approximately 110 guests at a standing-room-only symposium for women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), their families, and health professionals. Titled “PCOS: The Keys to a Healthier You,” the conference was presented in collaboration with the Pittsburgh chapter of the Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association (PCOSA) and consisted of 15 lectures presented by national leaders in the field on topics such as infertility, diabetes, hirsutism, genetics, and osteoporosis. The event also featured a “LifeKeys Fair,” where women could connect with vendors offering products and services beneficial to women suffering with PCOS, and receive blood pressure and heart screenings.

“It was very exciting to see so many women interacting with scientists and clinicians about this little-known and studied topic,” said Evelyn Talbott, DrPH, professor of epidemiology and studied topic,” said Evelyn Talbott, DrPH, professor of epidemiology and co-organizer of the conference. “This was the first symposium aimed at these women. It gave them hope by teaching them about lifestyle modifications that can really improve their quality of life.”

The conference came about after an impromptu conversation between co-organizer Jeanne Zborowski, PhD, of the GSPH Department of Epidemiology, and Tracy Montarti, president of the Pittsburgh chapter of PCOSA. The two women appeared together on WQED’s On Q magazine in the spring of 2002 to discuss both the scientific and human perspectives of this complex reproductive hormone disorder that affects 5 million to 7 million women and teenagers in the United States. After the show, Zborowski said, “We just started talking about how there isn’t much done for these women to bring them together with researchers and vendors who could help them.”

As a result, in an amazing brief period of about four months, the daylong conference was fully organized with the help of co-sponsors Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC, Magee’s Center for Fertility and Reproductive Endocrinology, and Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC, Magee’s Center for Fertility and Reproductive Endocrinology.

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Class years are listed for GSPH degrees. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, we encourage our readers to notify GSPH of any errors or omissions by contacting Karen Cresshaw, director of development at 412/624-5639 or at cresshaw@pitt.edu.
GSPH Alum Named MacArthur “Genius”

“It’s one of the nicer things that can happen to a person,” said Janine Jagger, PhD, MPH (GSPH ’74), of being named a 2002 MacArthur Fellow. “I can’t think of any downside to it.”

The MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, often called a “genius grant,” is a no-strings-attached award of $500,000 over five years. For Jagger, founder and director of the International Health Care Worker Safety Center at the University of Virginia School of Medicine, the recognition has come after years of taking a public health approach in an academic setting more focused on the clinical.

“I never followed the money trail,” she said.

She did, however, follow injury prevention issues. In 1985, a colleague mentioned that needlestick injuries to hospital workers were drawing the attention of the infection control community because of the risk of HIV and other blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Each year U.S. healthcare workers sustain about 400,000 injuries from sharp medical devices. Jagger’s reaction was quick and to the point. “I said, ‘Well, if it’s a product-related injury, then change the product to make it less likely to cause injury,’” she recalled. “The reaction I got was so dramatic that I realized this had not been thought of.”

With a $10,000 grant, Jagger embarked on a study of 415 healthcare workers. “My research question,” she said, “was this basic: ‘What stuck you?’” “Nobody had ever asked the workers that question before. They just asked, ‘Why did you stick yourself?’” “I determined that devices that had higher injury rates than those immediately thrown in the trash,” she said. “We also found that about 25 percent of injuries were caused by needles that were totally unnecessary.”

The result was a landmark study published in 1998 in The New England Journal of Medicine showing that needlestick injuries to healthcare workers were a device problem, not a human problem. The study classified the medical devices associated with injuries, and, for the first time, outlined design criteria for safer devices. After that, it was, Jagger said, “a kind of relentless march forward, combining epidemiology with public policy. We looked for every mechanism of change we could find.”

On November 5, 2000, then-President Bill Clinton signed the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act on November 5, 2000. Bill Clinton signs the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act on November 5, 2000. “I’m pleased to recognize the influence of my colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh on the professional path I have followed and on my accomplishments leading to this award.”

Katherine M. Detre
Appointed Distinguished Professor

Recognizing her “extraordinary, internationally recognized scholarly attainment,” Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg appointed Katherine M. Detre, MD, DrPH, to the rank of distinguished professor of epidemiology in the Graduate School of Public Health.

Distinguished professorship is the highest honor that a university can bestow upon a member of its faculty. Detre, who has been a member of the epidemiology faculty since 1974 and is founding director of GSPH’s Epidemiology Data Center, is acclaimed for her work in the study of coronary heart disease. In 2001, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded a $52.2 million grant to Detre for an international clinical trial of coronary heart disease and diabetes. The award is significant not only as one of the largest medical research grants in Pitt’s history, but as the largest grant ever given by the NIH to a sole principal investigator.

GSPH will serve as the hub for this seven-year project that will involve approximately 2,500 subjects at 40 sites across the country and the world. In addition to reduction of risk factors and symptoms, the study will examine the best course of treatment for patients with type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease, including angioplasty and bypass surgery or medical therapies, as well as two different approaches to the treatment of diabetes. Cardiovascular complications are now the leading cause of illness and death in diabetic patients. Detre has been a mentor to the many students and young faculty in statistics, medicine, and epidemiology who collaborate on the research projects she directs. She has supported development of computing and data management systems that make the Epidemiology Data Center a leader in the field of multicenter clinical trials. She is a fellow of the American Heart Association Council on Epidemiology and Prevention, the American College of Cardiology, the American College of Epidemiology, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.
Public health professionals from around the world congregated in Philadelphia for the American Public Health Association’s (APHA) 130th Annual Meeting and Exposition from November 9 through 13, 2002. Faye Wong, MPH, RD, president of APHA, said this year’s meeting served as a forum to begin developing a strategic plan for the future directions of public health. In a statement welcoming attendees to the meeting, Wong said, “Public health professionals have always been looked upon as the prevention people. But now we are also coming to be known as the public safety people. Public health is in the spotlight now as never before.”

The GSPH Reception for Alumni and Friends at the APHA annual meeting attracted approximately 60 people to the Loews Philadelphia Hotel on November 11, 2002. Guests enjoyed an evening of food, wine, and lively conversation while getting re-acquainted with faculty, alumni, and friends. The reception was cohosted by Dean Bernard D. Goldstein and by GSPH alumna and Philadelphia resident Gerald Katz (MHA ’63) and his wife, Ellen Magen.

Top: Hundreds of students, faculty, and public health professionals visited the GSPH booth at the APHA Exposition held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia.

Right: Dean Goldstein with epidemiology student Vinay Mehta, winner of the raffle drawing.
Approximately 120 people participated in the ASPH Environmental Health Conference, held September 8–10, 2002, to the third annual Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) Environmental Health Conference. The conference, responding to a new environment, was built around the theme of disaster preparedness and emergency management with attention to the public health role in preparedness and ways to best incorporate preparedness into the curricula at schools of public health. The 120 participants of the conference included public health faculty, representatives from health departments, and federal officials. ASPH Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health Bruce Pitt was a member of the conference planning committee.

A day of preconference workshops, “Bioterrorism: The Role of the Public Health Workforce,” set the tone for the overall conference with an exciting and challenging agenda planned by Samuel J. Watson, MD, MPH, GSPH associate professor of public health practice and senior biosecurity advisor to the Center for Public Health Preparedness. “My major goal for the preconference program was to bring in faculty that teach environmental and occupational health issues and have them talk about what is terrorism, what are the pathogens that can be used, how do they work, how do they get disseminated and infect us, and what are the fears that we have about it,” Watson said. He added that a further goal of the preconference was to connect practice with academics: “What does the public health force need in the way of trained and educated students, and thus, what are the kinds of skills and education that we ought to be teaching?”

The conference itself opened with a keynote address by Scott Lillibridge, MD, University of Texas-Houston School of Public Health professor, titled “Education as the Key to a National Strategy for Bioterrorism Preparedness.” Concurrent sessions on the first day included presentations on biological, chemical, and radiological terrorism courses, respiratory protection, training, and pandemic evaluation; and public information, concerns, and policy decisions. A panel session on academic centers for public health preparedness included panelist Margaret A. Potter, JD, MS, GSPH associate dean of public health practice and director of GSPH’s Center for Public Health Practice and the new Center for Public Health Preparedness. A plenary speech, “Natural Technological Events: Frequency and Severity of Toxic Releases During and After Natural Disasters,” was delivered on the second day of the conference by Stacy Young, MS, MPH, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Environmental Health. Jay Harper, MD, MPH, GSPH professor of environmental and occupational health, presented “Employee Preparedness: An All Hazards Disaster Training and Education Program in a Multihospital Health System.” GSPH students had the opportunity to contribute to the conference at a poster session.

Watson reported that the conference was well received by the ASPH and by the environmental and occupational health community. He noted the interest of participants in GSPH initiatives “People wanted to know what we were doing,” he said, adding that he was pleased at the recognition that Pittsburgh is ahead of the curve. “The Graduate School of Public Health is out in front doing things as a national leader.”
Beaufort Longest Delivers Inaugural Lecture

Beaufort B. Longest Jr., PhD, director of the Health Policy Institute, marked his formal installation as the M. Allen Pond Professor of Health Policy & Management with a lecture on November 19, 2002, titled “Health Systems: A Promising New Class of Corporate Citizens.”

“Just as the business sector has produced many good corporate citizens to the great advantage of American society, health systems with sufficient financial and organizational gravitas are increasingly assuming these roles,” Longest said, “and in so doing are making positive differences in their communities.”

Endowed Excellence in Education Award at GSPH convocation April 27, 2002. Along with a plaque commemorating the award, Rowe received a $2,000 prize in recognition of his dedication to teaching and his skill in communicating his expertise to students at GSPH.

Rowe quickly put the award to work for his students, purchasing molecular biology lab manuals, (invaluable “recipe books,” said Rowe, that students and lab technicians use to set up experiments) and a laptop computer. The computer, intended as a “loaner” for graduate students in the Microbial Pathogens course and for Data and Journal Club presentations, proved more valuable than Rowe originally anticipated.

“Probably the best story involves my course and for Data and Journal Club presentations, proved more valuable than Rowe originally anticipated.

First Craig Award presented to David Rowe

A committee of faculty and students awarded David Rowe, PhD, associate professor of infectious diseases and microbiology, the first Dr. James L. Craig First Craig Award. The award was established by the GSPH Department of Infectious Diseases and Global Health in memory of Dr. James L. Craig, assistant professor of public health sciences; and the Center for Public Health Preparedness. Rowe summed up his feelings about the award quite simply: “Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jim Craig.”

Gift Helps Fund Bioterrorism Lecture Series

Through the Pittsburgh Bioterrorism Lecture Series, Samuel Watson, All, MA, associate professor of public health practice and senior biodefense advisor to the Center for Public Health Preparedness, looks to educate the University community on issues regarding bioterrorism, specifically how to detect it, how to respond to it, and how to contain it. The series, an adjunct to Watson’s “Issues in Bioterrorism” course, invites nationally recognized experts in the fields of medicine, law, government, and public health to discuss the varied and complex issues associated with bioterrorism.

The spring 2002 term was the inaugural season for the series and began with Barry Kellman, JD, professor of law from DePaul University College of Law presenting “Legal Issues of Bioterrorism Prevention, Preparedness, and Response.”

Scott Lillibridge, MD, special advisor to the secretary of health and human services and former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Program, delivered a lecture on “Federal Government Planning for Preventing and Responding to Bioterrorism.” The series concluded with John LaMontagne, PhD, deputy director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), who lectured on “NIAID Research on Bioterrorism.” A CD is currently in production through the sponsorship of the University of Pittsburgh Center for Public Health Preparedness that will include audio and slides from the lectures.

The lecture series is sponsored in part by a donation from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Nienick Jr. Other series sponsors include GSPH, Arthur Levine, Pitt’s senior vice chancellor for the health sciences; and the Center for Public Health Preparedness. Watson is currently lining up speakers for the spring 2003 series. If you would like more information, call 412-383-7989.

Alumni Establishes Student Assistance Fund

Alumnus Jan R. Jennings (MPH ’72) has recently established the Jan Ricks Jennings Student Assistance Fund in Health Administration with a gift of $10,000 to the Graduate School of Public Health. Jennings, currently president and CEO of Jefferson Regional Medical Center near Pittsburgh, wanted not only to give back to his alma mater, but to honor his teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend at GSPH, Edmund M. Ricci. The Jennings fund will be used to provide books, conference fees, travel, and other educational expenses for students enrolled in the health administration program at GSPH.
Two New Departments Replace Health Services Administration

Reflecting increasingly specialized and complex fields, two new departments have been created in the Graduate School of Public Health to take the place of what previously had been the Department of Health Services Administration. The Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences (BCHS) and the Department of Health Policy & Management (HPM) became operational in July 2002.

The Department of Health Policy & Management offers two degrees: a Master of Health Administration (MHA) and a joint law and Master of Public Health program (JD/MPH) offered with Pitt’s School of Law.

The MHA program has refocused its attention on managing the health of populations. According to Judith R. Lave, PhD, professor of health economics and interim HPM chair, “We have conducted a complete review of our curriculum to make sure that all courses are where they ought to be.”

The program has also taken steps to ensure that it is connected to the world of practice. The program now requires that faculty to define and expand research in the social and behavioral sciences in public health. In the works is the creation of an Institute for Evaluative Sciences in Public Health.

An understanding of human behavior is fundamental to achieving our national and international health promotion and illness prevention goals,” Ricci said.

In January, Quinn completed a community assessment of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community of Allegheny County. Funded by the Maurice Falk Medical Fund and The William J. Copeland Fund, the assessment was conducted for Persad Center Inc., the Gay-Lesbian Community Center, and the Seven Project. Deborah Aaron, who holds a joint appointment with the Department of Epidemiology, was the coinvestigator.

The National Institute of Aging has granted $498,790 to Myrna Silverman, PhD, for the third year of a four-year study (2003–06) exploring the process of self-care for chronic illness among older African Americans and Whites in Allegheny County.

A gathering of students, faculty, and staff celebrated the retirement of longtime faculty member Elsie Broussard, MD, DrPH, on September 20, 2002. Dean Goldstein presented Broussard with a chair bearing the University insignia to commemorate her years of dedication to the school and to public health. Broussard has been a faculty member of GSPH since 1967.

Broussard, now a professor emerita of GSPH since 1967.

In an educational meeting at the Anthrax Attack.

Four areas of specialization: public health and aging; health education and promotion; maternal and child health; and behavioral research methods.

The BCHS program now requires that faculty to define and expand research in the social and behavioral sciences in public health. In the works is the creation of an Institute for Evaluative Sciences in Public Health.

“An understanding of human behavior is fundamental to achieving our national and international health promotion and illness prevention goals,” Ricci said.
Marsh and Nurt Emen of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center conducted a feasibility study on the suspected cluster, first noted more than two years ago, Pratt & Whitney funded the larger study. Marsh will perform a series of epidemiological studies in the company’s index plant and six control plants. Emen, a former GSPH faculty member, has separate funding of a similar amount to assess the extent of historical exposures to various chemicals at the seven plants. The investigation is expected to take six years.

**Department of Epidemiology**

Lewis Kuller, MD, DrPH, has formally stepped down as chair of the Department of Epidemiology after a 30-year tenure to devote himself full time to directing the newly formed Center for Healthy Aging. During his time as chair, Kuller attracted an eclectic faculty covering a broadly diversified body of research, tripling the size of the department from less than 10 full-time faculty when he arrived in 1972 to 31 faculty and 246 staff today. Within the department, he established nationally recognized programs in women’s health, diabetes, and cancer epidemiology, and he was instrumental in developing an Alzheimer’s research program, which has separate funding of a similar amount to Esmen, a former GSPH faculty member, of the Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Trevor Orchard, MBChB, MMedSci, professor of epidemiology, is serving as acting chair of the Department of Epidemiology. He will hold this position while a national search is conducted for a permanent successor to Lewis Kuller. Orchard is a national leader in the epidemiology of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, with a particular emphasis on insulin-dependent diabetes and management of lipid disorders. The National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases has awarded Steven Belle, PhD, $1.89 million to study patient and viral characteristics, including immunologic and genetic characteristics, to help explain viral resistance to pegylated interferon and ribavirin, the current optimal therapy for chronic hepatitis C. Evelyn Talbott, DrPH, was awarded a 2003 Health Care Hero Award for the category of Health Care Innovation and Research. The Health Care Hero Award program recognizes outstanding people and organizations that are making significant strides in the local health care field. The awards are presented by the Pittsburgh Business Times, Allegheny County Medical Society, and The Hospital Council of Western Pennsylvania.

**Department of Environmental and Occupational Health**

Meryl Karol, PhD, was selected to deliver the 2002 Frederick Sperling Memorial Lecture at Howard University in Washington, D.C. The lecture, titled “Asthma, Allergy, and Chemicals,” reflected Karol’s interest in the mechanisms of chemically induced respiratory sensitization and methods that predict susceptible individuals.

**Department of Health Policy & Management**

Nathan Hershey, LL.B, has been selected for inclusion in the 2003–04 edition of The Best Lawyers in America. Hershey was among those lawyers honored for being named to the list for 10 years or more since its first publication in 1983. Attorneys in Best Lawyers are selected by their peers, a group of 15,000 lawyers throughout the United States who cast their votes based on the legal abilities of other lawyers in the same specialties.

**Department of Human Genetics**

Eleanor Feingold, PhD, has been appointed associate editor for The American Journal of Human Genetics.

The National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research has awarded Susanne Gollin, PhD, a $1.6 million grant to conduct studies on a region of the human genome that is present in extra copies in a large percentage of oral cancers. She and her team of researchers will also investigate the process of gene amplification in oral cancer cells. Gollin has also been re-elected vice chair of the Allegheny County Board of Health.

**Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology**

The Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC) awarded Linda Frank, PhD, MSN, ACRN, the ANAC’s 2002 HIV/AIDS Educator Award at its annual meeting in San Francisco, Calif., on November 9, 2002. Frank’s 14 years of dedicated work educating healthcare providers about treatment and care for persons with HIV led her peers, HIV consumers, and community providers to nominate her for this prestigious honor.

John Encaneda, PhD, participated in a panel presentation at the International Congress on Law and Mental Health in Amsterdam, Holland, in June 2002. The panel addressed the rights of psychiatric patients in the provision of services that clients do not necessarily request. Encaneda was involved in two papers on this panel and is the first presenter to address the provision of HIV prevention through mental health care management of severely mentally ill clients.

**Centers**

David Piposzar, MPH, has been named executive director of the Center for Public Health Preparedness. Piposzar joins the center following a 28-year career with the Allegheny County Health Department, where he worked in environmental programs, public health program management, and public health preparedness activities. As one of his key career accomplishments, he directed the development of the Metropolitan Medical Response System in Western Pennsylvania. This collaboration of more than 150 agencies and 65 hospitals organized under the Pennsylvania Region 13 Counter-Terrorism Task Force, has been cited as a national model of regional collaboration.

Evelyn Talbott, DrPH, cuts the cake at a celebration of his 90th birthday on October 25, 2002 at GSPH.
The Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, has awarded GSPH a three-year $10.65 million grant to continue operating the Pennsylvania/Mid-Atlantic AIDS Education Training Center (PA/MA AETC). The center, funded by the Ryan White Comprehensive Care Act, provides clinical HIV/AIDS education and training programs for primary healthcare providers in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The program is headquartered in the Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology under the direction of Linda Frank, PhD, MSN, ACRN.

Among its many activities, the PA/MA AETC sponsored an update on the XIV International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain. The update, held on July 31, 2002, drew more than 75 healthcare professionals from the greater Pittsburgh area including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, social workers, and mental health workers.

Senior citizens throughout the Pittsburgh region can learn how to improve their health or stay in good shape by tuning in to a new radio program featuring healthcare professionals affiliated with the Center for Healthy Aging. The 20-minute radio segment, “Healthier Tomorrows,” airs on WEDO-AM 810 each Thursday from 2:30 to 2:50 p.m. as part of the Gary G. Varity Show. The center has currently scheduled guests for the program through the end of May. However, due to an overwhelming response from community partners, they are now planning to extend the show through the summer.

The National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities awarded a $6 million grant to the Center for Minority Health to establish a Center of Excellence designed to support community partnerships, outreach, research, and training needed to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities. The project, titled EXPORT Health, provides five years of core resources needed to support a multidisciplinary team of faculty scholars working in partnership with civic organizations, the faith community, and private business.

New Leadership at GSPH

Dean Goldstein recently announced two significant changes in leadership at GSPH:

• Meryl Karol, PhD, professor of environmental and occupational health, is the new associate dean for academic affairs. She replaces Carol Redmond, ScD, Distinguished Service Professor of Public Health in the Department of Biostatistics, who has stepped down as after five years of service in the dean’s office.

• Roberta Ness, MD, PhD, professor of epidemiology, is the new associate dean for research. In this capacity, she will develop a number of support structures for faculty research and training initiatives. All three faculty members will continue to pursue their prior teaching and research activities at GSPH within their respective departments.

Heather M. Kolonits, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Biostatistics, was appointed to the newly created position of associate dean for research. She replaces Carol Redmond, ScD, Distinguished Service Professor of Public Health, who has stepped down as after five years of service in the dean’s office.

The Pennsylvania & Ohio Public Health Training Center presented a workshop titled “Bringing the World to Your Agency,” which presented strategies to public health professionals on accessing information effectively via the Web, satellite, and interactive television. The workshop combined formal presentations with hands-on practice and individual consultation. Sixteen participants from Pennsylvania and Ohio took part in the workshop, which was held at Pitt’s Alumni Hall on July 16 and 17, 2002.

Photos above: Sixteen public health professionals took part in the workshop “Bringing the World to Your Agency,” sponsored by the Pennsylvania and Ohio Public Health Training Center.

The Center for Public Health Practice cosponsored the 2002 Allegheny County Health Department seminar “New Things” in October 2002. Nearly 300 staff of the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) and GSPH attended the seminar, which focused on new developments in local public health practice. Topics included the Three Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Project, Realtime Outbreak and Disease Surveillance (RODS) and Emergency Preparedness, Public Health Practice (presented by Margaret A. Potter, JD, MS) and the Mobilizing Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) Strategic Planning Process.

The Center for Public Health Practice cosponsored the 2002 Allegheny County Health Department seminar “New Things” in October 2002. Nearly 300 staff of the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) and GSPH attended the seminar, which focused on new developments in local public health practice. Topics included the Three Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Project, Realtime Outbreak and Disease Surveillance (RODS) and Emergency Preparedness, Public Health Practice (presented by Margaret A. Potter, JD, MS) and the Mobilizing Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) Strategic Planning Process.
2000s

Tadao Okada, MD, MPH '02, has accepted a position as interim chief of the Department of Family Medicine at Kameda Medical Center in Kamogawa, Japan, and is serving as the residency director in family medicine at the center. Kameda Medical Center is home to one of only three family medicine training programs in Japan.

1990s

C. Lu Conser, MPH '93, has been named director of grants at the Carlisle Area Health & Wellness Foundation in Carlisle, Pa. The foundation was established in June 2001 to identify and address healthcare needs and policies, promote responsible health practice, and enhance access to and delivery of health services in the Carlisle area.

Stuart Gitlow, MD, MPH '91, of Woomerocket, R.I., was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the American Society of Addiction Medicine. The society is dedicated to educating physicians and improving the treatment of individuals suffering from alcoholism and other addictions.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson named 13 doctors, physicians and improving the treatment of individuals suffering from alcoholism and other addictions.

1970s

Gerald Barron, MPH '71, has been elected president of the Pennsylvania Public Health Association. He will officially take on this new role in October. Barron is deputy director for operations of the Allegheny County Health Department, adjunct associate professor of public health practice at GSPH, and codirector for leadership preparedness at the University of Pittsburgh Center for Public Health Preparedness.

James C. Cook, MPH '79, of Johnstown, Pa., has been elected chair of the board of the Pennsylvania Association of Rehabilitation Facilities for 2003. The association represents medical rehabilitation hospitals and outpatient clinics, as well as vocational and residential programs for persons with disabilities related to mental health or mental retardation.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation awarded Janine Jagger, MPH '74, a 2002 MacArthur Fellowship Grant, also dubbed MacArthur “genius grants.” This program awards five-year fellowship grants to individuals who demonstrate exceptional merit and show potential to make future creative contributions in their fields. Jagger is one of 24 new fellows and will receive $500,000 in unrestricted support during the next five years. She is founder and director of the International Health Care Worker Safety Center at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. (See page 20 for a profile of Jagger.)

Michelle Jones, MPH '79, has recently been appointed to the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee in the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. Jones is also executive director of Guthrie’s same-day surgery center.

1960s

Ronald L. Kathren, MSHyg '62, of Richland, Wash., retired as professor and director of the U.S. Transuranium and Uranium Registries (USTUR) and has been appointed professor emeritus. The USTUR is operated by the Washington State University College of Pharmacy and Nuclear Radiation Center and is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Health Studies.

Diane Peterson

Two GSPH Grads Receive Public Health Excellence Awards

The Pennsylvania Public Health Association (PPHA) presented Public Health Excellence Awards to David Piposzar, MPH '97, and John Domzalski, MPH '81, at the association’s annual meeting on October 22, 2002.

Domzalski, commissioner of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, received this award in recognition of more than 30 years of service as a public health professional and leader in his field. He has served in a number of prominent public health roles during his career, including deputy commissioner for public health services, director of correctional health, and district health director. Since 1996, he has served as a member of the City of Philadelphia Emergency Management Planning Group and has been an early advocate of bioterrorism preparedness. In addition to his MPH, Domzalski holds a JD from Temple University.

Piposzar, recently named director of the University of Pittsburgh Center for Public Health Preparedness (UPCPHP), was recognized for his leadership in mobilizing community partnerships and for his work in identifying and solving health problems. He joined UPCPHP after a 28-year career with the Allegheny County Health Department, where he managed environmental and public health programs and public health preparedness activities. For the past several years, he has developed and delivered training programs on bioterrorism and public health preparedness to emergency medical personnel throughout the state.

PPHA presents Public Health Excellence Awards to Pennsylvanians who exemplify excellence in public health policy or practice. Susan M. Myers, MPH '97, of the GSPH Center for Minority Health, chaired this year’s awards committee, and Karen S. Peterson, MPH '70, served on the committee.
In Memoriam

John Cutler

John Cutler, MD, MPH, professor emeritus in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, died February 8, 2003, of pneumonia following a heart attack. Cutler, a resident of Point Breeze, Pa., was 87 years old.

Cutler’s distinguished and influential career in public health began when he graduated from Case Western Reserve University Medical School in 1941 with a Phi Beta Kappa key. Soon after, he joined the Public Health Service as a commissioned officer, remaining active until 1967. During World War II, he served as a medical officer on convoy duty in the Coast Guard, and in 1943 worked as a medical officer in the U.S. Public Health Venerable Disease Research Laboratory in Staten Island, N.Y. He worked for the Allegheny County Health Department, organizing the final polio vaccination program in the Hill District, and went on to become an assistant and then deputy director of what later became the Pan American Health Organization in Washington, D.C.

He returned to Pittsburgh permanently in 1967 when the University of Pittsburgh recruited him to head the population division of GSPH as professor of international health. He served as chair of the Department of Health Services Administration and was acting dean of GSPH in 1968 and 1969. Cutler was instrumental in procuring funds for a major international health project in West Africa and in organizing a program that enabled obstetricians and gynecologists from Third World countries to train in reproductive health technology in the United States. He was particularly interested in the international arena, helping to develop a joint program with the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs. He also actively promoted the recruitment of foreign students by GSPH, greatly adding to the school’s reputation abroad.

As a member of the faculty of health services administration, Cutler was especially noted for his work in developing research and curriculum in the areas of venereal disease control and population management. A memorial fund has been established at GSPH to commemorate Cutler’s contributions to public health. To make a contribution, or for more information, please contact Karen Crenshaw at 412-624-5639 or crenshaw@gsph.pitt.edu.

It’s not too late to get in on the ground floor of a movement to revitalize the GSPH Alumni Society. In fact, Michael D. Shankle, MPH ’96, says it’s a great time.

Since last summer, a growing corps of alumni and faculty have been working to strengthen the connection between GSPH and its grads by creating pathways for alumni to become more involved with the school’s continued success.

“Shaping a National Agenda on the Environment and the Aging”
Pennsylvania Room, Pittsburgh Athletic Association, Pittsburgh
Contact: Elizabeth Kim, 412-624-3081 or ekim@gsphlean.gsph.pitt.edu

April 23, 2003
Environmental Protection Agency
Town Meeting, 2 p.m.
Contact: John Pack, 412-232-2788
Pittsburgh Athletic Association, Pittsburgh
Contact: Karen Gudmundson, 412-624-5200 or kgudmundson@gsph.pitt.edu

April 26, 2003
Annual Alumni Dinner,
4 p.m. cash bar; 5 p.m. dinner
Pittsburgh Athletic Association, Pittsburgh
Contact: Diane Kline, 412-624-5200 or dkline@gsphlean.gsph.pitt.edu

April 27, 2003
GSPH Convocation, 4:30 p.m. lineups; 5 p.m. start of program
IBEW Conference Center, 5 Hot Metal Street, Pittsburgh (South Side)
Contact: Diane Kline, 412-624-5200 or dkline@gsphlean.gsph.pitt.edu

May 15, 2003
Jay L. Foster Memorial Lecture Series
in Alzheimer’s Disease
Mary Gangal, MD, MPH, professor of psychiatry and epidemiology, University of Pittsburgh
Community Lecture, 1 p.m.
IBEW Conference Center, 5 Hot Metal Street, Pittsburgh (South Side)
Contact: Elizabeth Kim, 412-624-3081 or ekim@gsphlean.gsph.pitt.edu

May 17, 2003
GSPH Alumni Society President Michael D. Shankle (left) and Dean Bernard D. Goldstein have made the revitalization of the GSPH Alumni Society a top priority for themselves and the school.

For more information on becoming involved, contact alumni coordinator Susan Carr at 412-624-1294 or scarr@gsphlean.gsph.pitt.edu.
Attention Alumni!

It just became easier and cheaper to continue your education at GSPH! We will now waive the application fee for any GSPH alum who enrolls as a nondegree student.

SO TAKE ADVANTAGE!

Brush up with courses in your field, or explore our new courses in global health or public health preparedness and disaster response.

Contact the Office of Student Affairs for more information.
Phone: 412-624-5200
Fax: 412-624-3755
stuaff@gsphdean.gsph.pitt.edu