

SPM NEWS

Department of Social & Preventive Medicine

*School of Public Health and Health Professions
State University of New York at Buffalo
<http://phhp.buffalo.edu/spm>*

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Marcia Wopperer, editor

The Director's Corner

We are happy to announce that Jo Freudenheim, Ph.D. has been appointed Chair of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine. Dr. Freudenheim is nationally and internationally recognized for her work in nutritional and cancer epidemiology, particularly breast cancer, molecular epidemiology and genetic susceptibility. Dr. Freudenheim joined the Department in 1987 as a postdoctoral fellow in cancer epidemiology and was appointed assistant professor in 1988, associate professor in 1993 and full professor in 1998. She has served in the leadership roles of associate chair from 2001-2003 and interim chair from 2003 until present. In 2004 Dr. Freudenheim was awarded the title of University at Buffalo Distinguished Professor. She also received the 2005 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Research and Scholarship for having received over two million dollars of grant funding during the year. The department faculty and staff enthusiastically support and look forward to working with her as we continue to strive for excellence in both our graduate and research programs.

As part of Jo's new tenure as chair, there will be several very important initiatives. One of these will be the hiring of several new faculty members to the department. Posting of new positions will start soon. Further, we will be making a strong effort to do more to recruit students to the graduate program—many people find out about our programs through word of mouth in very accidental circumstances. While that method is terrific, we want to get the word out to more people about the kind of training that is available here. We will be looking to everyone affiliated with the department—faculty, students and alumni—to help both in identifying possible candidates for faculty positions and in helping us publicize the graduate programs.

The School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP) has initiated the process to gain accreditation as a school of public health by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). The Council on Education for Public Health is the independent agency recognized to accredit graduate schools of public health.

During the summer of 2005, the School had a successful pre-accreditation site visit by CEPH's executive director. Alison Garvey has joined the Dean's Office to coordinate the accreditation effort. An application letter stating our intention to begin the accreditation process will be submitted to CEPH during the Spring 2006 semester. We hope that the application letter will be approved by CEPH this summer. When approved, the School of Public Health and Health Professions will begin the self-study. The purpose of the analytical self-study document is to describe how the School will meet the CEPH accreditation criteria for a school of public health and achieve the School's core public health curricular competencies. Once the self-study is completed, it is submitted to CEPH and the accreditation status is determined. This is yet another important step in the development of the new school.

- Carl Li, M.D., M.P.H.

2006 Congress of Epidemiology

The American College of Epidemiology, the American Public Health Association Epidemiology Section and the Society of Epidemiologic Research are jointly sponsoring the 2006 Congress of Epidemiology from June 21-24 in Seattle, WA. Pre-meeting workshops, special events for students and 1000 poster presentations will be presented. Information regarding the preliminary program, workshops and registration can be found at <http://www.epicongress2006.org>.

American Public Health Association

Mark your calendars!!!! The 134th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association will be held November 4-8 in Boston, MA. The theme of the meeting will be "Public Health and Human Rights." For more information visit the web at <http://www.apha.org/meetings>.

Honors and Awards



Joan Dorn, Ph.D. received the 2005 *Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award* from the School of Public Health and Health Professions.



Dr. Dorn was also nominated to the 2005 *Williamsville Wall of Fame*. The Wall of Fame is a partnership project between the three district high schools to recognize distinguished alumni who have excelled in their careers, made outstanding contributions to humanity, and/or distinguished themselves in service to their community or profession.



Gary Giovino, Ph.D. was awarded the 2006 *Joseph Cullen Memorial Award* from the American Society of Preventive Oncology honoring his work in tobacco research.



Jean Wactawski-Wende, Ph.D. received the 2005 *Outstanding Researcher of the Year Award* from the School of Public Health and Health Professions.

Faculty/Student Research

Qiang Li is principal investigator for a one-year \$30,000 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant entitled "*Cigarette Tax Avoidance Behavior and Cessation Analyses in Disparate Populations.*" The primary goal of the project is to examine cigarette tax avoidance behaviors in disparate population subgroups and how these behaviors affect cessation. This grant is a supplement to Dr. **Andrew Hyland's** grant entitled "*Low/Untaxed Cigarettes: Who Uses Them? Does it Decrease Cessation? How Much Does it Cost Taxpayers?*"

Amy Millen, Ph.D. received a two-year, \$119,998 Breast Cancer Postdoctoral Fellowship Award from the Health Research Science Board of New York State. The grant entitled "*Vitamin D and Breast Cancer: An Epidemiologic Approach*" will investigate associations between risk of breast cancer and exposure to vitamin D using data from the WHI Observational Study and the New York Exposures in Breast Cancer (WEB) Case-Control Study. Prospective associations between incident breast cancer and study center latitude and annual solar radiation exposure, as proxy measures for an individual's vitamin D exposure, will be investigated using data from the WHI-OS. The WEB study provides an important opportunity to measure associations between prevalent breast cancer and polymorphisms of the vitamin D receptor (VDR) which may alter the stability and function of the receptor and thus an individual's exposure to this vitamin at the cellular level. **Jo Freudenheim**, Ph.D. will serve as the Primary Fellowship Sponsor.

Faculty/Student Presentations

Pavani Ram, M.D. presented a paper entitled *"Household Water Disinfection in Hurricane-Affected Communities of Louisiana: Implications for Disaster Preparedness for the General Public"* at the conference on Water Contamination Events: Communication with Consumers hosted by the Institute for Public Health and Water Research in Houston, TX on January 31.

Saverio Stranges, Ph.D. will present a poster entitled *"Lifetime Cumulative Exposure to Secondhand Smoke is Associated With an Increased Risk of Myocardial Infarction in Never Smokers: A Population-Based Case-Control Study"* at the 46th Annual Conference on Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention in association with the Council on Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Metabolism to be held in Phoenix, AZ, March 2-5. Saverio's abstract has been selected, as a poster, among five finalists for the Sandra Daugherty Award for Excellence in Cardiovascular Disease or Hypertension Epidemiology.

Jun Yang, Ph.D. ('02) presented a poster entitled *"Prognostic Significance of MCM2, Ki67 and Gelsolin in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer"* at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Special Conference on New Developments in the Epidemiology of Cancer Prognosis: Traditional and Molecular Predictors of Treatment Response and Therapy held in Charleston, SC, January 11-15. Jun received a Scholar-in-Training Award to attend this conference.

News and Notes

Christine Ambrosone, Ph.D. was chair of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Special Conference on *"New Developments in the Epidemiology of Cancer Prognosis: Traditional and Molecular Predictors of Treatment Response and Survival"* held in Charleston, SC, January 11-15. Dr. Ambrosone was also recently appointed senior editor (Epidemiology) for the Journal of Cancer Research.

Margaret Eberl, M.D., M.P.H. passed the General Preventive Medicine Board Exam in November 2005.

Dennis Horrigan, M.S. ('81) was appointed president and CEO of The Catholic Independent Practice Association (IPA).

June 2005 Graduates

The following students successfully completed all degree requirements established by the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine and the University at Buffalo for February 2006 degree conferral. Congratulations!

M.P.H.

Stephanie Coleman, *"Using Electronic Medical Record Prompting Interventions to Increase Immunization Coverage."* Mentors include Drs. Dennis Bertram and Carl Li.

Leah Guhde, *"A Review of the Efficacy of School-Based Programs for the Prevention of Childhood Obesity."* Mentors include Drs. Joan Dorn and Dennis Bertram. Leah has accepted a position as statistician at SUNY College/Brockport.

Christine Murekeyisoni, *"Obesity Among African-American School-Aged Children."* Mentors include Drs. Joan Dorn and Carl Li. Christine is a research analyst in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine.

Kenneth Piazza, M.D., *"A Multivariate Analysis of the Association Between Increased Asthma Morbidity and Environmental Exposures in Western New York Elementary School Children."* Mentors include Drs. Dennis Bertram and William Scheider.

Amy Sonricker, *“Using Avian Species-Specific Mortality in Predicting Human Cases of West Nile Virus in New York City.”* Mentors include Drs. Carl Li, Dennis Bertram and Jacques Berlin. Amy is a research assistant – REDs Research at the American Red Cross – New England Region.

Laura Stevens, *“Worksite Interventions for Reduction of Weight and Cardiovascular Disease Risk.”* Mentors include Drs. Dennis Bertram and Carl Li. Laura is currently a data manager at Frontier Science and Technology in Amherst, NY.

Ph.D. in Epidemiology and Community Health

Brian Wrotniak, M.S., *“The Relationship Between Motor Coordination and Physical Activity in Children.”* Mentors include: Drs. Joan Dorn (major), Leonard Epstein and James Roemmich. Brian is an assistant professor at D’Youville College, and research assistant professor in the Division of Behavioral Medicine at the University of Buffalo.