

# SPM NEWS

## Department of Social & Preventive Medicine

School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP)

State University of New York at Buffalo

<http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/spm>



June 2012

Marcia Wopperer, editor

### *In Memorium*

**Saxon Graham**, Ph.D., professor emeritus, and chair of the Department of SPM from 1981-1991, passed away on May 19. He was 90 years old. This is a loss to all of us here in Buffalo and to the greater epidemiology community as well. Dr. Graham was a remarkable leader, providing inspiration with his scientific insight and personal warmth. He leaves behind a tremendous legacy of research, of mentorship, and of vision for epidemiology and public health.

Dr. Graham has been cited as one of the fathers of chronic disease epidemiology in this country, with particular emphasis on the role of diet in the etiology and prevention of cancer. His numerous publications are widely cited and continue to remain historical landmarks in the field of nutritional epidemiology. America's fascination with the long-term health effects of diet has been shaped, in significant measure, by the work of Dr. Graham. He was among the first American researchers to focus on links between diet and the etiology and prevention of cancer.

A native of Buffalo, Dr. Graham first came to UB in the mid-1940's for his post-baccalaureate studies after earning an A.B. in history and English from Amherst College. After completing master's and doctoral degrees in sociology at Yale University, he returned to Buffalo in 1956 to teach and carry out his research as a sociologist of medicine. He joined Roswell Park Memorial Institute as director of Community Epidemiological Studies in the Department of Statistics and Epidemiology Research. He was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health, UB School of Medicine, from 1956-66; professor in the Departments of Sociology and SPM in 1966, and chair of SPM in 1981. He served as Director of the Doctoral Program in Medical Sociology. His tenure includes service on numerous editorial boards; national research advisory boards, committees and study sections in addition to several international scientific boards.

By the time of his retirement in 1991, he enjoyed a worldwide reputation as a leading authority on the broad subject of cancer and diet. In addition to the public health implications of his work, Dr. Graham's research and professional service represent immense achievement. Dr. Graham's work continues to bring global recognition to UB's endeavors in the health sciences, and his ongoing commitment to both students and colleagues is an enormous asset to the university. The University at Buffalo is privileged to honor Dr. Saxon Graham by conferring on him the 1996 University at Buffalo Honorary Doctorate in Science.

The Department of SPM continues to honor Dr. Graham by conferring two annual awards in his honor, the *Saxon Graham Award* for overall excellence in epidemiology, and the *Saxon Graham Research Award* which provides funds to support research toward the completion of the doctoral dissertation. The awards are presented at the annual Saxon Graham lecture which features a talk given by a distinguished speaker, a leader in epidemiology.

### *The Director's Corner*

The School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP) commencement was held on Saturday, May 12 at the Center for the Arts. Nirav Shah, M.D., M.P.H., New York State Commissioner of Health, served as commencement speaker. Three M.S. and 13 M.P.H. students were included in the roster for degree conferral. Congratulations to our graduates and best wishes for their future endeavors!

The University at Buffalo, under the purview of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School, will conduct a Comprehensive Program Review of the Department of SPM. Two outside reviewers will visit the department on October 1 and 2. The department will prepare a self-study document detailing its accomplishments of the past five years including its strengths, weaknesses, and goals for the future. As part of the


evaluation, the reviewers will meet with the SPHP dean, the dean of the Graduate School, SPM faculty and several SPM students. Their task is to provide the university with an evaluation of the department and its programs, and to make recommendations which assist the department in achieving its goal of excellence in teaching, research and service.


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


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## Honors and Awards


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 **Mark Glasgow**, M.P.H., received the *Robert O'Shea Travel Award* which will provide travel funds to present his research, "Smartphone Technology for Improving Air Pollution Exposure Estimates," at the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Society for Epidemiologic Research.

 **Yanli Li**, B.Med., is the 2012 recipient of the *Saxon Graham Research Award* for her proposal entitled "Measurement of Serum Chemokines in Response to Dramatic Change of Particulate Air Pollutants During the Beijing Olympics." The award will provide funds to help offset the cost of the chemokine assays she has planned related to her dissertation work.

 **Amy Millen**, Ph.D., received the SPHP *Outstanding Junior Researcher of the Year Award*. The award was presented at the School's annual meeting held on May 2.

 **Xuefeng Ren**, Ph.D., is the recipient of the *Society of Toxicology's 2012 Best Postdoctoral Publication Award* for his research "Involvement of N-6 Adenine-Specific DNA Methyltransferase 1 (N6AMT1) in Arsenic Biomethylation and Its Role in Arsenic-Induced Toxicity."

 **William Scheider**, Ph.D., received the Clean Air Coalition's *2012 Golden Gas Mask Award* for his exceptional contributions to the Coalition in reducing air pollution in Western New York.

 **John Violanti**, Ph.D., received honorable mention for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health 2012 *Alice Hamilton Award*. The award was received in recognition of a paper he co-authored, "Shift Work Duration and the Awakening Cortisol Response" published in the journal *Chronobiology International*.

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## Faculty/Student Presentations

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**Mark Glasgow**, M.P.H., will present a poster entitled "Smartphone Technology for Improving Air Pollution Exposure Estimates" at the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Society for Epidemiologic Research. The meeting will be held June 27-30 in Minneapolis.

**Henry Lin** presented a poster entitled "Socioeconomic Status, Food Reinforcement and Obesity" at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting and Scientific Sessions of the Society of Behavioral Medicine held April 11-14 in New Orleans.

**Xuefeng Ren**, Ph.D., presented a paper entitled "Involvement of N-6 Adenine-Specific DNA Methyltransferase 1 (N6AMT1) in Arsenic Biomethylation and Its Role in Arsenic-Induced Toxicity" at the Society of Toxicology's 51st Annual Meeting held March 11-15 in San Francisco.

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## Faculty/Student Research

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**Michael LaMonte**, Ph.D., was awarded a four-year subcontract from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center entitled "Objective Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Health in Women Aged 80 and Older." The subcontract, funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, will obtain objective measures of physical activity and relate those measured with the incidence of cardiovascular disease endpoints and other outcomes relevant to older postmenopausal women. Dr. LaMonte was also awarded a two year grant entitled "Metabolic Syndrome and Periodontitis in Postmenopausal Women" from the National Institute on Dental and Craniofacial Research. The study which will examine the relationship between metabolic factors and periodontal disease progression in older women enrolled in the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) at the Buffalo Center. Co-investigators include Drs. **Jean Wactawski-Wende**, Richard Browne, Robert Genco and Christopher Andrews.

**Amy Millen**, Ph.D., is principal investigator for a three-year \$803,816 grant from the NIH National Institute on Aging (NIA) entitled "The Role of Vitamin D in Retinal Diseases in Aging." The study will use data from the population-based Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) longitudinal cohort study of aging African American and Caucasian men and women to study the association between vitamin D status and prevalent diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration (AMD). She and her co-investigators, Drs. **Michael LaMonte** and Christopher Andrews, will examine for the first time the association between vitamin D status and incidence or progression of AMD.

**Pavani Ram**, M.D., received a one-year award from the World Bank for her project entitled "Analysis of Multi-Country Handwashing Data and Guidance on Handwashing Behavior Measures." The project will use pre-existing and new evidence to develop an enriched understanding of handwashing measures, and analyze country-specific data on handwashing behavior measures. Dr. Ram also received a one-year award from the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research for her project entitled "Development and Evaluation of Perinatal Handwashing Promotion for Improved Maternal Handwashing Behavior." She will develop the study

design, guide development of the intervention, consent forms and data collection tools, oversee data analysis, and interpret the findings in the context of global health.

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## News and Notes

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**Matthew Bonner**, Ph.D., has been promoted to associate professor in the Department of SPM.

**Kristina Young**, M.S., and Harry Sultz, D.D.S. were awarded a contract with Jones Bartlett Publishers for the 8th edition of their textbook, Health Care USA, Understanding Its Organization and Delivery. The release is planned for summer 2013. Over the years, this text has been adopted as the primary text in over 250 colleges and universities throughout the U.S. in courses ranging across the disciplines of medicine, nursing, allied health professions, pharmacy, management and law. It continues to remain a "national best-seller."

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## Alumni News

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**Priyanka Dua**, M.P.H., has accepted a position as research analyst in Healthcare Informatics at Independent Health, effective May 21.

**Priyanka Dua**, and **Karen Morris** have passed the Certified in Public Health exam conducted by the National Board of Public Health Examiners. The exam was held in February 2012. Previous successful graduates include: **Michael Amato**, **Katherine Dobson Amato**, **Mark Glasgow** and **David Nichols**.

**Karen Sereeday**, M.S. ('10), received an Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) Fellowship at the CDC.

**Nicoleta Voian**, M.D., M.P.H. ('09), successfully completed the American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM) certifying examination.

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## Preventive Medicine Residency Program

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**Joel Beatty**, M.D., will complete his Preventive Medicine Residency Program on June 30. Joel plans to practice as a primary care physician in Buffalo and pursue administrative work on projects that aim to improve value for health consumers.

**Rashmi Bismark**, M.D., has been named chief resident for Preventive Medicine for 2012-2013.

**Dhanashri Kohok**, M.B.B.S., will complete the Internal Medicine/Preventive Medicine Residency Program on June 30. Dhanashari has accepted a position as hospitalist at Ball Memorial Hospital in Muncie, IN.

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## SPM Graduates: June 2012

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The following students successfully completed all degree requirements established by the Department of SPM and the University at Buffalo for February 1 and June 1, 2012 degree conferral. Congratulations to our graduates!

### M.S. Epidemiology

**Thomas Sheehan**, J.D., "*Exposure to Ambient Carbon Monoxide and Risk of Low Birth Weight in Western Washington State.*" Committee members include Drs. Carole Rudra (major), Jean Wactawski-Wende and Lina Mu. Tom is a partner at, and in the litigation group of, Phillips Lytle LLP in Buffalo.

### M.P.H. Epidemiology

**Tonya Carr**, "*Tuberculosis in Institutionalized Populations: A Public Health Challenge.*" Committee members include Drs. Carl Li (major) and Dennis Bertram.

**Ayesha Khan**, "*Understanding Associations Between Age of First Drink, Problematic Drinking, Adherence to Rape Myths and Sexual Aggression Among Freshman Students at the University at Buffalo.*" Committee members include Drs. William Scheider (major) and Sherri Darrow.

**Dhanashari Kohok**, M.B.B.S., "*Prevalence of Metabolic Syndrome in Breast Cancer.*" Committee members include Drs. Jo Freudenheim (major) and Carl Li.

**Lavanya Krishnan**, "*Inflammation as a Mechanism for the Association of Obesity and Colon Cancer.*" Committee members include Drs. Heather Ochs-Balcom (major) and Jo Freudenheim.

**Caila Vaughn**, "*Insulin-Like Growth Factor Biomarkers and Adenomatous Polyp Risk in Caucasians and African Americans.*" Committee members include Drs. Heather Ochs-Balcom (major) and Amy Millen. Caila will continue her graduate studies in the Ph.D. in Epidemiology Program in the Department of SPM.

**Marielle Wiede**, "*Global Prevalence of Continued Feeding During Diarrheal Episodes in Children Under Five Years of Age, and Correlates of Continued Feeding in Kenya, 2008.*" Committee members include Drs. Pavani Ram (major) and Amy Millen.

M.P.H. Environmental Health

**Joel Merriman**, *“Use of Cell Phone-Based Time-Activity Data for Air Pollution Exposure Estimation.”* Committee members include Drs. Lina Mu (major) and Matthew Bonner. Joel has accepted a position in Health and Safety at Ecology and Environment, Inc.

M.P.H. Health Services

**Sarah Ackroyd**, *“Evaluating the Impact of a Certified Diabetes Educator in a Patient-Centered Medical Home.”* Committee members include Drs. Carl Li (major) and Linda Kahn. Sarah will begin medical school this Fall at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry.

**Kathleen Dolan**, *“Fall Prevention and Canopy of Neighbors: Home Safety Assessment, Modification and Other Interventions to Keep Older Adults Aging in Place.”* Committee members include Dr. Carl Li (major) and Professor Anthony Szczygiel. Kathleen is an attorney at Ricotta and Visco, Attorneys and Counselors at Law.

**Vera Dovirak**, *“Comparing Rates of Lower Extremity Amputations in a Sample of Local Medicare Population With Diabetes to Other Geographic Regions and Exploring Non-Biological Risk Factors That May be Associated With It.”* Committee members include Dr. Carl Li (major) and Professor Kristina Young.

**Karen Morris**, *“Using Texting-While-Driving Performance Feedback to Change Texting-While-Driving Attitudes and Behavior.”* Committee members include Drs. Carl Li (major) and Gregory Fabiano. Karen is a project coordinator at the Research Foundation, University at Buffalo.

M.B.A./M.P.H. Health Services

**Joel Beatty**, M.D., *“Using Alternative Statistical Formats for Presenting Risks and Risk Reductions.”* Committee members include Drs. Carl Li (major) and Elie Akl.