

PITT iiii PUBLIC HEALTH

HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Newsletter



SPRING 2015

- Mark Roberts Named Director of Public Health Dynamics Laboratory
- Introducing Missy Deasy
- Health Policy and Management Students Give Back
- Mid-year Graduation Celebration





Spring greetings to all of our alumni and colleagues. As many of you know, I had been quite ill over the summer, but am happy to report that I am back at work and nearly back to full strength. There are a series of exciting things happening in the department, and this issue of the newsletter will inform you about many of these activities. We continue to expand our faculty and welcome John Grefenstette, PhD, formally of the Department

of Biostatistics, and Marian Jarlenski, PhD, MPH, who joins us after receiving her PhD from Johns Hopkins University—details are on page 3. In our ongoing efforts to expand our educational programs, we started accepting students into our new MS degree in health services research and policy and continue to work with the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business to offer a joint MHA/MBA degree, which we now expect to have for fall of 2016. Details on our classes and the expansion of the MPH curriculum can be found on page 4. Additionally, we have enhanced our MPH program with the appointment of Karen Hacker, MD, MPH, the newly appointed director of the Allegheny County Health Department, as the inaugural Public Health Leader in Residence. We also have added new staff and we especially need to note the hiring of Missy Deasy as the new program administrator for the MHA, MPH, and JD/MPH programs.

Our students continue to excel. Data describing our summer residencies and practica demonstrate outstanding placements, and we highlight some outstanding student achievements on pages 6 and 9.

We continue to expand our health services research activities, adding several new grants to our portfolio of funded research detailed on page 10. Of special note, we have started conducting research for the Pennsylvania Department of Health under a contract developed through the University of Pittsburgh Health Policy Institute, investigating a host of issues for Pennsylvania Medicaid and other public health issues. Furthermore, we continue to publish our research results in high-quality publications, summarized again on page 10.

Finally, I would like for all of us to welcome Mike Evans as the newly appointed president of the department’s alumni association.

Please keep in touch and let us know what you are doing—and we are always open to suggestions regarding improving the department.

Mark S. Roberts, MD, MPP
Professor and Chair
Department of Health Policy and Management

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On cover:
Mark Roberts presents Alyssa Landen (MPH) with a program completion certificate at our mid-year graduation celebration.

DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW FACULTY

The Department of Health Policy and Management recently added two new faculty members who represent a range of important additions to the faculty.

John J. Grefenstette

We are pleased to announce that John J. Grefenstette, PhD, has been appointed professor of Health Policy and Management in the Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh. Grefenstette was the inaugural director of the Public Health Dynamics Laboratory (PHDL) at the University of Pittsburgh and previously served as professor and chair of the Department of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology and assistant dean of the School of Computational Sciences at George Mason University and as head of the Machine Learning section at the Navy Center for Applied Research in Artificial Intelligence at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory.

Grefenstette received his BS in mathematics and philosophy from Carnegie Mellon University and his PhD in computer science from the University of Pittsburgh. In 2010, Grefenstette was honored with the Evolutionary Computation Pioneer Award from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics



Grefenstette

Engineers (IEEE) Computational Intelligence Society.

Grefenstette’s research activities span many areas on the boundary between computation and biology, including modeling and simulation of infectious diseases, public health databases, data mining, evolutionary algorithms, machine learning, computational models of biological networks, and high-performance computing applications to public health. Grefenstette was the founding associate editor for the journal *Evolutionary Computation*, serves on the editorial board for the journal *Adaptive Behavior*, and has been associate editor for the journal *Machine Learning*. Grefenstette’s major projects currently include serving as senior scientist at PHDL; the National Center of Excellence for Models of Infectious Diseases Agent Study (MIDAS), funded by National Institutes of Health/National Institute of General Medical Sciences; and the Vaccine Modeling Initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Marian Jarlenski

The department welcomed Marian Jarlenski, PhD, MPH, as a new faculty member this fall. Jarlenski comes to the department from the John Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, where she earned her PhD in health policy and management. She has extensive experience working in Washington, D.C., where she worked for organizations such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the Kaiser Family Foundation.



Jarlenski

Jarlenski’s time in Washington, D.C., galvanized her interest in conducting her own research to impact policy and ultimately to improve the public’s health. The opportunity to “collaborate with researchers in the Graduate School of Public Health and the health sciences” was one reason Jarlenski cited for accepting a faculty appointment at the University of Pittsburgh. Currently, she is collaborating on projects with the Health Policy Institute and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regarding Medicaid expansion and issues of cost, quality, and efficiency.

Jarlenski plans to teach courses on health policy and politics and maternal and child health and looks forward to mentoring students in the department.

KAREN HACKER NAMED PUBLIC HEALTH LEADER IN RESIDENCE

This fall marks the beginning of the Public Health Leader in Residence program, which was created to provide greater opportunities to MPH students within the Department of Health Policy and Management (HPM). Similar to the Executive in Residence for the MHA program, the Leader in Residence will give MPH students a real-world contact to discuss career development and competencies needed for success as leaders in public health.

The department is thrilled that Karen Hacker, MD, MPH, director of the Allegheny County Health Department, will be the first Public Health Leader in Residence. Hacker has extensive experience in both community and government public health and is currently an adjunct professor in health policy and management. She will serve both as a role model and point of contact as students develop their leadership and professional identities during their time in HPM.



Deasy

COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION OF HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION (CAHME) UPDATE

We are pleased to announce that in May 2014, CAHME granted our MHA program full reaccreditation for seven years, through 2020–21. This status reflects the productive achievements of our faculty in teaching, research, and professional service; the competencies and academic performance of our students and the program's record of management residency placements; and postgraduate employment and administrative fellowships.

HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT (HPM) STUDENT ENROLLMENT

As of the beginning of the 2014 fall term, HPM experienced the largest student enrollment in the history of the department, with an overall total of 85 master's students (47 MHA, 37 MPH, one MS), 12 doctoral students, and 17 certificate students (12 HSE, five HSL). Of this number, 11 students graduated in December 2014: eight MPH, one JD/MPH, and two MHA students. We have begun to process applications for our master's degree programs earlier than in years past and, based on our applicant volume

INTRODUCING MISSY DEASY

Missy Deasy joined the Department of Health Policy and Management in April 2014 as the program administrator for the MHA, MPH, and JD/MPH programs as well as the alumni coordinator for the department. She has been an employee at the University of Pittsburgh since 2002 and has provided administrative support for various schools, including the School of Law and the School of Medicine. Most recently, Deasy worked in the Division of General Internal Medicine as a student services coordinator for the degree-granting programs in clinical research and medical education. Deasy is looking forward to meeting all current students and alumni. In order to turn this goal into a reality, she has established a LinkedIn page for the department and encourages everyone to connect with us there. Please search for the group Health Policy and Management, Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh and send an invitation request. We are looking forward to our current students, faculty, staff, and alumni using this site as a communication tool. If you are in the area, please stop by and introduce yourself!

processed to date, we expect to enroll between 28 and 32 master's degree students for the 2015 fall term. We have consistently sought to maintain diversity across all of our master's degree programs based on factors of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic background, undergraduate major, and life experience.

EXCITING MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH) CURRICULUM OVERHAUL

Several changes were made in the department's MPH curriculum based on student feedback, curricular logic, and market considerations. The most significant has been restructuring the full-time MPH curriculum from three academic terms plus the summer term practicum to a five-term program. Full-time students who enter in the fall term, year one, will expect to graduate in the spring term, year three, along with the MHA cohort. This schedule will provide students a more reasonable time period for the development and completion of their master's essay projects. Two new courses also will be added to the MPH core: Public Health Systems: Legal, Economic, and Operational Foundations and Political Process and Health Policy Making.



Myriam Hunink presents Mark Roberts with the career achievement award at the 36th annual SMDM meeting.

ROBERTS NAMED AS DIRECTOR OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DYNAMICS LABORATORY

Mark Roberts, MD, MPP, professor and chair, Department of Health Policy and Management, was recently named the director of the Public Health Dynamics Laboratory (PHDL), an interdisciplinary activity at the Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh focused on the development of computational methods to improve the theory and practice of public health. The laboratory, initially developed by Graduate School of Public Health Dean Donald S. Burke and funded through several federal grants from the National Institutes of Health, contains substantial expertise in mathematical modeling and the simulation of diseases and epidemics. Roberts hopes to expand collaborations between PHDL and the department and to increase the use of modeling and simulation in health care research. Details can be found at phdl.pitt.edu.

ROBERTS RECEIVES CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Mark Roberts, MD, MPP, professor and chair, Department of Health Policy and Management, received the Career Achievement Award of the Society for Medical Decision Making (SMDM) on October 21 during its 36th Annual North American Meeting in Miami, Fla.

SMDM's members include scientists from a variety of disciplines including decision science, psychology, health economics, operations research, biostatistics, clinical epidemiology, and informatics. The award recognizes distinguished senior investigators who have made significant contributions to the field of medical decision making.

"I am very honored and humbled by this recognition," Roberts said. "This professional society built me into the researcher and academician I have become, and I am delighted and amazed to join a group of Career Achievement Award recipients that includes many of my teachers and mentors."

Roberts has been an active member of SMDM since 1984, served as its president from 2008 to 2009, and has held other leadership roles with the organization. He joined the faculty of the Pitt School of Medicine in 1993 and has held the chair of Pitt Public Health's Department of Health Policy and Management since 2010.

DEVELOPMENTS IN GLOBAL HEALTH FOCUS

Wes Rohrer, MBA, PhD, received funding from a U.S. Department of Education Title VI grant awarded to the University's Center for Global Health. The grant covers the development and offering of a course with a global health perspective at the graduate level open to upper-level undergraduates. This course, Comparative International Health Systems and Health Policy, will be initially offered in 2015–16 as an elective for both MPH and MHA students and students enrolled in the Global Health Certificate program.

Rohrer also is collaborating with colleagues at the College of Public Health and Health Informatics at King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Barb Folb, public health librarian/informationist, Health Sciences Library System University of Pittsburgh; and a team of doctoral and master's degree students in the department on a systematic review of literature relevant to road traffic accidents in the eastern Mediterranean and Gulf region. An abstract of this study has been accepted for presentation at the Seventh International Conference on Health Issues in Arab Communities, to be held in Muscat, Oman, in March 2015.

MINA KABIRI WINS LEE B. LUSTED STUDENT PRIZE

PhD student Mina Kabiri was awarded the Lee B. Lusted Student Prize for outstanding presentation of research at the annual Society of Medical Decision Making (SMDM) meeting this year. SMDM is an international transdisciplinary group that is committed to improving the health of individuals and populations through systematic proactive approaches used for decision making in health care. The Lee B. Lusted Student Prize is a prestigious award given for outstanding presentations of research to students in different disciplines. Kabiri's discipline was health services and policy research, and her abstract was titled "Making Hepatitis C a Rare Disease in the United States: Model-based Predictions."



Eva Harpst, Nikita Sharma, and Radhika Parekh volunteered with the Community Food Bank (McKeesport Center) this past fall.

HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS GIVE BACK, PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENTS

The Health Policy and Management Association (HPMA) serves as the governance body and representative of the master's degree students in the department. As a component of professional development, HPMA leadership has emphasized the importance of civic engagement and relevant community service along with planning social and recreational activities. These events also serve

as an interactive way for students to get to know one another beyond the classroom environment. HPMA continues to meet with program leadership to provide student input and perspectives on all aspects of the master's programs, including the curricula and student services.

HPMA kick-started this year with two successful volunteer events. The first volunteer event was to support Off

More than 700 families were directly affected by the food distribution at the Produce to People event.

the Floor Pittsburgh, a faith-based ecumenical nonprofit organization that provides donated

gently used and renovated furniture and household furnishings to disadvantaged individuals and families in housing transition. On an early

Saturday morning, a team of HPM students invested sweat equity in moving furniture from the

warehouse and delivering it to the recipients' apartments and homes. In early December, another group of HPMA volunteers served to staff the Off the Floor annual luncheon and auction, the primary fundraising event for the organization.

A dozen HPM students volunteered with Produce to People by serving at a direct food distribution site in McKeesport, Pa., sponsored by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Our students participated by interacting with the clients, dispensing and carrying 30-50 pounds of fresh produce and meat for each person or family in need. More than 700 families directly benefited from the food distribution at this event.



SUMMER 2014 RESIDENCIES AND PRACTICA

ORGANIZATION	PRECEPTOR(S)	STUDENTS	PROGRAM
Allegheny County Health Department	Jamie Sokol	Alyssa Landen	MPH
Allegheny County Department of Human Services	Sheila Bell	Annie Trostel	MPH
Allegheny County Department of Human Services	Casey Monroe	Michelle Sergent	MPH
Allegheny Health Network Patient Safety and Quality of Care	Diane Frndak	Varun Sharma	MHA
Allegheny Health Network West Penn Hospital	Melissa Kovtun	Elizabeth Nelson	MPH
Allegheny Health Network West Penn Hospital	Mark LaRosa	Monica Kohli	MPH
Boston Public Health Commission/Boston University	Mary Bovenzi	Hamdi Abdullahi	MPH
Consumer Health Coalition	Sally Jo Snyder	Alexandra Vastano	MPH
Emory Clinic	Kelli Gress	Marques Moore	MHA
Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development	Marisa Brown	Yasamin Rassuli	MPH
Jewish Association on Aging	Deborah Winn-Horvitz	Lisa Kessler	MPH
Jewish Healthcare Foundation	Nancy Zionts	Robert Ferguson	MPH
Pennsylvania Department of Health	Andrea Smith	Kirsten Lunn	MPH
UPMC	Patty Genday	Phylicia McCalla	MPH
UPMC CancerCenter Department of Radiation Oncology	Kelly Kassab	Margherita Sciuлло	MHA
UPMC Health Plan	John Lovelace	Jogs Singh	MHA
UPMC Passavant and UPMC St. Margaret	Donna Jasko David Patton	Brian Washburn	MHA
UPMC Physician Services Division Administration	Doug Harrison Rick Dabruzzo	Megan Suter	MHA
UPMC Physician Services Division Department of Surgery	Ed McQuade	Kola Omotade	MHA
UPMC Physician Services Division Department of Urology	Margaret Ealy	Olivia Cupelli	MHA
UPMC Presbyterian and UPMC Shadyside Hospital	Albert Wright	Amanda Johnson John Cadwalader	MHA
Washington Hospital	Gary Weinstein	Natalie Fisher	MHA

EXTENDED RESIDENCIES

ORGANIZATION	PRECEPTOR(S)	MHA STUDENT	PROGRAM
Allegheny Health Network Patient Safety and Quality of Care (part time)	Diane Frndak Mark LaRosa	Ashley Oates	MHA
Children's Institute of Pittsburgh	David Miles	Ranjit Makam	MHA
Gateway Health Plan Medicare and Strategic Planning	Austin Ifedirah	Kush Banerjee	MHA
UPMC East	Mark Sevco Keith Lorenz	Preston Allred	MHA
UPMC McKeesport Hospital	Cindy Dorundo Amy Bush	Caitlin Thayer	MHA
UPMC Physician Services Division Department of Medicine	Annamarie Lyons	Vincent Chiu	MHA
VA Healthcare VISN #4	Carla Sivek	Michael Aaronson	MHA
VA Pittsburgh Health System	Jo Petro	Kolby Parent	MHA



From left: Phylicia McCalla, Jessica Ton, Gerald Barron, Kirsten Lunn, Wesley Rohrer, Alyssa Landen, Mark Roberts, Michelle Sergent, Alex Vastano, and Annie Trostel.

MID-YEAR GRADUATION CELEBRATION

The department held its inaugural mid-year graduation celebration on Friday, December 12, at the University Club (see photo on page 8). Of the 11 students graduating in December 2014, eight Master of Public Health (MPH) graduates attended the event with family and friends in attendance along with a good showing of the HPM faculty. Mark Roberts, Gerry Barron, and Wes Rohrer acknowledged the students' achievements and presented the graduates their program completion certificates. Alyssa Landon presented a thoughtful and gracious response as representative of her graduating cohort.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED FALL 2014

- Deborah Backman** – Surma Scholarship for Long-term Healthcare Administration in Policy and Aging
- Amy Beck** – The Professor Emeritus Thomas B. Fitzpatrick Scholarship Fund
- Alexandra Dulin** – Nathan Hershey Endowment in Health Administration
- Evangeline Harpst** – Nathan Hershey Endowment in Health Administration
- Lauren Kepple** – The Thomas and Jody Priselac Endowed Fund for Healthcare Leadership
- Kevin MacDonald** – HPM Friends and Alumni Scholarship Fund
- Alexandra Nwokedi-Ibewuik** – HPM Friends and Alumni Scholarship Fund
- Margaret Robertson** – HPM Friends and Alumni Scholarship Fund
- Christopher Thompson** – Hunter Group Health Policy and Management Student Scholarship Award
- Brian Washburn** – Surma Scholarship for Long-term Healthcare Administration in Policy and Aging

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

MASTER OF HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (MHA) STUDENT COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL RESIDENCY AT UPMC DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

Vincent Chiu is a second-year MHA student who recently completed an extended residency at the UPMC Department of Medicine. During his residency, he focused on the design and implementation of new models of care, from the first inflammatory bowel disease medical home nationwide to a new intravenous antibiotic program. Chiu also worked on a proposal for redesigning hospital service at UPMC Shadyside, and one of the recommendations ultimately led to \$300,000 in savings for the organization. Through close work with executives, Chiu discovered the importance of guiding values and principles for excellent leadership. He said the residency is “so much more than the projects you work on” and saw the exposure to the executive-level management as the greatest benefit.



Chiu

NEW GRANTS AWARDED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT, JANUARY 2014–OCTOBER 2014

FACULTY MEMBER	FUNDING AGENCY	GRANT TITLE
Howard Degenholtz, PhD	Health Resources and Services Administration	Making Organ Donors Matter: Using Psychographic Data Mining to Create Tailored Public Education and Outreach Campaign
Julie Donohue, PhD	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	The Influence of Formulary Management Strategies on Opioid Medication Use Amount Patient and Prescribers PA Medicaid Research and Data Analysis
Mark Roberts, MD, MPP	National Institutes of Health	MIDAS Computational Models of Infectious Disease Threats (Project 5), Policy Methods

SELECT PUBLICATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT, JANUARY 2014–OCTOBER 2014

Faculty in the Department of Health Policy and Management continue to produce outstanding research that informs important current health care policy questions. Last year, department faculty published 72 manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals with the following articles highlighting the breadth of our research.

Disaster Preparedness. Faculty members in the Center for Public Health Practice are using unique quantitative methods to examine and define the variability in the legal and regulatory environment for various disaster preparedness resources. One recent example:

1. Guclu, H., **Bjerke, E.**, Galvan, J., & **Potter, M.A.** (2014) State-level legal preparedness for nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S.: A network analysis of state laws and regulations. *Public Health Research, 129* (Supplement 4).

Long-term Care. Nicholas G. Castle continues to conduct cutting-edge research in long-term care and has contributed significantly to the understanding and detection of elder abuse in chronic care facilities.

2. **Castle, N.G.**, Handler, S.M., & Wagner, L.M. (2014) Potential prescription drug misuse in assisted living. *Research in Gerontological Nursing, 7* (1).

Medicare and the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Several members of the department conduct research on the impact of ACA and changes in Medicare and Medicaid. Representative reports include:

3. Tang, Y., Gellad, W.F., Men, A., & **Donohue, J.M.** (June 2014) Impact of Medicare Part D plan features on use of generic drugs. *Medical Care, 52* (6):541-8.
4. **James, A.E. III**, Gellad, W.F., & Primack, B.A. (2014) Implications of new insurance coverage for access to care, cost-sharing and reimbursement. *JAMA, 311* (3):241-242.

5. **Zhang, Y.*** Baik, S., & Zhou, C. (June 2014) A simple change to Medicare Part D's low-income subsidy program could save \$5 billion. *Health Affairs, 33* (6), 940-945.

6. **Donohue, J.M.** (2014) The impact and evolution of Medicare Part D. *N Engl J Med, 371* (8): 693-5.

Health Services Research. Faculty continue to collaborate with investigators throughout the University to provide health services research expertise for many other departments and schools. We have had significant contributions in cost-effectiveness analysis and many other methodologies.

7. **Donohue, J.M.**, Belnap, B.H., Men, A., He, F., **Roberts, M.S.**, Schulberg, H.C., Reynolds III, C.F., & Rollman, B.L. (September-October 2014) 12-month cost-effectiveness of telephone-delivered collaborative care for treating depression following CABG surgery: A randomized controlled trial. *Gen Hosp Psychiatry, 36* (5):453-9.



JD/MPH GRADUATE GEOFF MWAUNGULU JR.

Geoff Mwaungulu Jr. is a 2013 graduate of the JD/MPH program. He recently accepted a position at the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) in Washington, D.C. Within NACCHO, Mwaungulu focuses on projects addressing national public health preparedness and response initiatives from the perspective of local health departments. His specific areas of work include community resilience, health care coalitions, the

national health security strategy, surge management, and more. During his time at Pitt, Mwaungulu was able to work with the Center for Public Health Practice, which was pivotal to the trajectory of his career. He credits the JD/MPH program for training him to address public health issues from both a legal and a public health perspective, which he finds invaluable in the work he does today.

LETTER FROM MIKE EVANS

As the new president of Pitt Public Health's Health Policy and Management (HPM) Alumni Association, I want to thank outgoing president, Mike Blackwood ('80) for his tireless efforts over many years. To continue to support our school and its students, I encourage you to send me your ideas for programs and activities that you would like to see from the alumni association. We need to ensure that our alumni association has a continuing and supportive relationship with the HPM program. Accordingly, an alumni relations plan and calendar of events are being developed to help us achieve this goal. More information will be forthcoming once the plan and calendar are finalized.



As I get settled into my new role, one immediate charge I have is to increase support from alumni for HPM scholarship funds. The department continues to attract top-tier students, and additional support is needed to continue to raise the program's profile nationally. If you are a recent alumnus, please consider pledging "50 for 5." This is a contribution of \$50 each year for five years. When you think about how far your Pitt education is going to take you, it is an easy financial commitment to make. If you are a more seasoned alumnus, I hope you will consider donating at an increased level. Working together, we can have a significant impact on the department's future. In a few weeks you will receive a letter that further outlines the department's needs and provides several different giving options. I hope that you'll join me in showing your support.

Mike Evans

Mike Evans (MPH '80)
HPM Alumni Association President



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Visit our Web site at hpm.pitt.edu for more information.



From left: Diane Peterson (HPM '75) and Sally Morton, chair, Department of Biostatistics. Peterson was named a 2014 Legacy Laureate during Pitt's homecoming celebration, recognizing her outstanding professional and personal accomplishments.