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The synergy Newsletter

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

New Center Brings Campus Health Researchers Together

Welcome to this inaugural issue of *synergy*, the biannual newsletter of the Center for Health Research (CHR). The Center was created January 2001 with core support from the University. We are also grateful for the research partnership support of Kaiser Permanente. The new Center is an affiliate of the Institute for Business and Economic Research (IBER) of the Haas School of Business and represents not only a major collaborative effort of the Haas School and the School of Public Health, but an alliance of social scientists and other researchers across the campus who are interested in addressing the many health issues facing our country and our world. We hope that the Center will become an important part of the University's Health Sciences Initiative, bringing social science involvement to the many challenging issues that will be raised by advances in the biological sciences.

As our Mission Statement indicates, the goal of the Center for Health Research is to advance knowledge in three areas: the multiple determinants of health; the organization,

financing, and outcomes of the health care delivery system; and the causes and consequences of health care technological innovation. The Center will emphasize the production and dissemination of knowledge based on multiple disciplines as these disciplines interact to reveal the complex forces effecting the maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of human health.

To facilitate research in these areas, the Center offers a number of services including: pre- and post-grant support; a small grant program to fund pilot studies and development of new research ideas; a working paper series; an interdisciplinary seminar series; and an annual conference on a major health-related topic. Several of these functions are described in other sections of this newsletter. A comprehensive website for the Center is in the works.

We will also be working to pull together a compendium of health data sources and to explore ways of providing consultation and technical assistance to ease investigators access to and use of health data.

synergy:

*the working together of
two or more things
to produce an effect
greater than the sum
of their individual effects*

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Upcoming Conference Focuses on Application of E-Health to Health System Redesign

With anticipated support from the California HealthCare Foundation, the Center intends to co-sponsor a major conference late this fall on “E-Health Applications for Improved Patient Outcomes: Removing the Barriers.” The conference will have three primary objectives:

(1) To examine the barriers and facilitators associated with widespread applications of e-health technologies to patient care delivery. This will include examination of the financial, regulatory, legal, confidentiality, organizational, and cultural issues associated with such applications;

(2) To identify actions that can be taken by the conference participants—payers, employers, regulators, providers, consumers,

and e-health firms—to remove the current barriers to wider implementation of e-health technologies to health care; and

(3) To develop an applied research agenda to assess the impact of e-health technological innovations on health care delivery and to increase the knowledge base of what works and what doesn't work under various circumstances.

The Conference is intended to build on many of the recommendations made in the recently released Institute of Medicine Report, *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century*. Further details on this important conference will be available in the fall issue of *synergy*.

Working Paper Series Initiated

Members of the Center for Health Research are encouraged to submit papers to its new *Health Research Working Paper Series*. Papers will be made available on the CHR website in both Word and PDF formats. Listings of working papers will be sent monthly to all Center members and the *synergy* mailing list. Updates will also be made in each issue of *synergy*. Hard copies will be available for purchase (\$3.50 domestic; \$7.50 international).

Authors should submit both a hard copy and a disk or e-mail attachment (preferably in Word format) of the paper, abstract, JEL classification numbers (where applicable), keywords, and a suggested mailing list to the Center for Health Research, 423 Warren Hall #7360, chr_uch@uclink.berkeley.edu.

Berkeley–Kaiser Permanente Research Partnership

The Center recently received \$50,000 of core support from Kaiser Permanente (KP) to explore research of mutual interest. Dr. Joe Selby, Director of Research for KP, commented: “We are delighted to forge this partnership with the University, as it enables us to pursue important issues with greater strength. We benefit from the University’s considerable social science and health sciences research expertise and we believe that the University benefits from having an increased ability to address population-based health issues in collaboration with our investigators.”

Researchers from the University and KP recently met to discuss research topics and established three working groups related to e-health and information systems, vulnerable populations, and organizational factors associated with quality and outcomes of care. We believe that further discussions will result in important collaborative research—the results of which will be disseminated in future issues of *synergy*.

Small Grant Program Begins

Approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000 of core support (on an annual basis) to fund up to four or five small grants has been set aside for Center members interested in pursuing health research. Grant awards will be in the range of \$3,000 to \$5,000 and are limited to one year.

While any proposal dealing with health issues will be considered, preference will be given to proposals that address one or more of the Center’s research priorities: (1) The social and behavioral determinants of health, health care-seeking behavior, and quality and outcomes of care; (2) the impact of markets, organizations, and professions and the relationships among them as they influence issues of cost, access, quality, and outcomes of care; and (3) the causes and consequences of health care technological innovations, including bio-

technology, genomic research, and e-health as these are translated into delivery of care and services to influence the health of individuals and communities.

Although any UC Berkeley faculty member with an interest in the above research priorities is eligible to apply, preference will be given to junior faculty. Proposed budgets may include support for GSRs, travel, pilot studies, data set purchases, summer salary support (up to \$5,000), and expendable research supplies (excluding equipment).

If you have any questions about the proposal procedure, please contact the Center’s program manager, Peg Hardaway Farrell (510-643-7211, phf@uclink.berkeley.edu) or the Center’s chair, Steve Shortell (510-643-3546, shortell@uclink.berkeley.edu).

CHR Members in the News

Additional information from Patt Bagdon, IBER Editor

Ken Chay (Economics) has been selected as an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Research Fellow. Chay was nominated for his work in three areas: (1) his examination of the effect of the 1964 Civil Rights Act on the relative earnings of black men; (2) air quality regulation, both in its effects on the housing market in response to the Clean Air Act, and (3) changing local air quality and infant mortality. Chay has already received direct research support for the latter two projects from the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Len Duhl (Public Health) was elected in February as a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science, an organization concerned with the social consequences and policy implications of knowledge. Together with the Oakland Healthy Cities Foundation, he's been developing a major renewal of Lafayette Park in Oakland. He also continues to serve as a consultant to UNICEF and WHO, and with Partners for Democratic Change—an international organization committed to building sustainable local capacity to advance civil society and a culture of change and conflict management worldwide.

Steve Hinshaw (Psychology) has been awarded a \$1 million NIMH contract to perform a long-term prospective follow-up of participants in a major, multi-center clinical trial (the "Multimodal Treatment Study of Children with ADHD"). This summer he will be embarking on a five-year NIMH R01 to follow up—into late adolescence—his sample of girls with ADHD, the largest such sample in existence. As president of the International

Society for Research in Child and Adolescent Psychopathology, Steve will be presiding for the Society's 10th Scientific Meeting, in Vancouver, British Columbia, in June 2001. He is also president-elect of the child clinical psychology division of the American Psychological Association.

Ted Miguel (Economics) has received two years of developmental funding from the National Institutes of Health's Fogarty International Center. "The Design and Impact of Child Health Projects in Africa" will examine an ongoing health program in 75 rural Kenyan primary schools, assessing the benefits of improved child health status on educational and labor market outcomes. A complementary research aim is to examine why the adoption of improved health technologies and practices is often slow in developing countries.

Teh-Wei Hu (Public Health) will begin work on "Smoking and Impoverishment in China," jointly with Prof. Yuanli Liu (Harvard), funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. This year-long project will be the first systematic study of the extent to which smoking leads to impoverishment. Hu, Liu, and their counterparts in China will (a) estimate the economic burden of smoking on Chinese families and examine the role of smoking in the poverty-generating process, and (b) estimate demand elasticities of smoking by income groups, and thus estimate how different policies might reduce cigarette consumption by people in different income groups.

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MEMBER NEWS

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Kamran Nayeri (UC DATA/Survey Research Center) and Michael Brunetti (Economics/UC DATA) presented “Health Status, Health Insurance, and Worker Mobility: A Study of Job Lock in California” (co-authored with Henry Brady, UC DATA/Survey Research Center, and Carlos Dobkin, Economics/UC DATA) to the California Work and Health Survey Second Annual Research Conference this past December at the Institute for Health Policy Studies, UCSF. Together with Jane Mauldon (Public Policy/UC DATA), Kamran also presented “Transitional Medi-Cal and Other Medi-Cal Enrollment among Welfare Exiters:1993-1997” (co-authored with Carlos Dobkin and Michael Brunetti of Economic/UC DATA) at the 4th Health Policy Briefing of the California Program on Access to Care in the California Senate Office of Research in Sacramento in February.

Andrew Scharlach (Social Welfare) has been selected by the Australian Fulbright Commis-

sion to receive a Fulbright Senior Scholar Award. His research examines the effect on elderly people and their families of Australian long-term care policies.

Under the leadership of **Lonnie Snowden** (director) and **Mary Masland** (research director), the Center for Mental Health Services Research has joined forces with other federally funded California mental health research centers to form the *Caring for California Initiative*. Funded by a grant from the California Department of Mental Health, the Initiative will evaluate the quality of care provided by the public mental health sector to children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, major depression, and conduct disorder. Lonnie has also recently completed a chapter in the Surgeon General’s *Report on Mental Illness*, which details specific mental health concerns and issues for African Americans.

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The new Center incorporates the existing Center for Health Management Studies, directed by Tom Rundall (Public Health). This Center has, in turn, been renamed the Center for Health Management Research to more accurately reflect its broadened support and a scope of activities associated with its core funding from the National Science Foundation, in collaboration with the University of Washington.

While the Center for Health Research is committed to being a resource for the entire Berkeley campus, we also encourage collaborative relationships with our colleagues at UCSF and Stanford. The Center is overseen by an Advisory Committee whose members represent nearly all of the social science and related disciplines pertinent to health on campus. The Center currently has over 50 members and we welcome others interested in one or more of the three research priorities previously noted.

Berkeley has long been known for its strength in the biological and the social sciences and its professional schools, and for individual excellence in addressing issues of health and health care delivery. The goal of the new Center is to harness these strengths to provide greater leverage and impact than previously has been possible. In brief, we hope to provide the “:synergy” needed to more effectively address the growing challenges of health and health care delivery. We look forward to working with all of you who share this goal.

Stephen M. Shortell
School of Public Health and Haas School of Business

Recent Member Publications

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Stephen M. Shortell, PhD, *Chair*; Peg Hardaway Farrell, PhD, *Editor/designer*

New Staff Members Bring Range of Experience and Skills

Story and photo courtesy of *Patt Bagdon, IBER Editor*



*Peg Hardaway Farrell,
Stephen M. Shortell,
Rochelle Vaughn*

Steve Shortell, chair of the new Center for Health Research, has recruited an outstanding staff for the Center.

Peg Hardaway Farrell, Program Manager, has a PhD in Nutrition Science from UC Davis and, by happy coincidence, the office in Warren Hall that once housed the Public Health Nutrition Program in the School of Public Health.

Peg has a broad background that includes running research conferences, editing scholarly publications in the nutrition field, and being a freelance editor for *WebMD*, the California Department of Health Services, and others.

She defines her role as that of an “information conduit,” with responsibilities that include arranging the Center’s annual conference, hosting visiting delegations of health care researchers, and making the results of CHR research accessible to scholars and the public through the Center’s newsletter and the

CHR website. She can be reached at phf@uclink.berkeley.edu.

The Center’s new Grants Administrator, **Rochelle Vaughn**, has a BA from Grambling State University and is finishing a Non-Profit Management Certificate at CSU Hayward. In addition to significant administrative experience at UCB, she was a member of the City of San Francisco’s Housing Authority “recovery team” that re-established the agency’s credibility and moved it off the “troubled” list. She has also taught in the Oakland elementary schools.

Rochelle will take over the administration of grants in the health field, especially those awards from the NIH. The Center is particularly keen to be able to offer faculty investigators a high level of service and Rochelle is already demonstrating her ability to make life easier for health researchers. Her e-mail address is vaughn@haas.berkeley.edu.



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Economics Takes an Exotic Turn

New assistant professor Ted Miguel (Economics) has been interested in rural development since he was a boy. Traveling to Kenya to study the impact of deworming treatments on the health and school performance of young children was the fulfillment of a life's ambition. He notes that a nation's health and nutrition status are actually very integral to its economic development and can affect many aspects of life—from what crops are planted and when, to what jobs are taken, or how long children stay in school.

Ted appreciates the value of the Center's interdisciplinary approach to research: As part of a multinational team of nutrition, epidemiology, and public health professionals, he saw first-hand the benefits to be gained from such collaboration.

One surprising result of his research was the discovery that while the deworming treatment had strong positive effects on the children's school attendance, it did not appear to affect their academic performance. He feels unexpected findings like these are positive things that force researchers to think again about their preconceived ideas, to look at their subject from new angles.

When not studying the economic impact of health status in faraway places, Ted likes to indulge his interest in ethnic cuisines. Nothing *too* exotic, though.
