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The synergy Newsletter

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

The First Year...

All of us can take great pride in the Center for Health Research's accomplishments during its first year of operation. As evidenced by the articles in this issue of *synergy*, the particular strength of the Center is found in its members—in their increasing numbers, their depth of involvement, and the number of grant awards they have received.

The interest and energy that has been created was very much in evidence during our Open House held this past November. The highlight of this event was Vice-Chancellor for Research Beth Burnside's welcoming remarks underscoring the importance and significance of the Center's work for the campus. We have been fortunate in our first year to add to the University's core support through our important research partnerships with Kaiser-Permanente (see page 7) and, most recently, the Health Research and Educational Trust of the American Hospital Association.

(see accompanying article on page 3). The Center has also continued to expand its role as a forum for scholarly discourse on important issues of health and health care.

In looking ahead to the Spring semester, I particularly want to call attention to the March 1st deadline for applications to our Small Grant Award program. Once again, we will have approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 to fund about five to six proposals—up to \$5,000 each—on topics related to the Center's research priorities.

Interested faculty are encouraged to apply (see p. 7).

In closing, I want to thank everyone—faculty, staff, and University administration—who has been instrumental in helping to successfully launch this new campus-wide initiative. While the future will require significantly a greater amount of resources to realize our potential, we can say with confidence that the "best is yet to come."

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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Small Grant Program Awards

The Center for Health Research began its Small Grant Program this past spring with five grants totaling \$23,000. Covering a range of topics and with an impressive geographical reach, these grants showcase some of the interesting research now being done by Center members.

∞ Indonesian families living near financial institutions that offer savings accounts appear to suffer less when faced with sudden health expenses, apparently due to the higher likelihood that they have non-trivial financial assets. **Paul Gertler** (Business & Public Health; gertler@haas.berkeley.edu) and **David I. Levine** (Business; levine@haas.berkeley.edu), together with fellow researcher Enrico Moretti, are examining how Indonesian families use financial and social capital as a way to insure and self-insure against financial shocks to child health. Various child health outcomes will be used to determine if financial resources can protect child health as well.

∞ Direct-to-consumer drug advertising is targeted at users who do not make brand choice decisions. Research being carried out by PhD Candidate Marta Wosinska (Economics; wosinska@econ.berkeley.edu) and **Paul Gertler** (Business & Public Health; gertler@haas.berkeley.edu) considers whether direct-to-consumer advertising is profitable due to patients' influence on physicians or due to patients' control over another part of the decision—the decision to get treated. Their work concentrates on physician behavior when prescribing cholesterol-lowering drugs, and

takes into account conditions such as patient and physician tastes and preferences, formulary options, and marketing method [i.e., direct-to-consumer advertising vs. detailing (calls made to physicians by pharmaceutical sales personnel)]. Ms. Wosinska will be presenting her research results during the Spring 2002 Health Services and Policy Research Seminar Series (<http://HealthResearch.Berkeley.edu/events/seminars>).

∞ Patients' emotional reactions to a given medical situation are often dependent on the quality of their communications with their doctors. Current economic theory has provided no serious way to treat these feelings as distinct from other kinds of outcomes. There have been relatively few studies of doctor-patient relationships that address specific questions of information exchange. **Botond Köszegi** (Economics; botond@econ.berkeley.edu) is testing physician responses against an economic model that isolates the behavioral consequences of patient medical anxiety and physician behavior.

∞ **Edward Miguel** (Economics; emiguel@econ.berkeley.edu) and Michael Kremer continue their work with an ongoing health program in 75 rural Kenyan primary schools, as they investigate the determinants of health behavior, in particular the adoption of deworming drugs. They are examining various aspects of individual health practices, including the roles of information diffusion, peer effects, price factors, and the influence of social networks.

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New Research Partnership With HRET

The Center for Health Research is pleased to announce its new research partnership with the Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET). A research and educational affiliate of the American Hospital Association, HRET focuses its activities on identifying, exploring, demonstrating, and evaluating key strategic health care issues affecting innovative health care delivery systems, educating the field about the implications of changing health policies, and developing strategies for community health improvement.

The partnership between the Center and HRET comes in two forms: \$25,000 in core support for the Center and \$25,000 as a fellowship grant for the support of a postdoctoral researcher or doctoral student to work on one of three research topics of interest to HRET and CHR:

(1) The creation of a redesigned delivery system that incorporates new information technologies and work-force strategies for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

(2) The development of ways to incorporate patient safety and quality knowledge into practice and measuring the impact of these practices on cost and outcome.

(3) An examination of issues of disparity in how health care is delivered to racial and ethnic minorities.

Mary Pittman, HRET's President, describes the new relationship as "exciting" and notes the "close alignment between the research agendas of the Center and those of the HRET." **Steve Shortell**, Center Chair, noted "Some of us have had long-standing individual relationships with the Trust and we are now looking forward to this expanded university-wide involvement."

Call for Papers

Members of the Center for Health Research are encouraged to submit pre-publication papers to its new Health Research Working Paper Series. Authors should submit both a hard copy and a disk or email attachment (preferably in Word format) of the paper, abstract, JEL classification numbers (where appropriate), keywords, and a suggested mailing list to the Center for Health Research, 423 Warren Hall #7360; CHR_UCB@uclink.berkeley.edu.

CHR Members may also submit links to papers that have been published in electronic journals. Contact Peg Hardaway Farrell, the Center's Program Manager, for more information about this option (phf@uclink.berkeley.edu; 510/643-7211).

Focus on Our Members

CHR's 65 members come from 12 departments on the UC Berkeley campus as well as the Institute for Health Policy Studies at UC San Francisco and the joint UC Berkeley-UCSF Global Health Institute. Each issue of *synergy* will focus on a representative sampling of our members.

Andrew Bindman (UCSF) is Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine at San Francisco General Hospital, and the Director of the Primary Care Research Center in UCSF's Department of Medicine. His research interests

include access to care for low-income and minority populations, primary care, and evaluation of health care reform. His current research is focused on validating health care report card indicators of primary care and the impact of Medicaid managed care on primary care physicians. He practices internal medicine at San Francisco General Hospital's medical clinic and has a special interest in the role of public institutions in providing health care.

Thomas Boyce (Public Health) is the Director of the Joint Medical Program, Division of Health and Medical Sciences, in the School of Public Health. His research interests include developmental psychopathology, biology-context interactions in disease pathogenesis, social disparities in health, and psychobiological reactivity and social hierarchies in childhood.

In the past year, Dr. Boyce has published one paper and has three more in press.

David Leonard (Political Science) has been a Berkeley faculty member in the Political Science Department since 1976. Prior to that he was on the faculties of the Universities of Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). He has lived in Africa for over a dozen years, in four different countries, and has done short-term work in another 16 countries on that continent. Over the years he has served as advisor to the United Nations Development Program, the Food and Agricultural Organization, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International De-

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velopment, the Office for Technology Assessment of the United States Congress and the Government of Kenya. He currently is the Dean of International and Area Studies.

Lorraine Midanik's (Social Welfare) research interests include research methodology, health services research, health behavior, alcohol and drug policy, epidemiology of alcohol and drug use, evaluation of treatment services, employee assistance programs, retirement, and caregiver burden.

Jane Mauldon (Public Policy) serves as Chair of the University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Her research interests include welfare, teenage pregnancy, sex education, reproductive health care, disabled children, lesbian and gay families, and, in general, the health and well-being of children and adolescents and their families. She is currently evaluating a statewide program in California serving teenage parents on welfare. She has taught courses on social welfare policy, policies affecting children and adolescents, poverty and race, program evaluation, and quantitative methods.

Kaiping Peng (Psychology) was interviewed recently by the Chinese and U.S. media (the South China Morning Post, Radio China International, the San Jose Mercury News, and the California Monthly) about current events and their impact on the mental health of Chinese Americans and others.

He has received numerous awards, includ-

ing the Hellman Foundation Faculty Research Award, the SSCI Endowed Professorship from the Department of Psychology, Beijing University, the Overseas Chinese Scholar Chuan-hui Award from the Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China, and the American Cultures Fellowship at the Center for Teaching and Studying American Cultures at the University of California, Berkeley for the year 2000-2001. Dr. Peng has published two papers and two book chapters in the past year.

Kristi Raube (Business) is Executive Director of the Graduate Program in Health Management. Her research interests include the financing and delivery of health care to underserved populations, Medicaid, and maternal and child health.

Martin Sanchez-Jankowsk (Sociology) recently received a three-year Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Investigator Award to pursue his research on urban violence. His research interests include urban sociology, political sociology, poverty, race and ethnicity, youth culture, and survey research.

Julia Walsh (Public Health) is a co-director of the Bay Area International Group (BIG) which focuses on financing health in less-developed countries. Her research interests include financing and access to family planning, reproductive health interventions and vaccines, health sector reform in developing countries, and computer-assisted distance learning.

eHealth Conference Focuses on Improved Health Care

The Center for Health Research is hosting the ***Symposium on eHealth and Technology Strategies to Improve Care Delivery in California***, a two-day, invitation-only conference to be held in Berkeley on December 11 & 12. Kenneth Shine, President of the Institute of Medicine; Ian Morrison, author and Senior Fellow, Institute for the Future; and Robert Brook, Director of the RAND Graduate School—are only a few of the conference’s nearly 60 speakers and panelists.

With a focus on the application of new technologies to health care delivery, the conference touches on topics ranging from “Digital Strategies for California Purchasers and Plans” to “Innovation in Physician–Patient Communi-

cation;” from “Ensuring That Safety Net Providers Will Be Included in the eCare Revolution” to “eHealth, Digital, and New Technology in Health Care—Who Pays?”

True to its cutting edge theme, participants will be able to access the speakers’ presentation notes from “internet kiosks” just outside their meeting rooms.

Nearly 250 leaders of physician organizations, health systems, health plans, consumers groups, and policy makers are expected to attend the conference, which has been funded by a generous grant from the California HealthCare Foundation.. Thanks to an additional grant from the Foundation, travel and lodging scholarships have also been made available.

Continued from page 2, Small Grants Program

✎ Using very different methods, France, Italy, and the Netherlands have pursued the goals of reduced government spending and more flexible labor markets, but have done so in ways that preserve or even enhance equality and protections for the disadvantaged. Using interviews with local scholars and health care leaders, **Jonah D. Levy** (Political Science; jlevy@socrates.berkeley.edu) is extending his existing work on the welfare state reform policies enacted by the center-left governments of these European countries.

While any proposal dealing with health issues will be considered, preference will be given to research 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

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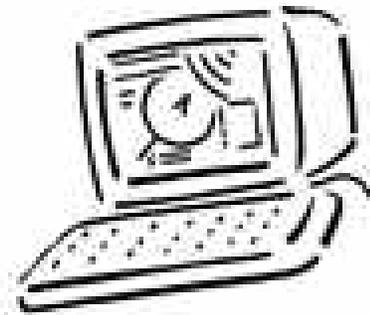
Kaiser-Permanente Partnership Update

Researchers from the Center for Health Research and Kaiser Permanente's (KP) Division of Research met last spring to discuss future common research topics. Three working groups were developed from this initial meeting, focusing on the areas of vulnerable populations, organizational factors affecting quality and outcomes of care, and ehealth and information systems.

One outcome of this partnership is a research proposal under development to be submitted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Entitled *Evaluating the Implementation of Electronic Clinical Information Systems in Integrated Health Systems*, under the leadership of KP investigators John Hsu and Joe Selby, the proposal includes CHR researchers **Kristi Raube**, **Tom Rundall**,

and **Steve Shortell**; and UCSF researchers Bob Miller and Ida Sim.

The proposal will address the factors influencing the implementation of the electronic medical record in KP's Northern California region, the impact on patients and clinicians, and comparisons with other selected health systems implementing the electronic medical record.



Continued from page 6, Small Grants Program

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 biomedical and health care technological innovations.

Although any UC Berkeley faculty member with an interest in these 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). Application information for the next round of Small Research Grants can be found at the Center's web site, <http://HealthResearch.Berkeley.edu/grants>. The deadline for the 2002 Grants is March 1, 2002.

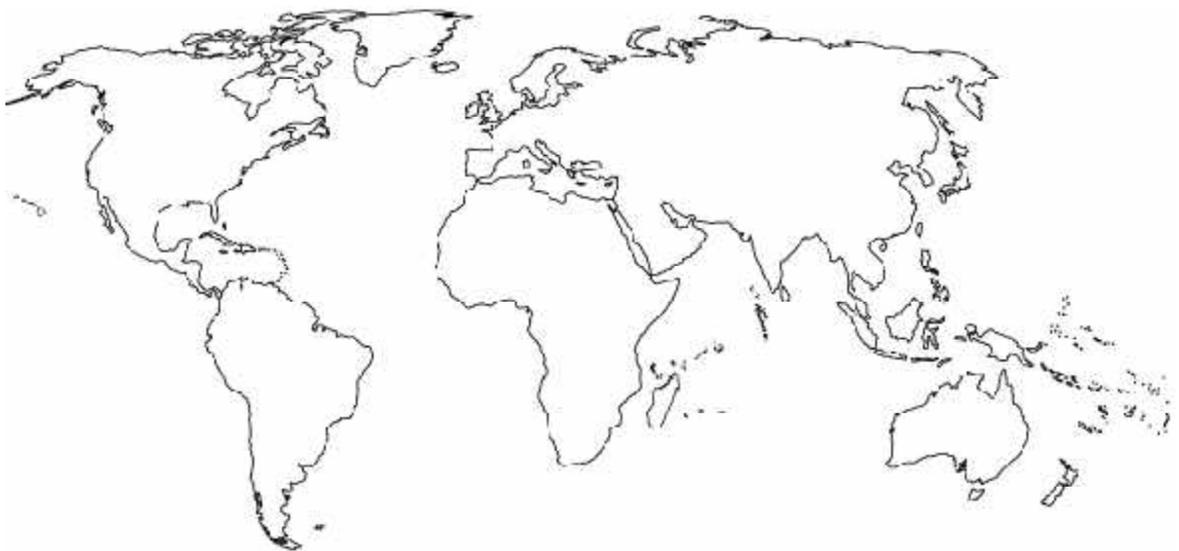
Center Hosts International Visitors

The Center played host this past June to a group of health care executives from the Australia and New Zealand Health Leaders Network (HLN). HLN is a joint initiative of the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council and the New Zealand Ministry of Health that provides professional development programs for senior leaders in public and private health organizations in both countries.

The intense, week-long study tour was the sixth such joint venture between HLN and UC Berkeley. It included on-site seminars led by senior executives from Bay Area health care firms and UC Berkeley faculty from the Schools of Business and Public Health. Participants discussed the strategic and operational challenges facing public and private health insurance plans, hospitals, physicians, HMOs, and other health care organizations in the U.S. **Tom Rundall**

(Public Health), CHR member and co-director of the Center for Health Management Research, coordinated the program and its in-depth discussions. Study tour participants have consistently rated the program as “excellent.”

The Center also hosted a two-day, multinational conference on “Quality Improvement Collaboratives” in October, which was led by **Steve Shortell** (Public Health & Business). Researchers from England, Sweden, Canada, and several U.S. universities met at Berkeley to discuss evaluations of interventions to improve the quality and outcomes of care for patients with hip fractures, mental illness, diabetes, asthma, and congestive heart failure, among others. The collaborative effort was funded by The Commonwealth Fund (U.S.) and The Nuffield Trust (U.K.).



Member Spotlight: Ray Catalano

Stress. We're all familiar with it. The car that comes out of nowhere, the last-minute additions to a report that's already late. To prepare us for these "fight or flight" situations, the body produces special stress hormones. But bereavement—the loss of someone or something beloved—can also trigger this response.

The physiological effects of these stress hormones are generally benign, unless you happen to be a pregnant woman. Even small increases in corticosteroid levels can have devastating effects on pregnancy outcomes: increased risk of miscarriage if they occur early in the pregnancy, and a greater likelihood of pre-term delivery and very low birth weight (VLBW; less than 3.3 lbs) if they occur later.

While most of the stress people face affects just their families or themselves, **Ray Catalano** (Public Health) has been interested in the effects of ambient stressors, those that result in physiological changes in a society. He notes that people form communities as a way to support individuals against adversity. When more than a small fraction of that community experiences stress, the capacity of the community to offer support is overtaxed and signs of stress increase.

Obvious ambient stressors—such as widespread unemployment, prolonged heat waves, or municipal water failures—have been linked to physiological stress responses. Could changes in a community's perception of social safety and/or security also trigger these changes in repro-

ductive results? One of the stages of grief is adaptation to the loss; hormonal changes during this stage can be dramatic. Could communal bereavement be linked to these adverse birth outcomes?

Together with colleague Terry Hartig, Dr. Catalano studied the rates of miscarriage and VLBW in Sweden after two very traumatic events: First, when Prime Minister Olof Palme was assassinated in 1986 on a Stockholm street. Then in 1994, more than 900 people perished when the ferry Estonia sank suddenly in stormy seas—a number that would be proportional to 16,000 people in the U.S. Both these events were occasions of great loss for a country that prided itself on high levels of personal safety and security. Dr. Catalano found that the incidence of VLBW rose significantly in the months following both the Palme murder and the sinking of the Estonia.

People across this nation are struggling with a sense of loss, even if they knew none of the New York or Washington bombing victims personally. This sense of communal bereavement may have lasting effects on those at particular risk. Dr. Catalano notes that persons thought to be vulnerable to anxiety should be with friends and family as much as possible. Those who know us well may detect the onset of symptoms we might not otherwise noted.

"The social interaction may itself be therapeutic for all involved," he added.

New CHR Grant Awards

The following is an alphabetical listing of the Center's newest grants. Please contact the principal investigators for further information.

Paul Gertler (Business & Public Health; gertler@haas.berkeley.edu) received a grant from NIH and the Fogarty Center to study **Poverty and Adolescent Risk in Mexico**; 1/02–12/03.

Paul Gertler (Business & Public Health; gertler@haas.berkeley.edu) and **Kristi Raube** (Business/Public Health, raube@haas.berkeley.edu) are working together on a grant from the UC Policy Research, entitled **Medi-Cal Managed Care: Effects on Costs, Access, and Outcomes**; 07/01–06/02.

Paul Gertler (Business & Public Health; gertler@haas.berkeley.edu) has been awarded a grant from the La Ka Shing Foundation to carry out a feasibility study on **Health Management Training and Research in China**; 07/01–11/01.

Teh-wei Hu (Public Health; thu@uclink.berkeley.edu) received a grant from Harvard University and the Rockefeller Foundation to

study the effects of **Smoking and Impoverishment in China**; 07/01–06/02.

Edward Miguel (Economics, emiguel@econ.berkeley.edu) has been awarded a National Institute of Health and Fogarty International grant entitled, **Child Health and Education Interactions in Western Kenya**; 05/01–04/03.

Tom Rundall (Public Health; trundall@uclink.berkeley.edu) continues his work with the NSF-sponsored **Center for Health Management Research**; 7/01–6/06.

Stephen Shortell (Public Health & Business; shortell@uclink.berkeley.edu) is working with The Commonwealth Fund to carry out **Research on Quality Improvement Collaboratives**; 06/01–05/02.

Stephen Shortell (Public Health & Business; shortell@uclink.berkeley.edu), through funding from the California HealthCare Foundation, is chairing the **Symposium on eHealth & Technology Strategies to Improve Care Delivery in California**; 06/01–12/01.



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

Open House a Big Success

In November, the Center for Health Research hosted an Open House attended by a number of Center members and staff from across campus. The Open House featured welcoming remarks from Vice-Chancellor Beth Burnside, who lauded the Center as an example of the type of multi-disciplinary research the campus wishes to encourage. Center Chair, **Steve Shortell**, used the occasion to announce the Center's newest research partnership with HRET (see article on p. 3).



Top Row: Ray Catalano, Carl Shapiro, Lonnie Snowden, Kamran Nayeri, Ken Chay; Center Row: Teh-Wei Hu, Jamie Robinson, Beth Burnside, Kristi Raube, Bill Satariano, Jane Mauldon; Bottom Row: Tom Rundall, Steve Shortell, Sandra Dratler, Julia Walsh, Richard Scheffler. (Photos courtesy of Patt Bagdon, IBER Editor)



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Center Staff Change

The Center is pleased to announce that Elizabeth M. Flora has recently been hired to fill the position of Grants Administrator. The Center's previous administrator, Rochelle Vaughn, has taken another position off campus.

Ms. Flora garnered six years of professional experience in the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of the Vice Chancellor at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she also received a BA in English Literature. Her academic focus emphasized disability representation. She brings to her work a sharp and humorous intellect, a keen eye for detail, and an enthusiastic sense of responsibility. Working out of the IBER offices (F502 Haas), she can be reached at 510/643-2996 or flora@haas.berkeley.edu.