



# voices for a healthy future

A PUBLICATION OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

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The Public Health Institute promotes health, well-being, and quality of life for all people through research and evaluation, training and technical assistance, and by building community partnerships.

## Pioneering Innovations in Public Health

**T**he Public Health Institute's national reputation for advancing public health is clearly rooted in the innovative thinking of our program leaders. These dedicated individuals consistently provide the imaginative, creative thinking required to develop the growing-edge programs that offer the most hope for preventing disease, saving lives, and improving quality of life.

Adeline Hackett, M.D., is this kind of a leader. A talented and renowned researcher, she served with distinction on PHI's Board of Directors from 1979 to 1999. Dr. Hackett's groundbreaking work in the field of breast cancer research resulted in an effective new approach to detecting this disease. Throughout her career, Dr. Hackett increasingly recognized the critical importance of encouraging daring and innovative ideas in formulating solutions to public health problems. Without collegial support, and without some resources to encourage the imagination, many public health professionals don't risk allowing daring, novel, ideas to emerge and be expressed in actions.

In recognition of Dr. Hackett's commitment to innovations in public health, PHI is forming the Adeline Hackett Innovations Initiative to encourage and provide partial support for creative thinking in the field. The Initiative will develop funds to be used in a program of small grant making within the PHI community. The first round of grants may be used for creative work, study, travel or other endeavors that have the potential to propel public health innovations forward. It is our hope that this Initiative will allow the simmering ideas and dreams – which people sometimes set aside for the sake of present-day realities – to reach a stage where they can be more fully explored.

This issue of our newsletter describes a selection of innovative efforts currently underway at PHI. The next generation of public health programs are now just emerging in the minds of program leaders. PHI is committed to giving those leaders an opportunity for their ideas to grow. ■

**in•no•va•tion:** a new idea, device, or process created by reflection, study and experimentation

To learn more about  
PHI's community of

projects and  
programs, visit  
www.phi.org and  
check out our  
"Program Links"  
page. We provide  
links to the programs  
highlighted in this  
newsletter and  
many others.

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Baby Jacob gets his blood drawn for metabolic disorder testing.

# Saving Babies Through Newborn Screening

VOICES FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE

Jacob Joseph Gensheimer was born January 24 at Los Gatos Community Hospital. He weighed 7 pounds and 9.9 ounces. Soon after Jacob was born, a little blood to be used for metabolic disorder testing was taken from his heel.

Even though Jacob's mother JoAnn was worried, Jim said, 'It's no big deal', adding that most babies cry more when they have their diapers changed.

For a number of years, almost all babies in the United States have been tested for two or more metabolic disorders. Starting this year, screening for up to 26 additional disorders is being offered as part of an innovative pilot research project in California, administered by PHI. New technology allows detection of genetic metabolic disorders that might cause death, disability, mental retardation and other serious illnesses in newborn babies.

"For some babies with these newly identifiable disorders, early detection and treatment with special diet can result in substantial improvements in health outcomes, including prevention of sudden unexpected death," said George Cunningham, M.D., Chief of the California Department of Health Services, Genetic Disease Branch.

So far, about one-third of the hospitals are currently participating in the study. About 25,000 mothers have been offered the expanded screening and 22,000 accepted it. Of the newborns who have been tested to date, 52 results came back initially positive, according to Dr. Cunningham.

But still, not all hospitals are participating in this project. Since it is a voluntary program, parents must authorize screening of their babies. Jim and his wife JoAnn did just that.

Now, Jim and JoAnn are enjoying their healthy, happy baby boy. They joined many other new parents in the internet age, and posted their son's photos on a website so friends and family could share their joy. Not a surprise – especially from someone who takes pictures for a living. Jim is a photographer at the San Jose Mercury News.

JIM GENSHIMER

# What Do Litigation and Public Health Have in Common?



EISNER PEDIATRIC & FAMILY MEDICAL CENTER

Medpin's free drugs are critical to safety net providers and their patients.

"Without access to free drug programs, many patients may not get their prescriptions filled, interfering with the ability to manage their disease."

— Anne Chang,  
Asian Health Services

# Med

**Medpin**  
Medicine for people in need

Some readers may be surprised to learn that lawsuits related to consumer fraud, toxic exposures, price fixing, distribution of illegal products, and unfair business practices have resulted in significant funding for programs to improve the public's health. The **Public Health Trust** (PHT), an innovative PHI program manages funds generated by these types of lawsuits. By directing settlement funds to programs that are closely related to the original purpose of the litigation, PHT also promotes and protects the public's health and consumer rights.

Medpin – Medicine for People In Need – is a good example. Initiated with settlement funds, this PHI program provides \$170 million of free drugs to California's safety net clinics where they are dispensed to low income/indigent patients. The free drugs are critical to safety net providers.

"Most prescription drugs are cost-prohibitive to our patients," said Anne Chang of Asian Health Services, one of the clinics receiving free drugs from Medpin. "Without access to free drug programs, many patients may not get their prescriptions filled, interfering with the ability to manage their disease."

Medpin also assists the clinics to develop long-term pharmaceutical management skills, an essential component in improving care for their patients. Pharmaceuticals have an important and growing role in the successful management of chronic disease, yet the benefit of these often lifesaving drugs is compromised for low income/indigent patients if the patient has no access to the drug due to its high cost.

Medpin has successfully leveraged funds from the lawsuit to attract additional foundation funding for technical assistance programs related to pharmaceuticals management. The California Endowment, the California HealthCare Foundation, and The California Wellness Foundation each have contributed to furthering Medpin's goals to improve the quality of patient care through better pharmaceutical management by safety net providers.

Marice Ashe, J.D., M.P.H., Director of PHT, launched Medpin two years ago and sees the program as a wonderful confluence of efforts between litigation and public health. "Although not involved in the litigation, we are able to use settlement funds for very creative and ground-breaking public health advocacy," said Ashe. "We support projects that have no other source of funding and that are pilot testing new ways of approaching difficult public health problems." ■

# PHI's Diversity Of Focus

PHI brings together diverse resources – from government, academia, the private sector, and the community – to build effective efforts to improve the public's health. As a result, our projects and programs span many areas of public health practice, research, and applied research and focus on multiple geographical regions and target populations.

- Alcohol
- Asthma
- Cancer
- Chronic Disease
- Communicable / Infectious Disease
- Community Health
- Disability
- Drug/Substance Abuse
- Environmental Health
- Family Planning / Reproductive Health
- Genetics
- HIV / AIDS
- Managed Care
- Media Advocacy
- Health Policy Research
- Homelessness / Indigent Care
- Lead Poisoning Prevention
- Leadership Development
- Maternal and Child Health
- Mental Health
- Nutrition/Physical Activity
- Occupational Health
- Pharmaceutical Access
- Rural Health
- Social and Behavioral Science
- Tobacco
- Violence Prevention
- Welfare Reform
- Women's Health

To learn more, visit [www.phi.org](http://www.phi.org) and click on our "Program Links" page.

## SELECTED PROJECTS

### Town Criers Photovoice Project

A dozen young people from California chronicled the impact of HIV/AIDS in their communities to help raise awareness of this silent killer. They were all acquainted with a family member or relative who is living with the disease. They decided to break the taboo and end the silence. They understand that HIV and AIDS aren't about "those" people with "those" lifestyles. AIDS is all around us, in the form of our mothers, fathers, relatives, friends and neighbors.

Participants in PHI's Town Criers Photovoice Project included nearly half from Camp Sweeney, the transitional unit for Alameda

County's Juvenile Hall. Using a \$20 Holga plastic camera, they chronicled the impact of HIV and AIDS in their communities. Photovoice, a grassroots documentary technique captured dramatic pictures and provocative stories to accompany the photos. The combination of pictures and writing has hit a powerful nerve.

Participants and their pictures continue to garner television, radio and newspaper coverage. The project was featured on the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle last November and most recently in March in The Oakland Tribune and on KNTV-Channel 11 (NBC3). Under the leadership of Karen Stevenson, these remarkable pictures along with their stories or poems are part of a traveling exhibit appearing at 12 local venues over the next year. Confirmed host sites include Alameda County's Office of AIDS, Berkeley High School (Berkeley), Wo'se Community Church (East Oakland), and Kaiser Permanente in downtown Oakland.

## California Center for Research on Women and Families

The California Center for Research on Women and Families (CCRWF), a PHI program working to help leaders improve the lives of women, families, and children, hosted the second California Working Families Policy Summit in Sacramento early this year. More than 600 state, legislative and community leaders attended and heard from respected advocates who put forth proposals in three priority areas: CalWORKs, including mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence services; nutrition and physical activity; and child care and after-school care. The summit, funded by the California Nutrition Network for Healthy, Active Families, was co-sponsored by the California Legislative Women's Caucus, the California Commission on the Status of Women and many other organizations. Visit [www.ccrwf.org](http://www.ccrwf.org) to download all recommendations and briefing materials. The Director of CCRWF is Kate Karpilow, Ph.D. ■



In this issue featuring innovators, it is especially fitting that we introduce the newest members of PHI's Board of Directors.

Locally and globally, PHI

- shares evidence
- promotes prevention
- builds community.



**Jessie C. Gruman's** career has focused on application of scientific knowledge to effective health solutions. Gruman is the founding Executive Director of the Center for the Advancement of Health, a Washington-based policy institute. The Center promotes a view of health that recognizes the role of behavioral, psychosocial, economic, and environmental factors in health and illness. Since its founding in 1992, Gruman has built the Center into a well-funded nonprofit that translates research into effective policy and practice. Formerly at the National Cancer Institute, Gruman directed the initial phase of the American Stop Smoking Intervention Study for Cancer Prevention. Prior to government service, she served as the National Director for Public Education at the American Cancer Society and the Manager of Health Promotion at the AT&T corporate headquarters. Gruman graduated from Vassar College and received her Ph.D. in social psychology from Columbia University in 1984.



**Diane Littlefield, M.P.H.** is the PI/PPD representative on the Board and directs the Center for Collaborative Planning, a training and technical assistance center within PHI. Her work focuses on promoting health and social justice through leadership development, asset based community development, participatory strategic planning and community organizing. Littlefield co-founded the Women's Health Leadership program that supports more than 300 diverse grassroots women leaders in California.

She is also on the faculty for the national ABCD Institute.



**Robert O. Valdez, Ph.D., M.H.S.A.** serves as the Dean and Professor of Health Policy and Management of the MCP Hahnemann University School of Public Health. Dr. Valdez was previously Professor of Health Services at UCLA. He is nationally recognized as an expert on health services research methodology, the U.S. health care system, and health policy analysis. On the state and local levels, Dr. Valdez has provided policy analyses on numerous health related issues

throughout the Southwestern states, especially in California, on issues of the uninsured, Medi-Cal and other health care financing issues and the quality of care for children.



**Antronette K. Yancey, M.D., M.P.H.** is currently an associate professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences, UCLA School of Public Health, with primary research interests in chronic disease prevention intervention and adolescent health. She recently returned to academia full-time after five years in public health practice, first as Director of Public Health for the city of Richmond, VA, and until recently, as Director of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion,

Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Dr. Yancey completed her undergraduate studies in biochemistry and molecular biology at Northwestern University, her medical degree at Duke, and her preventive medicine residency/M.P.H. at UCLA.

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"We're changing the way people think about health..."

## In Our Next Newsletter Edition:

### Cancer and Public Health

Our next newsletter will focus on PHI's efforts to understand cancer including causes, cures, and quality of life issues.

## New Projects & Programs

### ■ Philanthropy and Evaluation: Expanding Use

Co-Principal Investigators:  
Jana Kay Slater, Ph.D.;  
Norm Constantine, Ph.D.

Funding Agency: The David and  
Lucile Packard Foundation

This project is designed to improve the impact of philanthropic efforts through the promotion of effective evaluation practice in foundations. Nationally prominent and promising leaders from both the philanthropic and evaluation communities are being convened in a series of meetings to address organizational, methodological and political aspects of foundations' evaluation use, and to develop recommendations for improving practice. The primary product will be a commercially published book for use as a graduate-level textbook, and as a reference for practicing evaluators and foundation personnel. In addition, a program of training workshops will be

developed around the issues presented in the book.

### ■ Community Action to Fight Asthma

Principal Investigator:  
Megan Webb  
Funding Agency: The California  
Endowment

The Regional Asthma Management and Prevention Initiative (RAMP) has been awarded \$550,000 from The California Endowment to provide technical assistance to the northern California coalitions funded under its "Community Action to Fight Asthma" (CAFA) initiative. CAFA is a three-year program that is designed to support local asthma partnerships to develop and implement targeted intervention strategies to reduce environmental risk factors among school-aged children with asthma. RAMP is one of three regional coalitions in the state that will participate in the initiative to assist CAFA funded coalitions in their development

and the creation of interventions. The funding for RAMP will also be used to expand and enhance the RAMP website ([www.rampasthma.org](http://www.rampasthma.org)) and the RAMP newsletter (RAMP Review) for use across California. RAMP will also continue to engage in critical activities to address policy issues at the local, regional and state levels.

### ■ Family Planning Technical Assistance Program

Principal Investigator:  
James Williams, M.P.H.  
Funding Agency: The David and  
Lucile Packard Foundation  
The Family Planning Technical Assistance Program (FPTAP) provides administrative support to Packard Foundation Population Program consultants in India, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Philippines and Mexico. These consultants provide technical assistance to advance family planning programs and efforts in developing country contexts. Serving as expert advisors, they provide long-and short-term

technical assistance resources to NGOs funded by Packard Foundation grants whose purpose is to expand family planning and reproductive health choices and services at community, regional and national levels within each developing country. FPTAP also provides a leadership and professional development component as a part of each consultant's scope of work.

## Recent Publication

- The Technical Assistance Legal Center (TALC) has developed "Legal Resources for Tobacco Control", a compilation of nation-wide legal resources for public policy initiatives aimed at changing social norms regarding smoking and tobacco use. TALC provides California communities with legal technical assistance on tobacco control policy. To order, call TALC at 510.444.8252 or email [talcc@phi.org](mailto:talcc@phi.org).