

N

O

I

S

S

M

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.

The Value of Data in Establishing Public Health Policies

SUE HOLTBY
ELAINE ZAHND

Data are not just cold statistics. When used effectively, they can assist policymakers and others in establishing programs that improve health within our communities. The value of data comes from recognizing and exploiting their potential.

Many centers and programs at the Public Health Institute (PHI) collect and maintain data covering a broad range of public health topics, including:

- The Alcohol Research Group, one of the 16 federally-funded alcohol research centers in the U.S., conducts nationally-regarded studies of alcohol use, risk factors, and treatment outcomes.
- The Survey Research Group conducts local, regional, and statewide surveys using computer-assisted telephone interviews such as the California Behavioral Risk Factor Survey and the California Women's Health Survey.
- The Center for Research on Women's and Children's Health, which maintains the Child Health and Development Studies (CHDS) generational files for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. CHDS scientists study how health and disease are transmitted through generations by genetics, social, personal, and environmental factors.

In addition to these independent data collection efforts, PHI assists the California Department of Health Services in operating the California Cancer Registry, a world class population-based cancer surveillance system, that collects a broad range of data on all reportable cancers diagnosed in California. (See the article on page 2 for details on this program). We also collaborate with the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the California Department of Health Services to conduct the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). CHIS is a large population-based health omnibus survey that is conducted in multiple languages every two years with adults, adolescents, and children.

Both inside and outside the organization, PHI's numerous data sets provide researchers and policymakers with access to quality data on general and special populations. These data sets hold tremendous, untapped potential for secondary analysis, which is vital at a time when decisions on public health policy and resource allocation are increasingly based on empirical evidence. Secondary analysis is an efficient and effective method of analyzing data that can influence public health policy and programs.

PHI encourages researchers, evaluators, policymakers, and advocates to explore the potential of PHI data sets.

For more information about these data-based activities, visit www.phi.org or email communications@phi.org.





Nutrition and Cancer

DAVID HARRIS

An estimated 138,000 Californians will be diagnosed with cancer in 2004. A poor diet is a key risk factor for cancer. Nutrition, exercise, and weight control are factors in approximately 35 percent of all cancers.

The California Cancer Registry (CCR) is a statewide, population-based cancer registry created by state mandate in 1985. CCR began collecting data in 1988 as a collaborative effort between the Cancer Surveillance Section of the California Department of Health Services and the Public Health Institute. CCR's main function is to monitor the incidence and mortality of specific cancers over time and to analyze differential risks of cancer by geographic region, age, race/ethnicity, sex, and other characteristics of the population.



Approximately 340 studies using CCR data have been funded, and more than 1,000 publications have resulted from those studies. Researchers have used CCR data to investigate links between nutrition and cancer of the colorectal, breast, prostate, endometrial, gallbladder, and ovarian, as well as brain cancer among children. Research has also found disparities in cancer incidence among minority populations.

Based on this research, experts recommend specific actions to help reduce cancer risk, including: eating 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day, getting 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day, and avoiding being overweight or gaining weight as an adult.

CCR consistently receives the gold standard for data excellence from the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries for complete, high quality data. CCR's data is available to researchers who are investigating the causes of cancer and how nutrition and physical activity can help prevent this disease.

For more information about CCR, visit www.ccrca.org. ■

CONTACT
INFORMATION



Voices For A Healthy Future is a bi-annual publication of the Public Health Institute. This newsletter is posted at www.phi.org. For more information on the PHI community of programs and projects, contact:

PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

Communications Department
555 12th Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-4046
phone: 510.285.5500
fax: 510.285.5501
email: communications@phi.org
web: www.phi.org

Editors: Donna Sofaer, Vice President for Development, Communications, & Public Relations
Cinderella Lee, Communications Specialist

Design: Ison Design
Printing: Lee Michele Printgraphics

♻️ Printed on paper that is 100% recycled / 50% post-consumer waste, processed chlorine-free.

Copyright© Public Health Institute 2004. Permission to reproduce for educational or charitable purposes is hereby granted.



www.phi.org

Publicize your event on the PHI website. Submit it online at the Calendar of Events under News & Events tab.

Promoting Wellness in the Workplace

DANIEL SCOTT

According to California public health researchers, two recent reports demonstrate the vital need for business leaders and employees to work together to change poor nutrition and physical activity habits in the workplace.

In January, the Public Health Institute and the California Department of Health Services released the report, "Fruits and Vegetables and Physical Activity at the Worksite: Business Leaders and Working Women Speak Out on Access and Environment." The report is the first



statewide study demonstrating that both employers and employees (including those in small businesses and lower wage jobs) support measures to promote wellness through improved nutrition and

opportunities for physical activity in the workplace.

A second study released the same day by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that California tops all other states in annual obesity-related medical costs—spending \$7.7 billion of the nation's \$75 billion.

Based on the research, the new *California 5 a Day Worksite Program* developed the following ideas to help employers increase employees' access to healthy foods and physical activity during work hours:

- Replace snack foods with fruits, vegetables, and juice at meetings, breaks, employee gatherings and in vending machines and cafeterias;



(From left to right) Jim Carman, manager of the *California 5 a Day Worksite Program*, Jacquolyn Duerr, assistant division chief for the California Department of Health Services, and Desiree Backman, manager of the *California 5 a Day Campaign*, at the *Worksite Program* press conference.

- Build physical activity into the workday by providing space and equipment for exercise;
- Encourage active forms of commuting and support employees by designing buildings with accessible stairs, bike storage, showers, changing facilities, and safe walking areas; and,
- Form partnerships with community supported agriculture, local restaurants, and catering trucks.

Jim Carman, manager of the *California 5 a Day Worksite Program* reflects on why people get so little physical activity, "It's too easy to walk 20 steps to the car in the morning, drive to work, walk 20 steps from the parking lot to your workplace, remain sedentary all day and then repeat the same minimal amount of activity on the way home. This routine is costing employers bottom-line dollars and, worse yet, costing Californians their lives."

Promoting workplace wellness doesn't have to be expensive, but the outcomes in terms of better employee health and less absenteeism are priceless.

For more information on the *California 5 a Day Worksite Program*, contact Jim Carman at 916.449.5423 or jcarman@dhs.ca.gov.

PHI's Diversity Of Focus

PHI's diverse programs demonstrate our broad approach to improving public health. These programs include:

- Aging
- Alcohol / Tobacco / Substance Abuse
- Chronic Diseases: Asthma, Cancer, Diabetes
- Communicable / Infectious Diseases, including HIV/AIDS
- Community Health
- Disability
- Environmental Health
- Family Planning / Reproductive Health
- Genetics
- Health Policy Research
- Homelessness / Indigent Care
- International Health
- Lead Poisoning Prevention
- Leadership Development
- Managed Care
- Maternal & Child Health
- Media Advocacy
- Mental Health
- Nutrition / Physical Activity / Obesity Prevention
- Occupational Health
- Pharmaceutical Access
- Program Evaluation
- Rural Health
- Social & Behavioral Science

To learn more, visit www.phi.org.

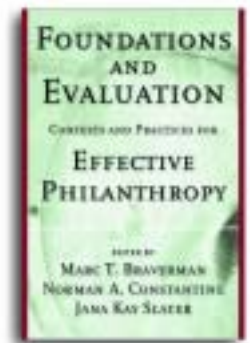
SELECTED PROJECTS

New Book on Philanthropy and Evaluation Goes to Press

NORM CONSTANTINE

In July 2004, Jossey-Bass will publish a book intended to improve the impact of philanthropy by promoting effective evaluation practices in foundations. *Foundations and Evaluation: Contexts and Practices for Effective Philanthropy*, was recently completed by PHI principal investigators and co-editors Norm Constantine and Jana Kay Slater, together with Marc Braverman from University of California, Davis.

The book developed from a meeting the editors convened last year to explore how evaluation could more effectively serve philanthropy. It provides unique institutional perspectives on evaluation from four nationally prominent foundation presidents. The book focuses on a variety of topics related to understanding foundations as a context for evaluation and building capacity for evaluation in foundations. This work was made possible by a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. ■



California Policymakers' Symposium Addresses Issues in Newborn Genetic Screening

ADELE AMODEO

In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the March of Dimes, PHI hosted a March symposium in Sacramento for California policymakers on issues related to the importance of newborn genetic screening. The symposium was moderated by Jose Cordero, MD, MPH, assistant surgeon general and director of the National Center on Birth Defects and Genetic Screening at CDC.

Among the audience were key legislators and staff, family advocates, medical professionals, and other interested parties. Joseph Valenzano, Jr., CEO of Exceptional Parent, presented the members of three families whose children and lives were affected by access or lack of access to newborn genetic screening. When genetic diseases are identified early, they can often be treated or managed with special diets, supplements, or medications, usually with excellent results.

Other presenters included Carmen Nevarez, MD, MPH, PHI's medical director and vice president of external relations, who provided case data by legislative district and George Cunningham, MD, MPH, chief of the Genetic Disease Branch of California Department of Health Services.

Proceedings will be issued later in the spring. ■

AWARDS

Honoring California Healthy Eating and Active Living Pioneers

In conjunction with our 40th Anniversary Year, PHI created the Pioneer award to honor professionals whose career-long efforts have changed our understanding, awareness, and policies regarding an issue critical to improving the public's health. The 2004 Pioneer awards honor seven Californians who have made major contributions to the field of healthy eating and active living.



Susan Foerster, MPH, RD, is chief of the Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section of the California Department of Health Services and director of the *California Nutrition Network for Healthy, Active Families* and the *California 5 a Day for Better Health! Campaign*. A nationally recognized leader in public health nutrition, Foerster developed the first 5 a Day public/private partnership program in California, which evolved into the national 5 A Day Program.

The following three dedicated women created and developed California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition):



Sarah Samuels, DrPH, is president of Samuels and Associates. For more than 20 years, Samuels has worked on public health and health policy issues for government, university, and philanthropic institutions. She developed the national Project LEAN campaign, the first privately funded national nutrition social marketing campaign, and serves as co-chair of California's Project LEAN (CPL) steering committee. Samuels is committed to developing programs and policies to improve access to healthy food choices and to make it easier for people to live healthier lifestyles.



Nancy Gelbard, MS, RD, has worked in the public health field for more than 25 years, with a focus on maternal, child, adolescent and community health. She is currently chief of the California Obesity Prevention Initiative at the California Department of Health Services (DHS). Gelbard has provided visionary leadership — particularly in the areas of policy, environmental, and systems change — for DHS' California Project LEAN and School Health Connections office, where she served as chief of both programs.



Peggy Agron, MA, RD, is chief of California Project LEAN at the California Department of Health Services. Under Agron's leadership, CPL works with state and local leaders to create healthier communities through policy and environmental changes that support healthy eating and physical activity.



Arnell Hinkle, MPH, RD, CHES, is executive director of the California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness (CanFIT) program. Hinkle provides a strong voice for addressing health disparities and the role that nutrition and physical activity can play in reducing them. She has been nationally recognized for her work in community health leadership and has created an innovative program that responds to the needs of communities of color and low-income youth.



Marion Standish, JD, is director of The California Endowment's Disparities in Health Program, which develops initiatives to reduce health disparities. Standish was founder and director of California Food Policy Advocates, a statewide nutrition and health research and advocacy organization that focuses on access to nutritious food for low-income families. A member of the board of directors of the Food Research and Action Center, Standish remains committed to improving health through nutrition.



Alice Waters is owner and chef of Chez Panisse, one of the most influential restaurants in the country. Waters pioneered the Edible Schoolyard Project at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Berkeley, California. The project allows children to be directly involved in planting, gardening, harvesting, cooking, and eating, while instilling values such as courtesy, generosity, thrift, respect, and reverence for the goodness of nature. Water's commitment to helping families learn to eat beautifully and wisely is reflected in her many contributions to the community.



P

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mary A. Pittman, DrPH
Chair
President
Health Research & Educational Trust
Chicago, Illinois

V

Robert O. Valdez, PhD
Vice Chair
Senior Health Scientist
RAND Health Services
Arlington, Virginia

C

Jessie C. Gruman, PhD
Treasurer
Executive Director
The Center for the Advancement of Health
Washington, DC

L

Carmela R. Castellano, Esq.
Secretary
Chief Executive Officer
California Primary Care Association
Sacramento, California

M

David E. Bonfilio, MBA
Planned Giving Officer
National Audubon Society
San Rafael, California

L

Glenn I. Hildebrand, MPH
Deputy Executive Vice President (ret.)
American Cancer Society, California Division
South San Francisco, California

S

Susan A. Holtby, MPH
Principal Investigator / Program Director Representative
Senior Research Scientist
Public Health Institute
Oakland, California

Margaret H. Jordan, RN, MPH
Executive Vice President
Corporate Affairs
Texas Health Resources
Arlington, Texas

Robert J. Melton, MD, MPH
Carmel Valley, California

Henry J. Ongerth, PE, MPH
Chief, Bureau of Sanitary Engineering (ret.)
California Department of Health Services
Berkeley, California

Roberto Tapia-Conyer, MD, MPH
Vice-Minister
Prevention & Protection of Health
Ministry of Health
Mexico City, Mexico

Antronette K. Yancey, MD, MPH
Associate Professor
University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Joseph M. Hafey, MPA
President / Chief Executive Officer

The Public
Health Institute
is widely
recognized and
respected for
leadership in
public health.



555 12th Street, 10th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-4046

phone: 510.285.5500
fax: 510.285.5501
email: communications@phi.org
web: www.phi.org

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

In Our Next Newsletter Edition:

Strategies for
Prevention and
Management of
Chronic Diseases

Sign up!

To receive this
newsletter and other
public health
information, visit
www.phi.org

New Board Member



Sue Holtby, MPH, has been elected to represent PHI principal investigators/program

directors on the PHI board of directors. Holtby has been with PHI or its predecessor organizations for 14 years and is based in the Santa Cruz, California office. She conducts research and evaluation projects with an emphasis on survey research and family planning. Holtby is currently working on the California Health Interview Survey in collaboration with the UCLA School of Public Health and the California Department of Health Services. She is also conducting an evaluation, with funding from the University of California at San Francisco, of the Family PACT program, the state's largest family planning program for low income uninsured

women and men. Previous projects include federal and state grants to examine alcohol and drug abuse issues among pregnant and parenting women. She has worked with Latino and American Indian communities in California and has done international work in Mexico and Ethiopia.

New Vice President for International Health Relations



Sharon Rudy, PhD, director of PHI's Population Leadership Program

(PLP), is responsible for leading the effort to develop a strategic plan for PHI's growing international health portfolio. With almost 30 years experience in international education and development, Rudy develops PLP's strategic vision and

technical direction. She also serves as primary liaison to USAID, WHO, the World Bank, the Glazer Pediatric AIDS Foundation, and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, which is the first faith-based NGO to receive a PLP fellow. Before she came to PLP, Rudy was the PRIME Project's (Performance Improvement and Training) associate project director, Johns Hopkins University/Population Communication Services (JHU/PCS) Africa Division senior program officer, and faculty associate in four schools: JHU's Departments of Health Policy and Management and Continuing Studies, American University, University of Maryland, and Trinity College. She has implemented health and educational programs in Africa, Asia, Europe, South America and the Middle East and spent years in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Recent Publication

"Prescription drugs, costly part of healthcare" (Medpin)

Rural clinics serving the elderly and low-income residents often struggle to make affordable prescription drugs available to their patients. In this article, which appeared in the Pacific Mountain Review in March, Medpin Program Director Kathryn Saenz Duke outlines a three-pronged strategy that rural clinics can use to lower their drug costs and increase their patients' access to prescription drugs. To request a reprint, contact Kathryn at kduke@medpin.org.