

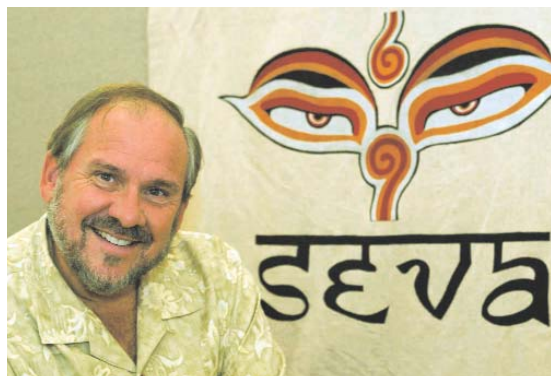
2004 Public Health Heroes to Be Honored 8th Annual Awards Ceremony to Be Held at The Rotunda in Oakland

by Johanna Van Hise Heart

On Friday, March 19, 2004, hundreds will step out for a night of celebration at UC Berkeley's 8th Annual Public Health Heroes Awards Ceremony, which this year recognizes three individuals and three organizations. While their efforts have focused on a range of public health challenges, the Public Health Heroes share a common energy, passion, innovative approach, and drive to correct health disparities in the world.

ophthalmology training programs, and manufacturing plants that produce low-cost interocular lenses, they have been able to restore more sight than any other entity in the world. Other Seva projects address the diabetes epidemic among Native Americans and the need for increased access to health care for people in developing countries. Dr. William Foege, senior medical advisor for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will present Brilliant with the **International Hero** award.

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International Hero: Larry Brilliant, M.D.

Combating Smallpox and Blindness Worldwide

A physician by training, **Larry Brilliant, M.D., M.P.H.**, has held roles of distinction in the disparate fields of infectious disease epidemiology, social activism, and high-tech entrepreneurship. As a medical officer with the World Health Organization in the 1970s, he managed the smallpox program in India, leading a team of more than 100,000 workers who in two years successfully searched out the last cases of *variola major* in the subcontinent. Inspired by this experience, Brilliant and his wife returned to the U.S. and founded the Seva Foundation, which restores sight to hundreds of thousands of people annually in Asia and Africa. By conducting national surveys of cataract-related blindness and establishing local self-sufficient eye-care facilities,

Bridging Medicine and Public Health

Steven A. Schroeder, M.D., is Distinguished Professor of Health and Health Care in the Division of General Internal Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), where he also heads the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center. Between 1990 and 2002 he was president and CEO of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a national health care philanthropy. Under Schroeder's leadership, the foundation broadened its grant-making focus to address a number of influences on health traditionally considered outside medical care. Most notable are policy initiatives and research programs (which vaulted tobacco control onto the national agenda and supported substance abuse prevention and treatment), care at the end of life, and health insurance expansion for children and others. Trained in internal medicine at Harvard University and in epidemiology as an Epidemic Intelligence Service officer at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Schroeder has held faculty appointments at Harvard, as well as George Washington University and UCSF, where he was founding medical director of university-sponsored HMOs. Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, president and CEO of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will present Schroeder with the **National Hero** award.



Regional Hero: Dolores Huerta.

Improving Health Status of Farm Workers

Cofounder and first vice president emerita of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO (UFW) and president of the Dolores Huerta

Foundation, **Dolores Huerta** has been a well-known figure in the labor and civil rights movements. As a grassroots organizer, she has been an incredible force for improving the health and health care of agricultural workers. She has successfully lobbied for countless bills, including landmark legislation that allowed farm workers to receive public assistance, retirement benefits, and disability and unemployment insurance, regardless of their citizenship. Together with César Chávez, she founded the UFW in 1963 and transformed it from a small organization to a political force boasting more than 400 staff and 70,000 members. She first received nationwide attention when she directed the great Delano grape boycott of

continued on back page

"Cal calling!"

During the upcoming weeks, Cal students may be phoning you to ask you to support the School of Public Health's Annual Fund. With the drastic state budget cuts facing the University, we're depending on your support now more than ever.





Dean's Message

Public health is so broad in scope that it often is difficult for people to understand or appreciate its specific contributions. At its heart, public health *prevents* disease, *protects* the public from harm, and actively *promotes* health. In this issue, we preview this year's Public Health Hero awards, which will recognize three individuals and three organizations that provide us with specific examples of prevention, protection, and promotion of health:

- Dr. Larry Brilliant, internationally recognized for his efforts to eradicate smallpox, is also the founder of Seva (Society for Epidemiology and Voluntary Assistance). We will honor this contribution, as well as his work in India, Nepal, Tibet, Cambodia, Tanzania and other countries to combat blindness.
- Dr. Steve Schroeder will be honored for his visionary and vigorous leadership of the nation's largest health foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Among the most significant of his achievements was the Foundation's role in contributing to smoking cessation efforts throughout the country, a cause that Dr. Schroeder continues to pursue in his new role as distinguished professor at UCSE.
- Dolores Huerta, appointed regent of the University of California in fall of 2003, will be honored for her work with César Chávez in organizing farm workers in the 1970s and for her ongoing work in

community building. Through her efforts and those of others, she has helped to provide a platform for disease prevention, health protection, and health promotion for thousands of individuals throughout the state.

- On the organizational front, we are proud to honor three local area health departments. The Alameda County Public Health Department, under the leadership of Arnold Perkins; Contra Costa Health Services, under the leadership of Dr. Wendel Brunner; and the City of Berkeley Public Health Division, led by Dr. Poki Stewart Namkung, have each made a marked impact on the health of our local communities, as highlighted in our feature story.

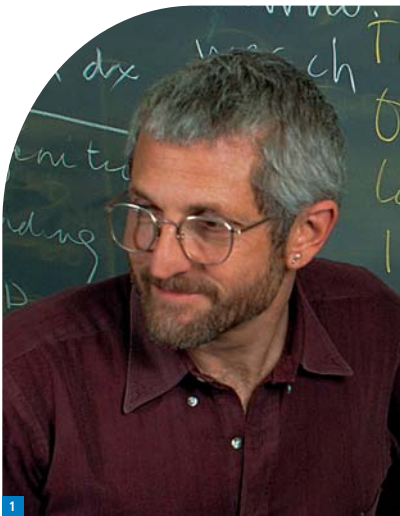
It is appropriate to recognize these individuals and organizations for their achievements. But it is also important to remember that every one of us who works to prevent disease and protect and promote health is a hero, and, like those we honor, we will each make our greatest impact through collective action. We hope you will join us Friday evening, March 19, at the Oakland Rotunda to celebrate these outstanding public health heroes.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Shortell, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Dean, School of Public Health
Blue Cross of California Distinguished Professor of Health Policy & Management
Professor of Organization Behavior

News and Notes



Reingold and Marmot Join Institute of Medicine

1 Arthur Reingold, M.D. (pictured), professor and head of the School's Epidemiology Division, was elected to membership in the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Science, and alumnus Sir Michael Marmot, Ph.D. '75, M.P.H. '72, was inducted into the Institute in October 2003. They are the 9th and 10th members of the School community to be elected to membership in the IOM and/or National Academies.

European Union Officials Discuss Chemical Safety Initiative During Campus Visit

2 European Union (EU) officials visited UC Berkeley to discuss the EU's innovative approaches to developing integrated chemical policies—including the Registration, Evaluation, and Authorization of Chemicals (REACH) initiative—and its lessons for California. The **Center for Occupation and Environmental Health** was a sponsor of the event (center photo).

Fineberg Delivers Penhoet Lecture

3 Harvey V. Fineberg, M.D., Ph.D., president of the Institute of Medicine and professor emeritus at the Harvard School of Public Health, delivered the fall 2003 Penhoet Lecture, "Crossing the Quality Chasm: A Health System for the 21st Century," in Warren Hall. Pictured: Fineberg (right) with Edward Penhoet, Ph.D., professor and former dean of the School.

Community Health Academy Receives University Partnership Award

The **Community Health Academy**—a partnership involving the School of Public Health, the Alameda County Public Health Department, and the East 14th Street Crossroads neighborhood of Oakland—was honored with the Chancellor's University Partnership Award. The award recognizes innovative programs that represent partnerships between the University of California, Berkeley, and northern California community groups.

Study Shows Lethal Surge in Accidents When Rain Follows Dry Spell

Going out for a drive in the rain? A study by a researcher at the School of Public Health provides new data on how risky that road trip might be. In an analysis of more than 1 million fatal crashes in 48 states, **Daniel Eisenberg**, a post-doctoral researcher, was surprised to find that the more it rained or snowed in a month, the fewer deadly traffic accidents there were. Specifically, in any given month, an additional 10 centimeters of rain is linked with a 3.7 percent decrease in the fatal crash rate.

"I had expected to see a positive relationship between the amount of precipitation and the rate of fatal traffic accidents, but my analysis revealed a more complex connection between the two," says Eisenberg.

He also discovered that the risk of an accident on a rainy day increases with the length of the dry spell preceding it. If there has been rain or snow for many days, the danger due to wet conditions falls.

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Eisenberg obtained weather data from the National Climatic Data Center and traffic crash records from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for the study. He analyzed fatal crashes from 1975–2000. Not only monthly, but annual data revealed that more rain and snow was linked to fewer fatal crashes. But when he looked at daily accident data, he found that more precipitation was linked to a higher number of deadly traffic accidents.

Further analysis showed that "the effect of precipitation on accidents on any given day depends upon how much it rained or snowed prior to that day," he says.

"For instance, if it rains a centimeter today, on average, there will be no increased risk of fatal crashes if it also rained yesterday," says Eisenberg. "But if it's been two days since the last rain, then the risk for a deadly accident increases by 3.7 percent. If you take it out even further to 21 days, the risk increases to



9.2 percent, or about two and a half times more risk than if it only rained two days before."

Eisenberg points to two likely explanations. "Oil and debris accumulate on the road when it hasn't rained for a while, making the roads slicker when it first starts to rain. By the second day of rain, the oil and debris have washed off the roads and are less dangerous. Another factor could be that people aren't as used to driving in the rain when it comes after a long dry spell. Perhaps they become better adapted to the weather conditions by day two or three.

"Many people are already aware of this phenomenon," Eisenberg adds. "What my study does is provide hard evidence to support it and to quantify just how much the weather changes the risk."

—Sarah Yang

Event Calendar

2004

March 4 (Thursday), 2 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

Spring 2004 Research Symposium

Several of the School's outstanding faculty present their cutting-edge research.

Alumni House, Berkeley campus

March 19 (Friday), 6:30 p.m.

8th Annual Public Health Heroes Awards Ceremony

A gala celebration recognizing individuals and organizations for their significant contributions and exceptional commitment to promoting and protecting human health. (See cover story.)

The Rotunda, Oakland

April 17 (Saturday)

Cal Day

Take in all that Berkeley has to offer at the campus's annual open house, offering a variety of free activities, lectures, sports, and demonstrations for people of all ages and inclinations.

UC Berkeley

April 27 (Tuesday)

Women's Health Panel

A discussion about issues in women's health in anticipation of May's observance of Women's Health Month.

Baldwin Auditorium, 22 Warren Hall, Berkeley campus

For updated information about School of Public Health events, please call Andrea Lum at (510) 643-6382.



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Peg Skorpinski, pp. 1 (Rotunda), 3 (staff), & 4 (banquet tables);

www.limage.net, p. 1 (Brilliant); Angela Torres, p.1 (Huerta);

Patricia W. Hosel, p. 1 (phonathon); Michael S. Broder, p. 2

(EU panel, Penhoet/Fineberg); www.freeimages.co.uk, p. 3 (car);

courtesy of Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, p. 4 (Schroeder).

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National Hero: Steven A. Schroeder, M.D.

1968–1970, which resulted in the first collective bargaining agreements for California farm workers. These precedent-setting early negotiations established now-standard contractual provisos such as health benefits, pensions, safe working conditions, and access to clean water and sanitary facilities in the field. Huerta has also long fought to ban the use of pesticides that threaten the health of farm workers, consumers, and the environment. In 2003 she was appointed to the board of UC Regents. Diana Bonta, director of the California Department of Health Services, will present Huerta with the **Regional Hero** award.

Implementing Cutting-Edge Programs and Policies

This year's **Organizational Hero** award will be presented to the health departments of the East Bay by former state assemblywoman Dion Aroner. Under the direction of Arnold X.C. Perkins

(Alameda County), Dr. Wendel C. Brunner (Contra Costa County), and Dr. Poki Stewart Namkung (City of Berkeley), these three departments play a special role in the education of future public health professionals by sponsoring more than a dozen UC Berkeley School of Public Health student internships each year and providing opportunities for other students to take on special projects associated with their coursework. However, what truly sets them apart is their steadfast commitment to meeting the public's present and future health needs by embracing innovative programs and policies.

In response to findings published in their 2000 Health Status Report, the **Alameda County Public Health Department** has taken great steps to counter alarming health disparities among different racial and ethnic groups. Their Asthma Start program has already measurably lowered children's asthma-related hospitalization

rates by working with families to reduce environmental triggers. The "Get Tested" program incorporates a sophisticated array of social marketing techniques to empower the county's African American and Latino communities with targeted education and outreach.

Contra Costa Health Services' anti-smoking initiatives have set a standard for not just the state, but the nation. The county initiated and implemented a campaign that made Contra Costa the first multi-jurisdictional county in the country to adopt a uniform ordinance restricting smoking in the workplace and in public places and has successfully promoted a Tobacco-Free Youth ordinance, prohibiting all tobacco advertising near schools and playgrounds.

The **City of Berkeley Public Health Division** has taken action to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities through programs that promote breast feeding, prevent low birth weights, and offer free dental care to uninsured children enrolled in the city's public schools.

For information about purchasing tickets to the March 19 Public Health Heroes Awards Ceremony, call (510) 643-6382, or visit our web site at <http://sph.berkeley.edu>.



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