

## Faculty News and Notes

**John Balmes, M.D.**, professor of environmental health sciences, received funding from the Centers for Disease Control to support the Berkeley Center for Environmental Health Tracking. The center will continue to work on building a national Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) network, the ultimate goal of which is to help technical and non-technical audiences understand the relationships among environmental factors, exposures, and health outcomes, and to encourage them to act on this knowledge. Specific aims fall into three categories: asthma surveillance and the environment, assessment and characterization of environmental factors (hazards) and exposures, and environmental justice and health disparities. The Berkeley center will also establish an internship program for students to train them in EPHT and a consultative group among EPHT program partners and other critical stakeholders to build capacity through ongoing communication of relevant knowledge, project accomplishments, barriers, and lessons learned.

Balmes and **Kirk R. Smith, Ph.D., M.P.H.**, the Brian and Jennifer Maxwell Endowed Chair in Maternal and Child Health, received funding from the NIH National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences for “Chronic Respiratory Effects of Early Life PM Exposure.” The five-year longitudinal study is a follow-up of a birth cohort enrolled in the NIH-funded “Guatemala Stove Intervention Study” and will examine the long-term effects of high exposure to biomass smoke during the critical period of lung development in childhood. The study is designed to determine whether exposure to higher levels of particulate matter during the first 18 months of life is associated with increased respiratory symptoms, bronchodilator responsiveness, sensitization to aeroallergens, and decreased rate of growth of lung function and somatic growth. Researchers also

hope to determine whether the GSTM1-null genotype renders children more susceptible and the GSTP1val105 variant less susceptible to the development of particulate matter-induced oxidative stress and chronic respiratory effects, and to continue development and field testing of innovative air pollution exposure assessment methods.

**Gladys Block, Ph.D.**, professor of epidemiology and public health nutrition, was awarded funding from the U.K. charity Children with Leukaemia for her research on “Effects of Maternal and Child Diet Folate Metabolism Gene Variants on Childhood Leukemia Risk.” The research builds upon data from an ongoing epidemiologic study of childhood leukemia to examine whether folate metabolic gene and DNA repair variants, and the diet of the mother and child, act separately or in combination in affecting leukemia risk. The study will also explore the modifying effects of folate metabolic and DNA repair gene variation on the relationship between diet and disease.

Block also received funding from the University of Pittsburgh/National Institute on Aging for instrument design and data analysis for the “Study of Women’s Health Across the Nation III/Coordinating Center.” The multi-site study examines the natural history of menopause.

**Gertrude Buehring, Ph.D.**, associate professor of virology, was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Cancer Institute to further her research into the possible links between bovine leukemia virus and human breast cancer. This collaborative project with Kaiser Permanente San Rafael will explore the relationship between antibodies to the virus and the presence of the virus in white blood cells and breast tissue of breast cancer patients. Adjunct professor of epidemiology **Michael Bates, Ph.D.**, is a collaborator on the project.



**Patricia Buffler, Ph.D., M.P.H.**, dean emerita and the Kenneth Howard Kaiser & Marjorie Witherspoon

Kaiser Endowed Chair in Cancer Epidemiology, received a Berkeley Research Futures Grant for the “Biologic and Environmental Risk Factors for Childhood Brain Tumors” project. The grant, sponsored by the Vice Chancellor for Research, is awarded to faculty to support the development of large, multidisciplinary research grant applications. The multicenter project based at UC Berkeley involves the UCSF School of Medicine, Stanford School of Medicine, USC School of Medicine, the California Department of Health Services, and the Northern California Cancer Center. The application to the multi-center project will be submitted to the NIH in October 2006.

Buffler also received funding from the U.K. charity Children with Leukaemia for her study, “Individual Genetic Susceptibility and Environmental Exposures in the Etiology of Childhood Leukemia.” The study will utilize data from the Northern California Childhood Leukemia Study to examine the role of child and maternal susceptibility factors conferred by functional metabolic and transport gene polymorphisms and haplotypes in modifying the effect of environmental exposures on the risk of childhood leukemia. Exposures include parental smoking, known carcinogens in traffic emissions, and pesticides.

The council of the International Epidemiology Association elected Buffler as its North America representative for the Congress of Epidemiology meeting held in Seattle June 21–24. The organization was founded in 1954 to provide a forum on developments in epidemiology of global significance.

The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) provided continued funding for “The Perinatal Outcomes Project,” led by professor of public health **Ralph Catalano, Ph.D., M.R.P.** The ongoing project is a collaboration with the CDHS Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Branch and the Regional Perinatal Programs of California (RPPC). The goal of the project is to provide all the maternity hospitals in California with meaningful data that they can use for the purpose of continuous quality improvement. A web site has been developed to distribute confidential hospital reports, which include information about live birth demographics; fetal, neonatal, and postneonatal mortality rates; and cause of death for all perinatal deaths. Additionally, aggregate regional and statewide reports are available on the website to help the RPPC target its regional quality improvement efforts.

**Brenda Eskenazi, Ph.D.**, professor of epidemiology, received a California-Mexico Health and Migration grant for research into how migration affects childhood overweight and obesity. The study will compare five year-old children in a migrant community in California with a sample of five-year-old children residing in the communities from which the parents in California emigrated. Eskenazi, along with doctoral student **Lisa Goldman, M.P.H. '02**, plans to test the hypothesis that migration affects risk factors for childhood overweight and obesity such as diet, physical activity, television watching, and environmental factors.

Eskenazi and **Nina Holland, Ph.D.**, adjunct associate professor in genetics and toxicology, also received federal funding research to determine whether PON1 genotype and/or activity in populations exposed to pesticides is an early indicator

of environmentally induced disease. The study will inform future policy decisions regarding allowable pesticide exposure to pregnant women and children necessary for the implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996.

**Paul Gertler, Ph.D.**, Li Ka Shing Distinguished Professor of Health Policy and Management, received support from the American Council on Education/USAID for “UCB/INSP Collaborative Training in HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis,” a collaborative, multilevel training program focused on HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB) prevention and care, formed by UC Berkeley and the Mexican National Institute of Public Health (INSP). UC Berkeley faculty and staff will work with INSP faculty and staff to develop and implement an HIV/AIDS/ TB track within INSP’s master’s degree programs in science, public health, and the joint Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE)/INSP master’s program in health economics. INSP will also expand its professional certification program; develop electives and short-courses to be taught by UC Berkeley, INSP, and collaborating faculty; provide research mentorship to INSP students at UC Berkeley, and assist with placing students in productive internship positions within the field. School of Public Health lecturer **Sandra Dratler, Dr.P.H. '99**, and **Kristiana Raube, Ph.D.**, both with the Haas School of Business’s Graduate Program in Health Services Management, are also principal investigators for the project.



**S. Katharine Hammond, Ph.D.**, professor of environmental health sciences, was appointed to the WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation. The group

## Dean’s Office: Comings and Goings



Acting deans Robert Spear (left) and Ralph Catalano

On July 1, 2006, Dean Stephen M. Shortell, Ph.D., M.P.H., begins a year-long sabbatical as a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences affiliated with Stanford University. Professor of public health **Ralph Catalano, Ph.D., M.R.P.**, will serve as acting dean for the fall semester, followed in the spring semester by **Robert Spear, Ph.D.**, chair of the Environmental Health Sciences Division.

Professor and associate dean for academic affairs **W. Thomas Boyce, M.D.**, begins a leave from UC Berkeley to accept a position at the University of British Columbia in Canada. Professor of health policy and management **Joan Bloom, Ph.D.**, will serve as acting dean of academic affairs.

## Petris Symposium Addresses California Health Policy



Kimberly Belshé, M.A. (right), secretary of the California Health and Human Services agency, talks with Richard Scheffler, Ph.D. (left), director of the Nicholas C. Petris Center on Health Care Markets and Consumer Welfare, and Stephen Shortell, Ph.D., M.P.H., dean of the School, at the “2006 Petris Symposium: Toward a Health Policy Agenda for All Californians.” Belshé delivered the keynote address at the April 21 event.

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provides WHO with the recommendations for addressing the most effective and scientifically sound means to achieve a coordinated regulatory framework for tobacco products. In 2003, the member states unanimously adopted the world's first public health treaty, the "WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control," designed to reduce tobacco-related deaths and disease around the world. She is currently on leave working at the Tobacco Free Initiative at the WHO in Geneva, Switzerland, where on May 26 she gave a briefing about the health effects of secondhand smoke to delegates at the World Health Assembly annual meeting. She also gave a talk at WHO headquarters on "World No Tobacco Day."

Hammond also received continued funding for "Sustaining Cessation in Smokers with Kids with Asthma" from the NIH. Previous research demonstrated that enhancing the perception of the risks of smoking to the smoker and the child doubled the odds of smoking abstinence two months later, but that this disappeared after six months. The current project, undertaken with colleagues at Brown University, aims to assess the "teachable moment" and examine the effectiveness of adding a relapse prevention component. The grant will allow researchers to evaluate environmental tobacco smoke exposure of the child to evaluate changes in the exposures, and to develop materials to convey this information to the smoking parents.

**Nina Holland, Ph.D.**, associate adjunct professor in genetics and toxicology, was a co-lead author for a study on varying susceptibility to organophosphate pesticides among Latina women and children. The paper, which appeared in March in the journal *Pharmacogenetics*

and *Genomics*, reports that adults and especially newborns range widely in their sensitivity to certain organophosphate pesticides such as diazinon and chlorpyrifos, which are used primarily in agriculture. This variation (65- to 130-fold) exceeds pesticide safety factors for children, and raises questions about the effectiveness of current EPA standards for safe levels of exposure, particularly for children. The pesticides are currently restricted for household use, but are allowed for some structural uses, such as treatment of home foundations. In addition, the approved use in agriculture presents possible exposure risks for the women and children in the area. The study, conducted through the Center for the Health Assessment of Mothers and Children of Salinas (CHAMACOS), included 130 Latina women and their newborns.

Holland was also awarded an NIH grant for research to investigate the health effects of PON1, an enzyme that detoxifies organophosphate pesticides in the body. The research includes developing a PON1 gene haplotype map for the Latino population, examining the ontogeny of PON1 enzyme activity in children, establishing whether PON1 genotype and activity are associated with pesticides in maternal and cord blood, and determining whether PON1 effects growth and neurodevelopment in children.



Charles, Prince of Wales, invited associate adjunct professor **Richard Jackson, M.D., M.P.H. '79**, to speak in London on the built environment and health care facilities. Jackson and the prince both addressed a January

conference on public health and design organized by the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment and the King's Fund. The conference included senior representatives of the Royal College of Physicians, the National Health Service, and the Royal Institute of British Architects.

**Sangwei Lu, Ph.D.**, assistant adjunct professor, received support for "Intestinal Colonization of Mice and Chickens by Salmonella Enteritidis." The grant, awarded by the USDA Cooperative State Research Service, will support multidisciplinary research to gain a systematic understanding of how the pathogen Salmonella colonizes the intestines of hosts and is transmitted to other hosts. The study aims to identify colonization factors, which can then be used to develop strategies to prevent the spread of Salmonella in food animals, and reduce transmission to humans.

**Mark Nicas, Ph.D., C.I.H.**, associate adjunct professor of environmental health sciences, received funding from the California Department of Health Services for the project, "Protecting Workers from Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes: Evaluating the Feasibility of Implementing Occupational Coding on Patient Information Forms." The project will identify occupations and chemical exposures that pose risks of developmental toxicity for a cohort of pregnant patients and evaluate the feasibility of using occupational codes on patient information forms to identify at-risk exposures on an ongoing basis. This information will help Hazard Evaluation System and Information Services provide early warnings to workers, employers, and health care providers on ways to prevent harmful exposures to reproductive and developmental toxicants.



**Emily Ozer, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of community health and human development, was selected as a William T. Grant

Scholar for her research project, “Adolescents as Resources in School-Based Prevention.” The grant is a national competition for scholars from any field who conduct research into child and adolescent development. The goal of the award is to support exceptional scholars early in their careers and provide them with resources, including five years of support for their research, and mentorship. Ozer was one of five recipients chosen through a highly competitive selection process.

**Arthur Reingold, M.D.**, head of the School’s Epidemiology Division, was chosen by the University of Michigan epidemiology faculty to deliver the 34th annual Thomas Francis, Jr., Memorial Lecture. Reingold’s lecture, presented in March, was titled, “From the Polio Vaccine Studies of Thomas Francis, Jr. to Studies of the Impact of Conjugate Pneumococcal Vaccine: The Need for Mega-Populations.”

Thomas Delmar Learning has published a fifth edition of *Health Care Management: Organization Design and Behavior*, by **Dean Stephen M. Shortell, Ph.D., M.P.H.**, Blue Cross of California Distinguished Professor of Health Policy & Management, and Arnold K. Kaluzney, Ph.D., professor emeritus of health care administration at the University of North Carolina School of Public Health. The textbook brings a systematic understanding of organizational principles, practices, and insight to the management of health services organizations. While based on

state-of-the-art organizational theory and research, the emphasis is on application through features such as “In the Real World” and “Debate Times,” which present actual situations and challenge the reader to provide a solution or a philosophical position.



**Kimberly Solomon, M.P.H., M.B.A.**, recently joined the Health Policy & Management Division as the new M.P.H.

program director and lecturer. Solomon’s research focuses on the health care workforce, market analysis, and strategic management and planning.

**Ira Tager, M.D., M.P.H.**, professor of epidemiology, received more than \$3 million in funding from the Department of Health and Human Services to continue the longitudinal cohort study, the Fresno Asthmatic Children’s Environment Study. The overall goal of the study is to determine if children with asthma who have adverse responses to short-term, daily increases in concentrations of ambient air pollutants and bioaerosols are more likely to have decreased lung function growth and increased long-term asthma morbidity.

**Michael Tartar, Ph.D.**, professor of biostatistics, was elected chair of the Section on Risk Analysis for the American Statistical Association, a scientific and educational society with the mission of promoting excellence in the application of statistical science across the wealth of human endeavor. The Section on Risk Analysis studies risk analysis and assessment and develops applications of these to various subject matter areas. 🍷

## Williams Honored as Outstanding African American Faculty



**Kevin Williams, J.D., M.P.H.**, lecturer and field program supervisor at the Center for Public Health Practice, was named Outstanding African American Faculty of the Year at the “Berkeley Conference of African Americans” in March. Williams was nominated and selected for the award by students. He was presented with the honor at the conference gala, where he was applauded for being “a wonderful listener, adviser, and most importantly, role model.” Pictured above, Williams (right) receives congratulations from his father, Carl M. Williams, Sr.

Below, Williams (center) with (left to right) Mr. and Mrs. Ben Smith; Williams’s mother, Niculia “Nikki” Williams; his wife, Mecca Williams; and his father.

