

University at Buffalo

# Health Impact

From the University at Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions

Spring 2019



# 100 YEARS AND COUNTING

Epidemiology and Environmental Health  
Students Look to the Future As Their  
Department Hits the Century Mark **p7**

## FROM THE DEAN

The 100th anniversary of our school's Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health brings to mind two somewhat contradictory strains of thought.

First, a century of educating some of the best and brightest in the public health field, of conducting groundbreaking research, of working with communities both local and global, is grounds for celebration. If you read this issue's cover article, you'll undoubtedly see the evidence of the vital work the department has done and continues to do. Do join us if you can during the events we've planned to mark this milestone. (See page 10 for more information.)



Second, for all the advances the world and our field have made against certain diseases, the practice of public health is no less necessary than it was 100 years ago. When we consider the beginnings of the field, which of course go back much further than 100 years, we think about illnesses like typhoid, smallpox and cholera, about the conditions of poverty and of sanitary practices (or lack thereof) that led to deadly outbreaks and, often, to death. Today, we deal with the effects of urbanization, environmental degradation, gun violence, and other facets of modern life. These facets may have altered which problems we see most often, but public health research and practice remain at the forefront of efforts to mitigate epidemics of all kinds.

Yes, the specific concerns have shifted, but the discipline of public health is as relevant as ever. A century ago and more, public health efforts focused on the well-being of populations. Superbugs, climate change, addiction and other realities of our contemporary world demand that they continue to do so. The good news, however, is that public health keeps advancing, and SPHHP's Epidemiology and Environmental Health is a dynamic contributor.

**Jean Wactawski-Wende, PhD**

Dean, UB School of Public Health and Health Professions  
SUNY Distinguished Professor

## ON THE COVER

Students in SPHHP's Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health are the vanguard of the department's next 100 years. Pictured l. to r. are front row: Gauri Desai, Zeinab Farhat, Marissa Kawyn, Nadia Koyratty; middle row: Amy Shaver, Kexin Zhu; back row: Zhongzheng Niu, Olabowale Olola, Nehel Verma, Seth Frndak. Photo: Nancy J. Parisi

## TRENDING AT SPHHP



### Kordas New Co-director for Community for Global Health Equity

Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Environmental Health Kasia Kordas, PhD, has been appointed co-director of the Community for Global Health Equity (CGHE). A scholarly community across UB academic units, CGHE seeks to reduce the impacts of health inequities by supporting international leaders and researchers who can effect change. In her new role, Kordas supports CGHE's "Big Ideas" teams, which pursue collaborative research on global health challenges.

"One of my most important roles is to help faculty fellows be successful in carrying out their proposed projects because initial findings and experience can be leveraged to pursue further work in this arena. Faculty want their work to have significant impact—and so does CGHE leadership. To accomplish this, we connect faculty with external sponsors, and if need be, guide prospective applicants through the initial steps of applying for larger grants from the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and other foundations," Kordas explained.

Kordas notes that she has big shoes to fill, having replaced in her new role founding CGHE Co-Director Pavani Ram. Previously associate professor of epidemiology and environmental health, Ram is now senior medical advisor for child health with the United States Agency for International Development.



“Happily, Dr. Ram elected to retain a volunteer appointment in the department and has agreed to continue to serve CGHE in an advisory capacity,” Kordas said.

Kordas brings valuable training and international experience, and professional connections to CGHE. She trained in international health at Johns Hopkins University and has held positions at the T.H. Chan Harvard School of Public Health, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Bristol.



KASIA KORDAS

Kordas also helps lead the CGHE Early Life Exposome Big Ideas team. She works with a multidisciplinary

team of scholars to understand how to measure the totality of environmental exposures among young children and investigate how complex exposures influence children’s growth, development, and health.

“Expect to see the ongoing growth of CGHE in the coming months,” she added. “As we move into the summer and next academic year, we will continue creating opportunities to nurture research, outreach and education related to global health equity.”

Learn more about CGHE’s work at [buffalo.edu/globalhealthequity](http://buffalo.edu/globalhealthequity)



## Practice Facilitator Program Aims to Transform Healthcare

**SPHHP GAINED A PROGRAM RECENTLY** when the successful online Practice Facilitator Certificate landed at the school. Deborah Kane, program development, offers a look at a trending healthcare profession and program.

**What it is:** The Practice Facilitator program offers a certificate in how to improve healthcare delivery by advancing the quality of the medical-care environment. Students learn to apply quality improvement methods, data analysis and other skills that build practices’ or organizations’ capacity to provide healthcare focused on efficient practices and patient experiences. We offer three cohorts per year; each is usually 25 to 30 participants.

Ours was actually the first practice facilitation program affiliated with a university, so we’ve been a model for others. After we received a positive critique by an independent health-research organization called Westat, The Agency for Health Research and Quality gave our program “exemplary” status. We’re one of only three programs in the country to hold that designation.

**Why it’s vital:** Transforming healthcare is a priority on the national and global agenda. This is no easy task. As James Mold, MD, a practice facilitation pioneer, says, “It’s like trying to build an airplane midflight.” When the program began as a pilot in 2013, we were pushing the market; now practice facilitation and practice transformation are part of the culture of healthcare.

**Why it meshes well with SPHHP:** Public health has a strong interest in practice transformation. This is also a professional certificate in healthcare. Practice facilitation is part of the future of healthcare and a growing occupation.

**The natural candidates:** Participants are from anywhere, many with MPH backgrounds working in organizations and agencies. We’ve contracted training cohorts with CBOs, AHECs and state departments of health. We recently had 36 funded scholars complete the training. Quality improvement of healthcare is on the national agenda, making our program instrumental in changing the healthcare paradigm. The best candidates understand the role that change plays and welcome the opportunity to be a catalyst in that process.

Find out more at [sphhp.buffalo.edu/home/education/continuing-education/practice-facilitator-program.html](http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/home/education/continuing-education/practice-facilitator-program.html).



## SPHHP in Print



CHRISTOPHER CHAPMAN

Exercise and Nutrition Sciences PhD candidate **Christopher Chapman** is lead author of a study suggesting that drinking sugary, caffeinated soft drinks while exercising

in hot weather may increase the risk of kidney disease. Drinking soft drinks during and following exercise in the heat does not rehydrate, the study reveals. "Our data suggest ... these beverages elicit a mild dehydration and acutely elevates biomarkers of acute kidney injury compared to water consumption during and following exercise in the heat," says Chapman. Study co-authors include **Blair Johnson, PhD**, assistant professor of exercise and nutrition sciences, and **James Sackett, PhD '18**, with Assistant Professor of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences **Zachary Schlader, PhD**, as senior author. (Published ahead of print in the American Journal of Physiology—Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology)



MARIANTHI MARKATO

Professor and Associate Chair for Research and Healthcare Informatics **Marianthi Markatou, PhD**, and Research Assistant Professor **Georgios**

**Afendras, PhD**, both in the Department of Biostatistics, co-authored a study examining how biomedical investigation requires elucidation of underlying associations between biological systems and patient characteristics. Models are required to quantify uncertainty present in the real world, to enable discovery of relationships. Cross validation is a way of measuring predictive ability of statistical models that are widely used in biomedicine and public health. They studied various fundamental aspects of implementation of cross-validation for identification of models with optimal properties, and hence optimal capacity in enabling answers to important biomedical problems that impact human health. (Published in the Journal of Statistical Planning and Inference)



XUEWEI CHEN

Postdoctoral associate in Community Health and Health Behavior **Xuewei Chen, PhD**, is lead author on the study that shows access

to and use of health information are critical to personal and public health outcomes. The study also looks closely at the differences between urban and rural residents in their access and use of certain health information sources. Study co-authors include Associate Professor of Community Health and Health Behavior **Heather Orom, PhD**, assistant dean for equity, diversity and inclusion and director of graduate studies. (Published in The Journal of Rural Health)



JOSHUA GORDON

**Joshua H. Gordon**, a student in the MD/PhD Medical Scientist Training Program of SPHHP and UB's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, is

lead author of a study observing that postmenopausal women who have experienced loss of all teeth are at higher risk of developing high blood pressure. The findings have been cited in numerous healthcare and general-interest media outlets. **Jean Wactawski-Wende, PhD**, SPHHP's dean, is senior author. (Published in American Journal of Hypertension)



RACHEL HOOPSICK

**Rachel Hoopsick**, a community health and health behavior PhD candidate, is lead author of a study showing that U.S. Army Reserve and National

Guard soldiers who experience greater feelings of guilt and other negative emotions about never having been deployed are more likely to misuse alcohol. The study's co-authors

include Hoopsick's mentor, **Gregory Homish, PhD**, associate professor and interim chair, and **D. Lynn Homish**, project director, both in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior. (Published in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*)



ALBERT VEXLER

Biostatistics Professor **Albert Vexler, PhD**, published papers in *Statistics & Probability Letters*, *Journal of Statistical Computation* and *Simulation*, *Statistics in Medicine*, *Statistics: A Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, and *The R Journal*. One paper, co-authored with, among others, Vexler mentees **Li Zou** and **Hongzhi Wan**, focused on using distribution-free mechanisms for sequentially evaluating treatment effects in health-related experiments. An extensive study confirms that the proposed test outperforms a different, conventionally used test across a variety of alternatives.



GUAN YU

A paper by Biostatistics Assistant Professor **Guan Yu, PhD**, demonstrates how different modalities can provide complementary information in modern scientific research. Using statistical prediction methods with multi-modality data could deliver better prediction performance than using single modality data, the study suggests. Yu also published an article proposing a unified framework to construct confidence intervals for sparse penalized regression with a wide range of penalties by making use of state-of-the-art optimization tools in stochastic variational inequality theory. (Both papers published in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*)



## Researcher Awarded \$2.7 Million Grant to Study Military Personnel Health

**AN SPHHP RESEARCHER** who studies health outcomes among members of the military has received a \$2.7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue the research project.

**Gregory Homish, PhD**, interim chair and associate professor of Community Health and Health Behavior, received the award through NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse. The funding runs through 2023. Combined with a previous \$2.3 million NIH grant for the ongoing study, Homish has now received \$5 million for the project.



GREGORY HOMISH

"This renewal will allow us to examine two highly prevalent, yet understudied, experiences: soldiers who have never deployed and those who are separating from the military," said Homish. "We will examine, over time, how these two factors impact changes in health for soldiers and their spouses."

Homish's collaborators on the NIH grant include Kenneth Leonard, director of UB's Clinical and Research Institute on Addictions, and Bonnie Vest, research assistant professor of family medicine in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at UB.

Substance abuse is one of the most common health problems among military personnel and tends to be even higher among reservists compared to active duty, researchers say. While research on the military has focused largely on the effects of deployment and combat, a significant proportion of reserve soldiers are never deployed.

"The information obtained from this study can be used to better inform prevention and intervention programs aimed at improving health outcomes for our military service members and their families," Homish said.

# Recent SPHHP Research Awards

Recipient	Funding Organization	Study Goals
<b>DEPARTMENT OF BIostatISTICS</b>		
<b>Jeffrey Miecznikowski, PhD</b> Associate professor (Co-principal investigator)	Marshfield Clinic Research Institute	To electronically identify and characterize pneumonia types and to evaluate the association of oral-health status with the risk of pneumonia.
<b>Guan Yu, PhD</b> Assistant professor (Co-principal investigator)	National Cancer Institute/NIH	Optimizing a new liquid biopsy for cancer screening and early detection to further improve its sensing performance, and using lung cancer as the disease model to demonstrate its clinical use in cancer screening and early detection.
<b>Jihnhee Yu, PhD</b> Associate professor (Co-principal investigator)	Institute of Education Sciences	Testing how best to meet the special education goals of ADHD children. Yu will supervise data management, analysis and interpretation; formulate and implement data analysis plans; and help with publications.
<b>DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HEALTH BEHAVIOR</b>		
<b>Jessica Kruger, PhD, CHES</b> Clinical assistant professor	Mailman School of Public Health	Developing a new undergraduate course on incarceration and public health.
	Columbia University	Developing a new undergraduate course on incarceration and public health.
<b>Sarahmona Przybyla, PhD, MPH</b> Assistant professor	University of Rochester	Determining the socioecological connections in young black/Hispanic men who have sex with men of their acceptance of preventive medication and testing for HIV, and framing those factors in a behavioral-economics context to find new ways to prevent the spread of HIV.
	Mailman School of Public Health	Developing a new undergraduate course on incarceration and public health.
	Columbia University	Developing a new undergraduate course on incarceration and public health.
<b>DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</b>		
<b>Jo Freudenheim, PhD</b> UB Distinguished Professor and chair	Peter T. Rowley Breast Cancer Scientific Research Projects/ New York State Department of Health	Evaluating the microbiome in breast tissues, saliva and feces from women with breast cancer to determine if the consistent differences exist by breast cancer subtype and stage of disease.
<b>Ekaterina Noyes PhD, MPH</b> Professor	University of Rochester Center for AIDS Research	Determining if palatable foods high in fat versus high in carbohydrates differentially mediate the release of feeding- and stress-related hormones after a stressor, and if effects are modulated by weight status.
<b>DEPARTMENT OF EXERCISE AND NUTRITION SCIENCES</b>		
<b>Elizabeth Mietlicki-Baase, PhD</b> , Assistant professor	University at Buffalo's CTSI Translational Pilot Studies Program	Determining if palatable foods high in fat versus high in carbohydrates differentially mediate the release of feeding- and stress-related hormones after a stressor, and if effects are modulated by weight status.
<b>Blair Johnson, PhD</b> Assistant professor	UB's 2019-2020 Clinical and Translational Science Institute Pilot Studies Program	Examining the use of head-out-of-water immersion therapy for concussion management and determining if face cooling and/or the cold pressor test are potential objective signs of concussion.

# 100 YEARS AND COUNTING

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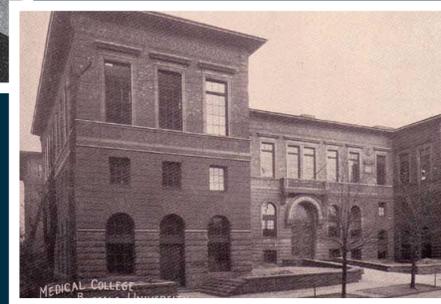
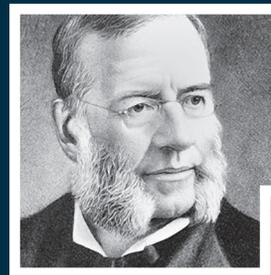
## A Century of Epidemiology and Environmental Health

# A

century of nearly anything is notable enough. For SPHHP's Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health, this year

marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of the department and 100 years of evidence-informed education, groundbreaking research, prominent researchers and community engagement. Take a tour of this timeline to discover the milestones in the department's evolution and growth.

(continued on next page)



Dr. Austin Flint, UB School of Medicine founding faculty member, publishes examination of local fever outbreak; work referenced by "father of field epidemiology" John Snow

1845

Public health courses first appear in UB medical school catalog

1891

Course in hygiene required for UB medical students

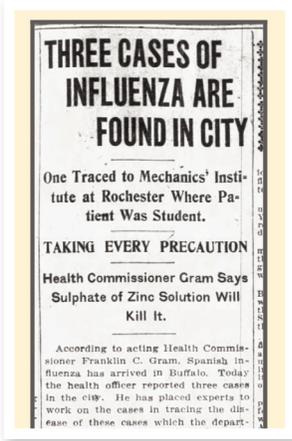
1912

## EPIDEMIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

is a relatively small department. But a large number of leaders in epidemiology and in public health have had associations with the University at Buffalo and with public health in the City of Buffalo.

Past giants of the field who spent time at UB include the late **Saxon Graham, PhD**, a father of nutritional epidemiology and leader in U.S. epidemiology; the late **Milton Terris, MD, MPH**, former president of the American Public Health Association and founder of the Journal of Public Policy; the late **Abraham Lilienfeld**, a leader in working to include chronic-disease research in the purview of epidemiology; **Michel Ibrahim**, professor emeritus at Johns Hopkins University and founding director of the American College of Epidemiology; the late **David Sackett, MD**, leader in clinical epidemiology and founder of McMaster University's Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics; and the late **Warren Winkelstein, MD, MPH**, a leading epidemiologist who conducted a landmark study in Buffalo of factors associated with blood pressure.

Notables currently working in the field include EEH's chair, UB Distinguished Professor **Jo Freudenheim, PhD**, and SPHHP's Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs **Gary Giovino, PhD '87** (see page 12).



Hygiene and Sanitation becomes formal division in medical school

1913

September: Influenza outbreak begins in Buffalo, contributing to 2000+ deaths in city, 50,000,000 worldwide

October: UB medical students aid local hospitals and temporary medical facilities during flu pandemic's height

1918

UB founds Department of Hygiene and Public Health, one of first universities in U.S. with an academic department for training public health officers, studying disease epidemics

1919

## OTHER NOTABLES CURRENTLY WORKING IN THE FIELD



Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center Senior Vice President of Population Sciences **Christine Ambrosone, PhD '95**. Molecular epidemiologist of cancer.



Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey Professor and Chief of Cancer Epidemiology and Health Outcomes **Elisa Bandera, MD, PhD '95**.



**Tim Byers, MD, MPH**. Former University of Colorado associate dean for public health practice and deputy director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center; cancer epidemiologist.



Chief of Clinical and Translational Epidemiology **Andrew N. Freedman, PhD '95, MD, MPH**, National Cancer Institute's Epidemiology and Genomics Research Program; cancer outcomes epidemiologist.



Deputy Director for Research Translation **Brian King, PhD, MPH '10**, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office on Smoking and Health.



Dean of George Mason University College of Health and Human Services **Germaine Buck Louis, PhD '87**. Reproductive epidemiologist.



**James R. Marshall, PhD**, distinguished professor emeritus, former vice president Population Sciences, Department of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. Cancer epidemiologist.



**Phillip C. Nasca, PhD**. Current professor/past dean, University at Albany School of Public Health; research professor, UB School of Public Health and Health Professions. Cancer epidemiologist.

# 1920s

Courses expand to include industrial and social medicine, medical jurisprudence, more

# 1930s

Department researchers publish disease survey on milk consumption in Buffalo

# 1946

Name changes to Preventive Medicine and Public Health

# 1950s

Department researchers, with Roswell Park colleagues, conduct work on diet and other factors related to ethnicity in relation to cancer

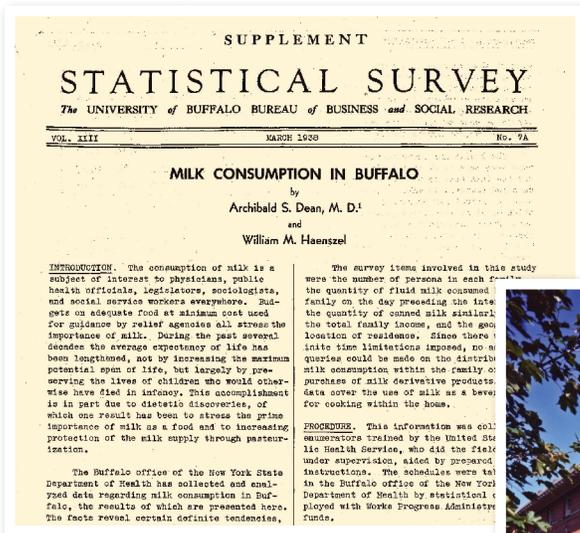
Department study one of nation's first to examine link between respiratory diseases and air pollution

# 1956

Department moves to former U.S. Marine Hospital, 2211 Main St., Buffalo

# 1960s

Department researchers complete one of field's first community-based studies of random population sample: Buffalo Health Study



Activity	No.	Mean amount of activity				Intraclass correlation coefficient	90% LCL
		Original reports		Recalled reports			
		Mean	SD†	Mean	SD		
<b>Standing (hours)</b>	137	3.76	2.9	3.25*	2.6	0.38	0.27
All participants	66	3.12	2.7	3.10	2.7	0.43	0.28
Males	71	4.36	3.0	3.38**	2.5	0.32	0.18
Females							
<b>Carrying (hours)</b>	137	1.17	1.5	1.53*	1.7	0.21	0.09
All participants	66	1.24	1.6	1.35	1.8	0.12	-0.05
Males	71	1.10	1.4	1.70**	1.7	0.31	0.17
Females							
<b>Lifting (hours)</b>	137	0.32	0.8	1.01***	1.7	0.21	0.09
All participants	66	0.46	0.9	1.14***	1.8	0.39	0.24
Males	71	0.19	0.5	0.89***	1.7	-0.02	-0.17
Females							
<b>Shoveling (hours)</b>	137	0.11	0.4	0.18	0.4	0.17	0.05
All participants	66	0.10	0.4	0.18	0.4	-0.07	-0.24
Males	71	0.12	0.4	0.19	0.5	0.36	0.22
Females							
<b>Other exercise§ (hours)</b>	137	0.80	1.4	0.79	1.4	-0.13	-0.25
All participants	66	0.83	1.4	1.01	1.7	-0.17	-0.33
Males	71	0.76	1.3	0.59	1.1	-0.09	-0.24
Females							
<b>Walking (blocks)</b>	137	3.81	4.1	3.25	3.6	0.32	0.21
All participants	66	4.33	4.7	3.51	4.4	0.45	0.30
Males	71	3.33	3.3	3.01	2.7	0.05	-0.10
Females							



**Enrique Schisterman, PhD '95.** Current president of the Society for Epidemiologic Research. Researches reproductive epidemiology etiologic study of reproduction and of exposure methodology.



**Holger Schunemann, MD, PhD '00.** Innovator with critical contributions to development of methods in evidence-based medicine applied to development of clinical guidelines.



**Maurizio Trevisan, MD '89.** Global leader in cardiovascular disease epidemiology.



**John Vena, PhD '80.** Founding chair, Department of Public Health Sciences, Medical University of South Carolina. Leader in environmental and occupational epidemiology.



**Jean Wactawski-Wende, PhD '89.** Researcher in women's health including leadership of the Women's Health Initiative.



**Robert B. Wallace, MD.** Professor of epidemiology and Irene Ensminger Stecher Professorship in Cancer Research, University of Iowa College of Public Health. Leading epidemiologist in research on aging.



**Zuo-Feng Zhang, PhD '91.** Epidemiologist with research focus on molecular epidemiology of cancer.

1963

Landmark department air pollution study guides regulators developing standards for federal Clean Air Act

1967

Department changes name to Social and Preventive Medicine reflecting growing efforts researching/teaching social aspects of health

Department establishes graduate master's program in epidemiology

1980s

Department researchers impact chronic disease epidemiology with examinations of cancer, cardiovascular disease, reproductive epidemiology fields

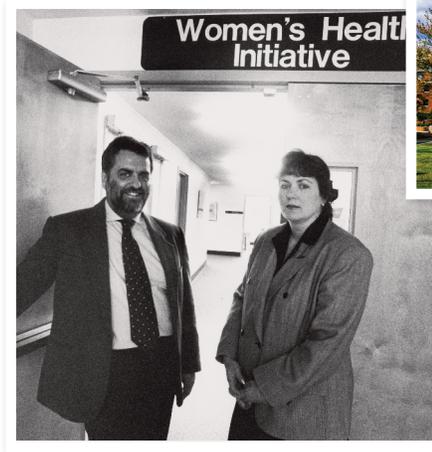
1993

UB is vanguard site for Women's Health Initiative, a clinical trial and observational study of the major causes of illness and death for postmenopausal women

Department establishes PhD program in epidemiology and community health

2003

School of Public Health and Health Professions developed at UB; department joins the new school



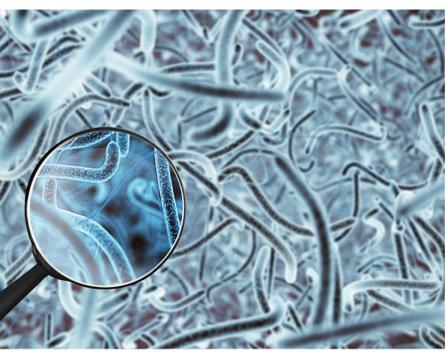
## Celebrate with a Centenarian

Join faculty, alumni, students and friends during the Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health's anniversary celebration. For details and to register, visit [sphhp.buffalo.edu/epidemiology-and-environmental-health/news-events/eeh-100th-anniversary-celebration.html](http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/epidemiology-and-environmental-health/news-events/eeh-100th-anniversary-celebration.html).

### THURS., MAY 30

- Tours and open hours: The Albright-Knox Art Gallery
- Saxon Graham Lecture: John Vena, professor and founding chair, Department of Public Health Sciences at MUSC, Albright-Knox Art Gallery auditorium
- Dinner: Marcy Casino in Buffalo's Olmsted-designed Delaware Park

Registration: \$100 / \$15 – symposium only • Students: \$25 / no cost – symposium only. Registration fees are non-refundable after May 9.



**University at Buffalo**  
**Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health**  
 School of Public Health and Health Professions

Department increases focus/resources on improving health of communities

Researchers investigate effects of microbiome on chronic disease; air pollution and reproduction; transgenerational effects of arsenic exposure; effects of nutrition on growth in low-/middle-income countries

2010s

Division of Environmental Health Sciences launches, offering resources for environmental health education, research and service opportunities at UB

2010

Department changes name to Epidemiology and Environmental Health to reflect ongoing focus on preventing disease, delivering care, teaching about public health

2014

Division of Health Services Policy and Practice, which combines innovative research and training, gets its first permanent director, Katia Noyes, PhD

2014

Degree programs: 3 MPH, MS and PhD

85 students

64 full-time and associated faculty

100% placement of department graduates

2019

**FRI., MAY 31, • 9 A.M. TO 4 P.M.**

**Epidemiology and Environmental Health 100th Anniversary Symposium**

**SPEAKERS**

- Plenary: Moyses Szklo, MD, DrPH, professor, Department of Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins University
- Germaine Louis, PhD, MS, dean, College of Health and Human Services, George Mason University

- Laura Smith, PhD, assistant professor, UB Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health
- Brian King, PhD, MPH, deputy director research translation, Office on Smoking and Health, Centers for Disease Control
- Shauna Zorich, MD, MPH, clinical assistant professor, UB Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health
- James R. Marshall, PhD, professor emeritus, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Institute

- UB Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health division heads: Lina Mu, MD, PhD; James Olson, PhD; Katia Noyes, PhD
- Poster presentations
- Reception: Hosted by Dean Jean Wactawski-Wende, PhD, and Dr. Karl Wende

**SAT., JUNE 1**

- Tour of Downtown Buffalo
- Other events (see details on website)

## Tobacco Use Authority Named Associate Dean, SUNY Distinguished Professor



GARY GIOVINO

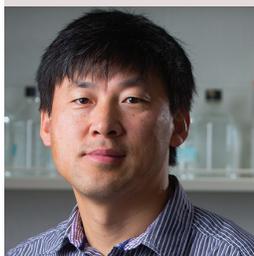
### INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED

authority on tobacco and nicotine **Gary Giovino, PhD '87**, has been named associate dean for faculty affairs in SPHHP. In his new role he will, among other key activities, work closely with the school's department chairs and oversee SPHHP's promotion and tenure process. Giovino was also named a SUNY Distinguished Professor, the highest faculty rank in the SUNY system.

Giovino had served as chair of the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior (CHHB) for more than a decade. He led the faculty and staff from the department's early beginning and plays a prominent role in UB's academic and research programs. Before joining UB, he was chief of the epidemiology branch at the Office on Smoking and Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Associate Professor Gregory Homish, PhD, is serving as interim chair of CHHB.



Giovino's research focuses on measuring and understanding tobacco use and dependence among youth and adults in the United States. He facilitated the development of the Global Tobacco Surveillance System, a major public health effort whose partners include the CDC and the World Health Organization. He also led the world's largest tobacco-use study, published in 2012, which surveyed more than 435,000 people from 16 countries. In 2015, he was appointed to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee, which advises the FDA in its regulation of tobacco products.



### PAPER OF THE MONTH

#### THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES (NIEHS)

selected research by Xuefeng Ren, PhD, Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health, as an Extramural Paper of the Month. According to NIEHS, each paper of the month is selected "based on their important findings and potential for public health impact." Ren's work found that arsenic exposure affected DNA methylation in similar ways regardless of when during life the exposure occurred, that the changes persisted for decades and potentially were inherited across generations. Contributing co-authors include Xushen Chen, Epidemiology and Environmental Health, and Guan Yu, PhD, Biostatistics. The paper was published originally in the journal Environment International.

# Postdoc Brings Epidemiology to the Masses



**AN SPHHP RESEARCHER** is helping the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) explain epidemiology to laypeople by curating the organization’s new public health-focused podcast “Epidemiology Counts.” **Hailey Banack**, postdoctoral associate in the Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health, also appeared on the first episode of the podcast, titled “Why should I trust that new health study?”

A committee of epidemiologists and SER members join Banack in curating the podcast. “It’s by epidemiologists for non-epidemiologists ... and intended to explain what epidemiologists do, and when people should believe, or ignore, the results of health research studies,” Banack explains.

New episodes of “Epidemiology Counts” air monthly. Each will focus on a specific disease or health condition and feature researchers who study it. The first episode set the stage for future editions by zeroing in on what epidemiology is, which many people don’t understand.

“The basic goal of most epidemiology is to measure disease frequency, so how frequent a disease is in a population, or to compare measurements of disease frequency in different groups,” Banack says.

#UBSPHHP ON SOCIAL MEDIA



## New on the Faculty



**Sarah Cercone Heavey, PhD, MPH '11**, director, MPH Programs and clinical assistant professor, Department of Community Health and Health Behavior

- **Previously:** Completed an NIMH-funded T32 fellowship at the Center for the Study and Prevention of Suicide at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Rochester Medical Center
- **Research focus:** Illicit and nonmedical opioid use



**Riana Pryor, PhD, ATC**, assistant professor, Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences

- **Expertise:** Heat stress and management of exertional heat illness
- Investigator in SPHHP’s Center for Research and Education in Special Environments



**Luke Pryor, PhD, ATC, CSCS**, clinical assistant professor, Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences

- **Expertise:** Human performance
- Member of the Medical Science Advisory Board for Quest Diagnostics’ BluePrint for Athletes

## Lecture Addresses Rehab's "Active Ingredients of Treatments"

This year's Glen E. Gresham Lecture discussed the answer to what many in rehabilitation science consider the field's "black box problem." In his talk "The Active Ingredients of Rehabilitation," John Whyte, MD, PhD, Institute Scientist Emeritus at Philadelphia's Moss Rehabilitation Research Institute, related recent advances in addressing that problem.

The black box for rehabilitation science, says Whyte, has been the field's inability "to describe and classify rehabilitation treatments based on their active ingredients"—actions taken by a therapist or other clinician to improve a patient's physical functioning. Instead, treatments are described by discipline ("10 hours of occupational therapy") or the problem being addressed ("6 sessions of gait training").

Whyte helped create a manual that describes the procedure by which rehabilitation treatments can be

defined based on their active ingredients. This greatly helps advance research into the treatments' effectiveness.

The Glen E. Gresham Visiting Professorship in Rehabilitation Science and Lecture was endowed by the late Albert C. Rekate, MD '40, and his wife, Linda.



JOHN WHYTE



## Nation's First Veggie Van Summit Rolls In

**SPHHP HOSTED THE NATION'S FIRST-EVER** mobile produce market summit in March, bringing together representatives from "veggie vans" across North America. Some 80 mobile produce market professionals gathered at the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences to network, attend training sessions and share their successes and failures.

Mobile produce markets popped up across the country over the past few years as communities sought new avenues to bring fresh, healthy foods to underserved neighborhoods. Keynote Elyse Guidas, MPH, executive director of Arizona's Farm Express, said these markets bring real benefits: "We bring equity so that the food system works for everyone. We provide the freedom to make your own food choices...and opportunities to create access to food," which generates further opportunities like children doing better in school.

SPHHP Assistant Professor of Community Health and Health Behavior Lucia Leone, PhD, is principal investigator on a five-year, \$3.1 million veggie van study funded by the National Cancer Institute. She and other conference organizers want to help market operators avoid "re-inventing the wheel...by giving people a toolkit they can use to ensure that their programs are incorporating evidence-based research and best practices to make their mobile markets as successful as possible," Leone says. "This conference is a great way to get research out to the people who need it."

Mobile Produce Market Conference keynote Elyse Guidas emphasized the benefits that veggie vans bring to underserved communities.

## Public Health Week Makes Strides

SPHHP's annual celebration of National Public Health Week took place in early April, leading off with an annual tradition, the Step Challenge. During the challenge (which actually lasted the entire month), SPHHP challenges the entire UB family—faculty, staff, alumni and friends—to get active. Step Challenge participants logged literally millions of steps as they competed for prizes and bragging rights.

## OTHER EVENTS INCLUDED

**Occupational Therapy Month, celebrating the more than 213,000 OT professionals and students nationwide who create fuller lives for their clients.**

Stressbusters like hatha and vinyasa yoga classes, free back rubs and stress-relief tips.

A session on using NARCAN to treat an opioid overdose with more than 200 people from UB and the surrounding community taking part.

**Global Health Day, a symposium that this year focused on substance use and how it affects local and global health, organized by the Office of Global Health Initiatives.**

## Bringing Health to a Tech Giant

### GOOGLING EXERCISE AND NUTRITION SCIENCE

alumnus Anthony Giuliano, MS '15, is sort of a meta-search experience: He actually works at Google.

Well, not Google precisely. Since 2017, Giuliano has worked for EXOS, the firm that runs the tech giant's fitness program. He joined as a performance specialist and recently stepped into a new role as account educator for EXOS at Google.

"At every Google office worldwide," Giuliano says, "there's a gym and wellness center staffed or designed by EXOS." Giuliano's home office is the Google Mountain View, Calif., campus. There, he runs EXOS's internship program and helps train new coaches. His is a new role focusing on quality assurance and educational opportunities for staff.

With Google's outsized reputation, you might wonder what working in that environment is like. Says Giuliano, "Where to start...? You grow so much more as a person because everyone wants the best for you. They give you feedback and critiques that I wouldn't have thought about but in a very constructive way."

The classes that Giuliano teaches "got so much better. The expectation is so much higher, and people push each other more honestly here."

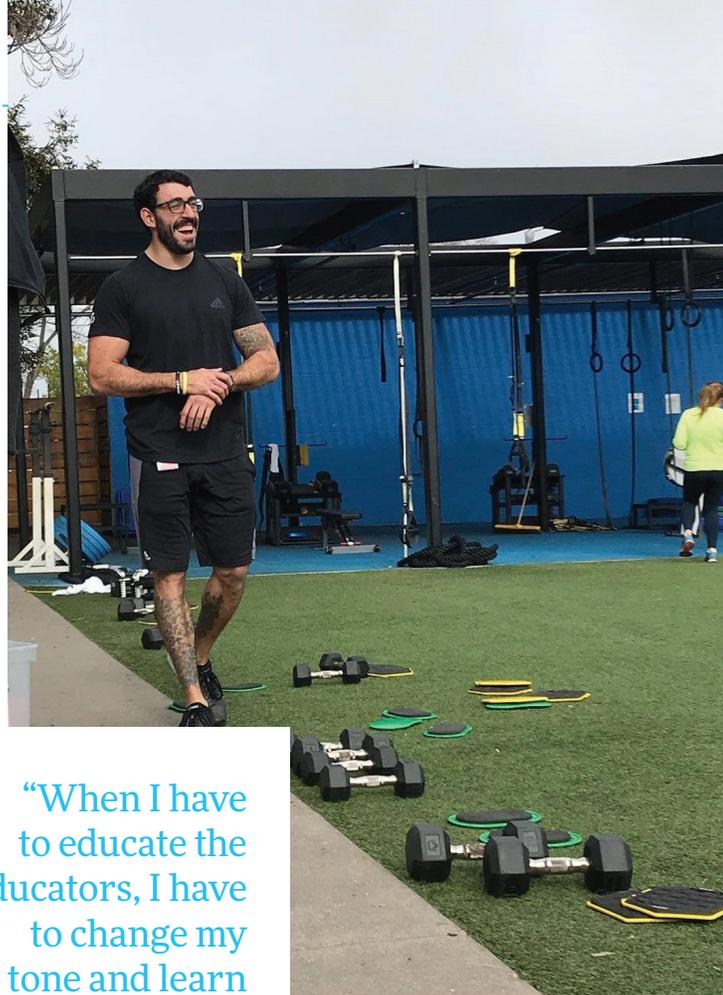
Unsurprisingly, one of the most important facets of Giuliano's job is to give feedback to help improve his co-workers' skills. That's where he feels his time in the Exercise Science program really helps.

"I learned from Dr. [David] Hostler's and Dr. [Harold] Burton's teaching styles," he says. "When I have to educate the educators, I have to change my tone and learn how to deliver feedback. Dr. Hostler showed us how to give generous, direct feedback."

Another highlight of his Exercise and Nutrition Sciences program was his tenure as a teaching assistant for undergraduate classes.

"The kids really wanted to talk about the subjects," he says. "That stretched my abilities because they would ask hard questions."

Giuliano encourages students to focus on "hard-to-learn skills—that will be your differentiator. Take the hardest



"When I have to educate the educators, I have to change my tone and learn how to deliver feedback."

TONY GIULIANO (PHOTO: YASMIN ARBAB)

course you can, and make sure you push through it. The people I look for have the ability to do that. Also, what are you doing outside of school? The people we hire have taken the extra steps. Ask yourself, 'How will I be objectively different and better than the other person applying?'"

One of those extra steps could be applying for an internship with EXOS and Google, he notes: "I'd love to see more UB people apply. They can visit the EXOS career webpage to find more info."

Giuliano envisioned himself as a coach for the rest of his life, but he says that EXOS offers people interested in fitness and wellness additional paths.

"You can go into management positions where you have to stretch your abilities as a coach and professional. Corporate wellness is an awesome career." Opportunities exist, he emphasizes, "in places you wouldn't think to look. Surround yourself with great people who can help you do what you really want to do."

Learn about an EXOS internship at [careers-teamexos.icims.com/jobs/12099/health-and-wellness-corporate-intern---paid-internship/job](https://careers-teamexos.icims.com/jobs/12099/health-and-wellness-corporate-intern---paid-internship/job).

## Alums Create Fund to Support Diversity

**DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION** in public health and social work are the goals of two UB alumni who have launched a student support fund. Danise C. Wilson, MPH, and Greer Hamilton, MSW, created the Hamilton-Wilson Student Support Fund after they recognized “the need to support students like us to ensure their success during school and within their career,” explains Hamilton. The fund provides \$1,000 awards to an incoming Black/African-American UB master of public health and a UB master of social work student. The awards are designed to help students with school-related expenses like books, field placement, transportation, and other needs.

The women’s goals are to mitigate financial barriers of Black/African-American students

and allow them to successfully complete their education; provide mentorship through a local network of social work and public health professionals; and strengthen and grow the representation of Black social workers and public health practitioners in the Western New York workforce.

Says Wilson, “I believe diversity enhances the ability to create quality programs and policies that are designed for communities in need. It is my goal that the Hamilton-Wilson Student Support Fund will assist more African Americans to pursue public health careers that directly impact underrepresented communities locally and throughout the world.”

To learn more or contribute:  
[hamiltonwilsonfund.com](http://hamiltonwilsonfund.com)



Greer Hamilton (l.) and Danise C. Wilson

“I believe diversity enhances the ability to create quality programs and policies that are designed for communities in need.”

DANISE C. WILSON



SUSAN BENNETT

### Bennett Recognized for “Excellence in Health Care”

Clinical Professor of Rehabilitation Sciences Susan Bennett, PT, DPT, EdD, ‘88, NCS, MSCS, was one of 25 healthcare professionals chosen recently to receive the inaugural Excellence in Health Care Awards. The awards program is sponsored by business weekly Business First. The 2019 Excellence in Health Care Awards recognize the most influential professionals in the Western New York healthcare industry. They are physicians, nurses, administrators, board members, advocates or researchers whose work has improved the way the health system works in area hospitals, labs, clinics, nonprofits, and health facilities. Bennett was honored with her fellow recipients during an event at the Hyatt Regency Buffalo.

# Influential CDC Digest Notes Alums' Tobacco Research

**THE PROMINENT DIGEST** "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report," published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recently devoted an "early release" announcement on a paper whose authors include two Epidemiology and Environmental Health program alumni. An early release indicates the paper discusses a topic of wide-ranging significance for public health.



BRIAN KING



ANDREA GENTZKE

Brian A. King, PhD '10, is lead author, and Andrea S. Gentzke, PhD '16, a co-author, of the article titled "Vital Signs: Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students—United States, 2011–2018." Based on their study's analysis of tobacco use among middle- and high-school students, they find that "tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States; nearly all tobacco product use begins during youth and young adulthood." They also note that the "considerable" rise in these students' use of e-cigarettes, even with no change in the use of other tobacco products during the period of the study, "has erased recent progress in reducing overall tobacco product use among youths."

The paper's conclusions and the stated implications for public health practice form a strong recommendation for long-term implementation of strategies to control tobacco in coordination with the Food and Drug Administration's regulation of tobacco products. These efforts, the authors note, "can prevent and reduce the use of all forms of tobacco products among U.S. youths."

The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report is CDC's weekly epidemiological digest for the United States and the main vehicle for publishing public health information and recommendations from state health departments.

Read more at [dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6806e1](https://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6806e1)

## STAY CONNECTED.

We want to hear from you! Visit the UB Alumni Association's UB Connect page and let us know what you've been doing since graduating.

>> [sphhp.buffalo.edu/alumni/connect](https://sphhp.buffalo.edu/alumni/connect)

**ATTEND AN EVENT!**

TO REGISTER FOR ALUMNI EVENTS VISIT [BUFFALO.EDU/ALUMNI/EVENTS](https://buffalo.edu/alumni/events)



## PT Alumni Catch Up at CSM

An SPHHP tradition continued during this year's CSM—The Combined Sections Meeting of the APTA (American Physical Therapy Association). For the seventh year in a row, alumni of the school's Physical Therapy program gathered in their downtime during a reception hosted by the Physical Therapy program.

About 40 alumni gathered at a D.C. watering hole to laugh, network, and reminisce. Some 17,000 physical therapists and associated professionals attended the main CSM conference.

"It's very common for many PT programs to hold an alumni gathering at this event; it's a great way for us to stay in touch with our alumni," said Director of Physical Therapy Clinical Education and Clinical Assistant Professor Juli Wylegala. She also reminds Physical Therapy alumni who attend CSM in the future to reach out in advance to ask about the reception.

"We would love to know where all of our alumni are working and be able to share their stories with others," she said.

## SPHHP Students Bring Home the Honors



Community Health and Health Behavior PhD candidate **Rachel Hoopsick** was a poster winner at the most recent American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting and Expo. Her poster, “Effects of Problems with Social Acceptance and Social Victimization on Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs and Illicit Drug Use among Reserve/Guard Soldiers,” was one of only two to receive the prestigious award in the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs section of the conference. Hoopsick works as a graduate research assistant with Operation: SAFETY (Soldiers and Families Excelling Through the Years), a NIH/NIDA funded ongoing study examining the health and wellness of US Army Reserve/National Guard soldiers and their partners.



**Lynne Klasko-Foster**, a PhD student in the Community Health and Health Behavior program, received the Society for Behavioral Medicine’s prestigious Distinguished Student Award for Excellence in Service Delivery award during the society’s Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions. SBM annually provides awards to students “who demonstrate outstanding academic and professional potential in the field of behavioral medicine.”



Two undergraduate SPHHP students were honored during UB’s 43rd Annual Martin Luther King Jr. commemoration. Public health major **Joshua St. Louis** received the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship, given by UB’s Minority Faculty and Staff Association, which honors a junior or senior who demonstrates high academic standards and leadership ability, and exemplifies a personal character that advances the spirit and philosophy of King. The association also honored **Dara Awoyomi**, a student in the Occupational Science/Occupational Therapy program, with its Academic Achievement Award for a sophomore or junior who meets high academic standards.



**Jacob Bleasdale**, who minors in public health and is a research assistant with Associate Professor Sarahmona Przybyla, received the SUNY-wide Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence. The awards recognize students who best demonstrate and have been recognized for the integration of academic excellence with accomplishments in extracurricular activities. Nominees are chosen by a committee named by SUNY campus presidents, and finalists are recommended to the SUNY chancellor to receive the award.



### Commencement to Feature First Public Health Bachelor’s Graduates

When SPHHP comes together for this year’s commencement ceremony, the audience will meet the first recipients of a bachelor’s degree in public health. Eighteen public health undergrads will move tassels to the left side of mortarboards to celebrate their successful completion of their degree.

Around 320 graduates from SPHHP’s other graduate and undergraduate programs also will leave the event as newly minted degree recipients.

The ceremony will feature an address by Erie County Health Commissioner Gale Burstein, MD, MPH, FAAP, who is also a research associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health at SPHHP.

**SPHHP COMMENCEMENT**  
1 P.M. | SATURDAY, MAY 18  
UB CENTER FOR THE ARTS

## 100% SUCCESS

**ALL 2017 GRADUATES** from SPHHP’s epidemiology and environmental health, master of public health, occupational therapy, and physical therapy programs gained a position in their field or went on to further study.

# Students Create Their Own Textbook

**“DO WE HAVE A FINAL?”** a student asked after seeing a large cake and extra guests on hand for the last day of Jessica Kruger’s PUB 320 course. Indeed, a final exam was to come.



But before that, Kruger’s 75 undergraduate students celebrated their history-making authorship of their own textbook. Small groups of graduate students have created content before, but never so many undergraduates, according to Kruger, clinical assistant

professor, Department of Community Health and Health Behavior.

Kruger’s students savored their achievement with cake and an unveiling of their scholarly work, “Models and Mechanisms of Public Health.” Every student received a bound copy, which they wrote during the semester and



used as the reading material for the course. The textbook is an open educational resource—free and accessible to anyone.

Students entering the lecture hall were greeted by SPHP Dean Jean Wactawski-Wende and special guests including Mark McBride, a UB alumnus and senior library strategist for the SUNY Office of Library & Information Services. Stacks of the textbooks were hidden underneath an SPHP banner. Kruger asked for a drum roll, lifted the banner and revealed the books.

Said sophomore Alexandra Kouptsova, who designed the cover, “Students have to buy really expensive textbooks. This brings power to the student again.” Students will continue to update the book’s contents as needed.

## Discovering the Differences

The winter session saw 16 undergraduate students in fields like public health, pre-medicine and others traveling to Jamaica for an experience of “learning through discovery,” led by Community Health and Health Behavior’s Associate Professor Emeritus Harold Burton, PhD, and Clinical Assistant Professor Jessica Kruger, PhD.

During their program, called Behavior Driven Disease: A Global Epidemic, students learned about Jamaica’s

healthcare system, and its social and behavioral issues. They visited clinics and other sites, learning about topics like nutritional differences between people who live in the mountains versus cities, the impact of unrestricted fishing, and more. The goal when they return to Buffalo is to transfer these lessons and experience to UB and their own communities and professions.

Rena O’Connor, a biomedical sciences student who took part in the trip, was beyond enthusiastic about her experience: “Not only

was I able to immerse myself in the Jamaican culture, I was also able to experience and study their healthcare system firsthand....

The experiences and interactions I had with the Jamaican people were truly inspiring as well. They demonstrated so much strength and resilience while also showing so much love and compassion....This trip has truly given me a new perspective on life and healthcare, as well as given me direction and inspiration for my future career in medicine.”



# Health Impact

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School of Public Health  
and Health Professions

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Designer: David Donati

19-SPH-001

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## My Bold Moment

"It was an incredibly remarkable experience to watch my students create the first-ever textbook written by 75 undergraduates, all while they were learning the content themselves. That type of experiential learning is powerful."

**Jessica Kruger**, Clinical Assistant Professor of  
Community Health and Health Behavior



**BOLDLY  
BUFFALO**  
THE CAMPAIGN FOR UB

Bold moments are what make us great. Moments when theory becomes reality. When we stand up for what we believe in. And when we work together toward the greater good. The Boldly Buffalo campaign provides countless opportunities for award-winning faculty and students to lead the way in public health research and practice. To learn how you can help create a better world, visit [buffalo.edu/campaign](https://buffalo.edu/campaign).