



# ATMCH Newsletter

Association of Teachers of Maternal and Child Health

Spring 2002

*Providing Leadership in Maternal and Child Health Education, Research, and Service*

## A Letter from the President by Arden Handler, DrPH

As I write this issue of the ATMCH newsletter, our nation is at war, the Enron scandals are captivating Congressional committees, and we are in the midst of a recession. While this is a logical time for deep pessimism, it is also a time of great opportunity in the Maternal and Child Health community. Welfare reform legislation passed in 1996 is up for renewal in 2002 and members of Congress are already beginning to consider their approach. House Democratic members have already stated that they want the renewal to focus on poverty reduction not just cutting the welfare rolls;

these efforts may be less likely to fall on deaf ears when unemployment is high, large corporations are going bankrupt, and those who were forced to leave welfare for work are finding their way back to welfare (if they have not already reached the five year time limit) More than I thought possible six months ago, we now have the opportunity to shape the next round of welfare legislation to focus on poverty reduction and improvements in education, job training (for men and women), child care and remove the punitive aspects of the legislation, particularly those for immigrants. Similarly, although the President's budget is focusing on a huge build-up for the Pentagon, we can clearly make the argument that an illiterate, unhealthy army cannot defend a nation. We can use this argument (even if it is painful to do so) to fight for the programs we hold near and dear to our hearts, such as access to health care, expansions in Title V, Head Start, WIC, family planning and income supports such as the Earned Income Tax Credit. There is certainly a lot of work to be done but our expertise as teachers and researchers will be invaluable in shaping policy in the next year as well as the next decade!!

So, enough about policy..... what is ATMCH doing? Since we met in the Fall, we have officially launched our curriculum posting project. We have already called for curricula in the following areas: Introduction to Maternal and Child Health, Reproductive and Perinatal Health, and Child Health. If you have not already done so, please send your curricula in these areas to Kalpana Ramiah at [KRamiah@asph.org](mailto:KRamiah@asph.org). We will continue to ask for curricula in areas such as Adolescent Health, Family Planning, Children with Special Health Care Needs and Policy and Advocacy, etc. over the next six months. As you know, last year we had already posted some Introduction to Maternal and Child Health courses on the web. Well, I am happy to report (based on a sample size of 1) that this effort is actually making a difference. At APHA, I was introduced to Diane Abatemarco, PhD at the Martha May Elliot Forum. She mentioned that she was teaching MCH at the School of Public Health of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. I said, "well, why don't you join ATMCH?" She said, "I am already a member. When I was asked to teach this course, I searched the Web, found the Introductory MCH courses,

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used these to help shape my course, and then feeling guilty, I joined!!” Well, there is an ATMCH success story for you!!!

We have also created an ATMCH member database, which sorts member interests based on their expertise. Both of these tools can be found at the ATMCH website ([www.atmch.org](http://www.atmch.org)), the curricula under the Teaching Tools button, and the member interest database under a new button, Member Interests. In addition, the ATMCH membership survey has been a major effort during this period (see Molly McNulty’s article page 4) and plans for a Continuing Education Institute at APHA are well under way. We will begin our Faculty Mentoring project after the Spring meeting.

On a more somber note, ATMCH mourns the passing of a wonderful colleague, mentor and friend to many ATMCH members, Dr. Helen Rodriguez-Trias. Helen Rodriguez-Trias was a tireless advocate for the reproductive rights of women around the world and was a past-president of the American Public Health Association and the National Women’s Health Network. She will be missed greatly.

If you cannot attend the March meeting, we will miss you, but as always we will continue to keep in touch via our ATMCH listserv. Importantly, there is an ATMCH election after the March meeting for both Secretary and President-elect; please remember to vote for our new leadership.

On a final note, congratulations to Pat O’Campo for winning the Loretta Lacey Award. If you are coming to Virginia, please join us for dinner on Sunday March 3 (details inside on page 5) to honor Pat. See you soon (virtually or in person).

### **From the Desk of Peter C. van Dyck, MD, MPH Associate Administrator for MCH in HRSA**

Happy 2002! I look forward to seeing you on Sunday, March 3 at the ATMCH meeting in association with the Association of Maternal and Child Health (AMCHP) National Meeting.

MCHB just received our FY 2002 budget, which includes an increase to the MCH Services Block Grant and some new grant programs. Changes to the budget are outlined in the table below. (See page 3)

We are pleased about the increase of funds for FY 2002, which puts the total MCH appropriation over \$1,000,000,000 for the first time. The President’s Budget for FY 2003 was also just released.

Aside from finalizing the FY 2002 budget, we have moved forward with the MCHB Strategic Plan. We are currently drafting the Strategic Plan, after input from expert panels in July and discussions and review of the draft at the October MCH Partnership Meeting and in December by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs and MCHB staff. We will have a draft ready for wider review shortly.

I am quite excited about several new initiatives underway at MCHB which include an evaluation of the Healthy Start Program for which we convened expert panels in January and a bullying campaign to disseminate findings regarding how to prevent bullying behavior.

In addition, MCHB has established a new EMSC research network partnership between MCHB’s Research and Emergency Medical Services for Children Programs to establish a Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network (PECARN). Four cooperative agreement grants totaling \$2.4 million will support the development of a national infrastructure from which to conduct collaborative research related to emergency medical services for children. For additional information, please contact Kishena Wadhvani, Ph.D. at [kwadhvani@hrsa.gov](mailto:kwadhvani@hrsa.gov).

HRSA/MCHB, in co-sponsorship with CDC, is developing a training course in maternal and child health epidemiology. The course is directed toward state personnel in maternal and child health, health statistics, or vital statistics who already have some background in data. The five-day course will include distance learning and long-term technical consultation components. Topics for the course are: 1) needs assessment and resource allocation, 2) program planning, monitoring, evaluation and research hypotheses, 3) data in MCH planning and analysis, 4) analyzing trends, and 5) statistics and epidemiology. The initial course is scheduled for late September, and will be conducted annually, thereafter. The instructors for the course are: Drs. Greg Alexander, Pat O’Campo, Debbie Rosenberg, and Roger Roachat, with Dr. Bill Sappenfield serving as adjunct faculty. Dr. Christina Park is the project officer from HRSA/MCHB.

MCHB has been working with the Association of Schools of Public Health to draft performance measures for the Schools of Public Health MCH Training Grants. Meetings held in Bethesda, MD in December and in Louisville, KY in January resulted in a high-quality set of measures that will be refined by the working group over the next several months.

I look forward to seeing you at the March 3 ATMCH meeting. (Dr. van Dyck and MCHB staff will be speaking at 3:00 p.m.)

**MCHB FY 2002 Budget**

<b>MCH Program</b>	<b>FY 2001 Appropriation</b>	<b>FY 2002 Appropriation</b>	<b>Difference from FY 2001</b>
<b>MCH Block Grant:</b>			
Grants to States	587,193,521	600,773,279	13,579,758
SPRANS	103,586,386	106,548,000	2,961,614
Earmarks	5,100,000	8,615,000	3,515,000
Subtotal, SPRANS	108,686,386	115,163,000	1,476,614
CISS	13,271,093	15,594,721	2,323,628
<b>Total MCH Block</b>	<b>709,151,000</b>	<b>731,531,000</b>	<b>17,380,000</b>
<b>Abstinence Education</b> Advanced and New	20,000,000	40,000,000	20,000,000
Abstinence Education Title V SSA	50,000,000	50,000,000	0
<b>Universal Newborn Hearing</b>	7,999,000	9,999,000	2,000,000
<b>Critical Care Programs:</b>			
EMSC	18,985,000	18,991,000	6,000
Traumatic Brain Injury	5,000,000	7,499,000	7,499,000
Trauma Care/EMS	3,000,000	3,500,000	500,000
Poison Control Centers	19,995,000	21,208,000	1,213,000
<b>Healthy Start</b>	89,996,000	98,989,000	8,993,000
<b>Bioterrorism-Hospital Preparedness</b>	0	135,000,000	135,000,000
<b>Total MCH Appropriation</b>	<b>\$924,126,000</b>	<b>1,116,717,000</b>	<b>192,591,00</b>

## ATMCH Membership Survey

By Molly McNulty, PhD, University of Rochester

### About the Survey

ATMCH conducted a survey of its members and potential members to identify current teaching activities, and to gauge the need for teaching and training support related to MCH at the graduate level.

The goals and objectives of the Survey Of Maternal And Child Health Teaching were:

- 1) To expand ATMCH membership
  - a. What services would potential members find valuable?
- 2) To assess needs of ATMCH membership
  - a. In what new services are ATMCH members interested?
- 3) To assess interest in Continuing Education Institute
  - a. What is the extent of knowledge of the MCH teaching competencies?
  - b. Is there sufficient interest in a CE Institute?
  - c. If so, what topics are of interest?

### ATMCH Membership Campaign

The first objective of the survey was to identify what services potential members would find valuable, in order to market ATMCH and broaden its membership base. A significant minority of potential members expressed interest in teaching support in maternal and child support. (See Table 1)

### ATMCH Member Needs Assessment

The second objective of the survey was to assess the needs of ATMCH membership. In what types of teaching assistance are ATMCH members interested?

The type of assistance most requested by ATMCH members responding was curriculum development (41%, N=17). About one third of ATMCH members responded were interested in a review of textbooks in the field, (37%, N=15) followed closely by help with course development and methods of course evaluation (32%, N=13 for each). Other types of teaching assistance in demand are distance learning, mentoring, needs assessment, and pedagogy (each 7%, N=3). Given a checklist of topics, ATMCH members were most likely to check were policy analysis and development (27%, N=11) and cultural competence (24% N=10). Other topics of assistance wanted included advocacy, children with special health care needs, community organizing, international health and development, and perinatal and infant health. ATMCH members also expressed interest in receiving help with teaching research methods, especially epidemiology, assessment, and qualitative methods (24%, 20%, and 20%, respectively).

**Table 1: Services Wanted by Potential ATMCH Members**

	POTENTIAL MEMBERS	
	N	%
	107	
Want assistance developing an MCH Program? (Y)	11	10%
<b>Types of assistance wanted</b>		
Course development	25	23%
Course evaluation	5	5%
Curriculum development	27	25%
Distance learning	23	21%
Mentoring	36	34%
Needs assessment	12	11%
Pedagogy (teaching methods)	12	11%
Service learning	19	18%
Textbook review	35	33%
other	12	11%
Want assistance developing an MCH Course? (Y)	34	32%
<b>Type of new assistance wanted</b>		
View curricula from other MCH	19	18%
MCH faculty visit	5	5%
Ongoing MCH TA	9	8%

### ATMCH Continuing Education Institute

The third objective of the survey was to assess interest in an ATMCH Continuing Education Institute, to be offered at the APHA Annual Meeting.

What is the extent of knowledge of the MCH teaching competencies?

Respondent	N	%
Member	30	73%
Potential	45	42%
Total	75	51%

Is there interest in a CE Institute? If so, what topics are of interest?

Almost 85% of ATMCH members indicated that they were definitely or possibly interested in attending an ATMCH sponsored CE Institute at APHA. (37% yes, 37% maybe). Encouragingly, interest was almost as high among potential members at 73% (17% yes, 56% maybe). Institute topics of interest among all respondents included an assessment of web-based teaching tools (51%, N=75), tools and techniques to teach MCH competencies (48%, or 71), and examples of syllabi; and of tests, projects, and assignments (43%, N=63, and 43% N=64). Every potential topic listed on the survey was of interest to at least one-third of survey respondents. ATMCH members' "top 3" CE topics were: assessment of web teaching tools, tools and techniques to teach MCH

competencies, and examples of syllabi. Potential members "top 3" CE topics were almost identical: assessment of web teaching tools, tools and techniques to teach MCH competencies, and examples of tests, projects, and assignments.

The complete ATMCH Membership Survey report, including all tables and the methodology section, can be downloaded as a PDF file from [www.atmch.org](http://www.atmch.org), under Member Interests.

### **Patricia O'Campo, PhD, Winner of the Year 2002 Loretta P. Lacey Award**

Congratulations to Dr. Patricia O'Campo who is the 2002 Lacey Award Winner. Dr. Patricia O'Campo is Associate Professor in the Department of Population and Family Health Sciences at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Hygiene and Public Health. She holds a joint appointment with the Department of Epidemiology, and is also an Associate with the Johns Hopkins Population Center. Dr. O'Campo was first appointed as an Instructor in Maternal and Child Health in 1990 and was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1991. Her PhD was from the Department of Epidemiology at Johns Hopkins and she served as a postdoctoral fellow for one year in the Department of Health Policy & Management. At the end of 1995, she was promoted to Associate Professor. Before coming to Johns Hopkins, Dr. O'Campo served as an intern with the Office of Research and Development at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

To date, Dr. O'Campo has been the principal investigator or co-investigator on eleven research projects and developed innovative methods for monitoring perinatal outcomes. The support for these projects include the NICHD, NIDA, Maternal & Child Health Bureau, the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, Baltimore City Health Department, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Heinz Endowment. Dr. O'Campo's work on development of methods to monitor rare perinatal events in small geographic areas and to measure the socioeconomic status of a population is considered highly innovative. She has explored methods that permit one to accurately estimate the simultaneous effects of individual and neighborhood characteristics on perinatal outcomes.

Dr. O'Campo has applied her scientific interests to the effects of class and race on health outcomes. In addition to conducting needs assessments for local health departments to guide programming and funding allocations for the care of MCH populations, she has investigated interpersonal violence; HIV-risk and drug use among low-income women and studied the ecological and cultural factors that influence child behavior in urban settings. Her contribution to the field has been acknowledged by the Maternal and Child Health section of the American Public Health Association by awarding her the Young Professional Award for 1994.

Dr. O'Campo is a respected teacher and has received her school's award for teaching quality, as well as an award from

the student assembly for advising, teaching, and mentorship. She has won several other awards, including the Institute of Medicine National Research Council Recognition of Young and Mid-Career Child and Family Scholars, the National Perinatal Association Outstanding Research Award, and the American Lung Association of Maryland's Distinguished Service Award for Smoking and Health. She was elected to the Delta Omega Society (honorary public health society), Alpha Chapter in May 1996.

Please join us at the awards dinner on Sunday, March 3, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. at the Terrace Restaurant of the Crystal Gateway Marriott, where the ATMCH and AMCHP meetings are held. Dinner will be approximately \$21 per person. Payment in the form of a check is due at the ATMCH meeting and should be made payable to ATMCH. If you plan on attending the dinner, please **RSVP by Wednesday, February 27** to Sandra Maldague ([smaldague@asph.org](mailto:smaldague@asph.org)).

### **Results of National Assessment of MCH Graduate and Continuing Education Needs Released**

**By Greg R. Alexander, MPH, ScD, University of Alabama at Birmingham**

The results of a recent nationwide assessment of maternal and child health continuing and graduate education needs have been released, indicating considerable demand by state and local public health agencies for employees with graduate degree training and appreciable unmet need for continuing education. The needs assessment, directed by Dr. Greg R. Alexander of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, gathered information from state Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) offices of state public health departments, from state Medicaid agencies, and from a 20% random sample of local health departments.

More than one-half of the MCH, CSHCN and local agencies reported that they either had a hard time or were unable to find qualified applicants who possessed the critical graduate-level skills they needed. Respondents rated the following as important graduate-level skills and competencies: leadership, systems development, management, administration, data analysis, policy, and advocacy. MCH epidemiology, public health and health care administration, and management were among the top rated critical unmet need areas for MCH professionals with graduate education.

State and local agencies reported limited capacity to meet the continuing education training needs of either their staff or the staff of other agencies. The number of reported **continuing education programs currently being provided** was modest. Program managers and program staff were perceived to be in greatest need for continuing education. Leadership, core public health skills, planning,

administration, performance measurement, evaluation, needs assessment, data analysis, personnel management, MCH epidemiology, policy/advocacy, and systems development were among the important continuing education themes identified. Having in-state, on-site and small conferences as a means for continuing education was the modality of first preference. This preference was compatible with the reported barriers to seeking continuing education, i.e., time away from work, lack of staff to cover functions while away, and cost. In addition, nearly 75 percent of the responses from state agencies revealed an interest in using distance learning technology for continuing education and 90 percent reported having the capacity available to do so.

This needs assessment was sponsored by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, HRSA, and was conducted by the MCH Leadership Skills Training Institute, Department of Maternal and Child Health, School of Public Health, University of Alabama at Birmingham. The final report is entitled "Graduate and Continuing Education Needs in Maternal and Child Health: Report of a National Needs Assessment, 2000-2001." The full report, along with an Executive Summary and a PowerPoint presentation of the report, can be viewed and downloaded from the following website: <http://main.uab.edu/show.asp?durki=44738>. Additional information can be obtained from Dr. Alexander at 205-934-6426 or at [alexandg@uab.edu](mailto:alexandg@uab.edu).

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FOR MCH POPULATIONS: PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

### **An ATMCH-Sponsored Session at AMCHP 2002**

This workshop will highlight projects that demonstrate how public health partnerships can work to address environmental health issues affecting maternal and child health. Highlighted projects will illustrate the collaboration of community organizations, academia, state health departments and federal agencies to integrate environmental health with maternal and child health policy and program development. The projects will also highlight the connection between the physical environment and the health and well-being of communities.

Edie Kieffer, PhD (University of Michigan) organized this session and will be moderating. Panelists include Peter Simon, MD, MPH (Rhode Island Department of Health), Maureen Edwards, MD, MPH (Maryland State Department of Health & Mental Hygiene) and Dr. Kieffer. The session will be held from 10:30 – noon on Tuesday, March 5 at the AMCHP meeting. Location to be announced.

### **ATMCH Internal Session at AMCHP 2002**

Greg Alexander and Donna Petersen will present on "Faculty mentorship and new faculty recruitment" at 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 3rd at the ATMCH Business Meeting.

### **ATMCH Student Research Symposium!**

MCH students have put together a symposium to share their research. The ATMCH student symposium will be held on Sunday, March 3, 2002, 12:30-1:45pm in Salon K at the Crystal Gateway Marriott. This is the same room as the ATMCH business meeting. Bring your lunch and come support the students' efforts!

### **National MCH Epidemiology Awards 2002: Recognizing Excellence By William Sappenfield, MD, MPH**

Have you, your colleagues or other individuals made significant strides in using data to make a difference for women, children and families in communities? Do you know someone whose MCH research is having national impact? Would you want to recognize this important work nationally? Take advantage of this new opportunity to specifically recognize excellence in MCH epidemiology.

Sponsored by 14 national health and public health organization, the Coalition for Excellence in MCH Epidemiology announces the third year of the National MCH Epidemiology Awards. The Coalition, which includes ATMCH, is recruiting nominees for this year's awards. Nominees are individuals, institutions, and leaders of institutions who have made significant contributions to improving the health of women, children and families through epidemiology and the effective use of data in the five major categories.

### **2001 National MCH Epidemiology Award Recipients**

**Advancing Knowledge**—Greg Alexander, University of Alabama at Birmingham

#### **Effective Practice**

**Local**—Kathy Carson, Public Health Seattle-King County  
**State**—Bao-Ping Zhu, Michigan Department of Community Health

**National**—Hani Atrash, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Outstanding Leadership**—Peter van Dyck, Health Resources and Services Administration

#### **Lifetime Achievement—**

**Young Professional Achievement**—Cande Ananth, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

These awards recognize both new research and effective public health practice. In fact, awards can recognize individuals and institutions at a local, state and national level.

For more details, visit

<http://www.citymatch.org/citymatch/mcheptawards.htm>.

Deadline for nominations is June 1, 2002. Nominations and questions should be sent to:

William M. Sappenfield, MD, MPH  
Division of Reproductive Health  
Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
E-mail: [bsappenfield@cdc.gov](mailto:bsappenfield@cdc.gov)  
4770 Buford Hwy. NE. MS-K22  
Atlanta, GA 30341-3717  
Phone: 770-488-5133  
Fax: 770-488-6291

### **Friends of Title V Report By Chris Goldson, AMCHP**

The FY 2003 appropriations season officially began with the release of the President's budget on February 4, 2002. In anticipation, AMCHP and our other national partners, The Friends of Title V, have been busy preparing a legislative strategy and message to use on the Hill this year.

The Bush budget includes a 4% increase for discretionary spending within the Department of Health and Human Services overall but cuts funding for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) by \$394 million from FY 2002 funding levels. The President's FY 2003 budget calls for level funding for the MCH block grant in FY 2003 at \$739 million as expected (The President's total includes funding for TBI). The budget also calls for an increase of \$33 million for the discretionary community-based SPRANS Abstinence Education program, for a total of \$73 million in FY 2003. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson stated that with this increase, "the federal government has demonstrated its commitment to bringing equity to the message of abstinence and teen family-planning services."

The budget request also proposes to level fund Healthy Start at its FY 2002 appropriated level of \$99 million. The request also calls for cuts in some programs, eliminating funding (\$10 million) for Newborn Hearing Screening and children's trauma programs at HRSA and encouraging states to incorporate these projects through the MCH block grant, carving \$85 million from the Children's GME program, and eliminating funding (\$120 million) for the Community Access Program (CAP).

The President also proposes a drastic increase for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Needy Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The Bush budget would increase WIC by \$364 million in FY 2003, including a \$150 million contingency fund. The administration expects this new

funding will allow the program to support a monthly participation rate of 7.8 million in FY 2003.

The President's budget also includes \$20 million for a program to promote responsible fatherhood. Faith and community based organizations would receive grants to "encourage and help fathers to support their families and avoid welfare, improve fathers' ability to manage family business affairs, and encourage and support healthy marriages."

The President also proposes to establish a New Freedom Commission on Mental Health to be supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This commission would be charged with studying and making recommendations for the mental health delivery system, including recommendations on the availability and delivery of new treatments and technologies for people with severe mental illness.

The request also repeats language proposed last year but rejected by Congress that would allow states to transfer up to 20 percent of funds appropriated under the Public Health Service Act and Title V between those grants. States exercising this authority would need to notify the Secretary of Health and Human Services in writing at least 30 days prior to implementing such a transfer.

The Friends of Title V will be working in the next few weeks to develop a message to take to the Hill to advocate for the MCH Block Grant and the populations it serves. This message will be based on the needs identified by states needs assessment as well as national issues, such as mental health or dental health, that the MCH block grant can play a role in addressing.

### **Center for Child Health Research By Lewis Margolis**

The Center for Child Health Research is a national research institute, created by the American Academy of Pediatrics in September 1999, to improve the physical, mental, and social health of children by catalyzing and synthesizing research from across academic disciplines, and then using the research to inform public policies and improve medical practices. One of the Center's primary activities is to convene cross-disciplinary, topic-focused groups of experts to work to identify the unanswered questions in a particular area or subject, and to develop plans for how best to find the answers to those questions. Current areas of interest include maternal depression and child health, income inequality, Latino health, rural health, and tobacco use prevention. For more information about possible collaboration, contact [cchr@aap.org](mailto:cchr@aap.org).

## **NEW WEB-BASED TOOLS FOR MCH RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

### **New Distance Learning Program in MCH Epidemiology**

**By Carol Hogue, PhD, MPH**

A new distance learning program in Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology will be offered for the first time by the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University beginning in the fall of 2002. Students may apply either for a 3 year mid Career MPH Program "Option" or a 12 month Certificate Program. Both programs are designed to train and certify working professionals with a quantitative orientation who are employed by state and local public health organizations. The masters' level programs are intended to impart specific knowledge and skills to plan, manage, and evaluate women's and children's health and reproductive health and family planning programs. They require two 3-day weekends per term in residence at the Rollins campus in Atlanta, Georgia. Limited number of partial scholarships available. For more information **send an email to [kbell@sph.emory.edu](mailto:kbell@sph.emory.edu)**.

### **www.FolicAcid.net: Training Future Health Professionals About Folic Acid and the Prevention of Birth Defects**

**By Sandra Maldague, MPH, and Carol Hogue, PhD, MPH**

When all women of childbearing age consume an adequate amount of folic acid, up to half of neural tube defects will be prevented. Despite the well-established health benefits of folic acid, many women either do not consume it in the required quantity or take it too late to protect their babies. Research suggests that women will improve consumption when they hear clear messages from their health providers. Towards improving provider/client communication, and with support from the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation and sponsorship by the ASPH MCH Council and the Federation of Associations of Schools of the Health Professions (FASHP), the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) has developed a web-based short course (45 minutes) for training predoctoral level students in public health, allied health, dentistry, medicine (including osteopathic), nursing, optometry, and pharmacy about the benefits of folic acid and issues to address in folic acid counseling.

To date, over 400 students across all health professions have participated in the pilot test, with a mean pretest score of 70.83% (S.D.=14.336) and a median score of 69.00%. On the post-test, students performed significantly better ( $p < 0.005$ ) (mean score of 88.97 (S.D.=8.560) and median score of 92.00). Over 94% of students in the evaluation agreed that the module provides convincing evidence that counseling individuals about folic acid is important. Over

85% of students who completed the online evaluation agreed that they are more confident in their ability to counsel individuals on folic acid after completing the module.

The website will be launched in April 2002 and has the capability of reaching students in the health professions throughout the United States.

For more information about the website and how it can be used in the classroom, contact Sandra Maldague at [smaldague@asph.org](mailto:smaldague@asph.org). The website may be viewed at [www.folicacid.net](http://www.folicacid.net). Demonstrations of the website will be available at the ASPH booth (Booth II) at the AMCHP Exhibit Hall.

### **UNC Updates Data Skills Online**

**By Sarah Pfau, MPH, UNC Chapel Hill School of Public Health**

Now in its second year, the Data Skills Online project in the Department of Maternal and Child Health in the School of Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has updated its web site ([www.sph.unc.edu/toolbox/](http://www.sph.unc.edu/toolbox/)). An upgrade of WebCT (Web Course Tools) has enhanced capacity to provide web accessibility for persons with disabilities.

In addition, all tools are in one WebCT course space, simplifying logon and access. There are now 8 self-instructional, distance learning tools to assist you with day-to-day professional tasks such as:

- Working with population-based data;
- Developing and reporting measures for the Title V Block Grant application;
- Monitoring and evaluating progress on specific program activities; and
- Developing strategies to meet the needs of the MCH population.

Tools take a maximum of three hours each to complete, and can be accessed from any Internet connection. A "resume" function allows the user to return to a tool at any time.

Data Skills Online tools are entirely self-instructional. Learners assess their performance through quizzes with hypertext links to appropriate answers and activities for practicing the application of the theory presented in the lessons. Tools also have hypertext links to definitions for new terms discussed and online references and resources.

Analytic and technology tools currently available are:

- "Subscribing to a List"
- "Browser Basics and Searching"
- "Web Design"
- "Creating Spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel"
- "Overview of Primary Data Collection Instruments"
- "Designing Questionnaires"

- “Developing an Analysis Plan for a Quantitative Study”
- “Geographic Information Systems”

Other tools currently being field-tested:

- “PRAMS Data Analysis Tool for Title V Performance Measures”
- “Understanding Title V Performance Measures and the Title V Information System”
- “Conducting a Health Services Needs Assessment for Children with Special Health Care Needs”

Other tools under development:

- “Economic Analysis in Maternal and Child Health”
- **“Measuring Maternal Morbidity”**
- “Assessing Infant Mortality Factors at the State and Local Level”
- “Creating a Relational Database in Microsoft Access 2000”
- “Developing an Analysis Plan for a Qualitative Study”
- “Program Evaluation Fundamentals”
- “Proposal Writing Fundamentals”

In the past year, nearly 600 people representing 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and several other countries have registered for at least one Data Skills Online tool. Nearly 70% of registrants from January through September 2001 indicated that they were using the Data Skills Online web site to improve skills for their current job.

More than 90% of registrants reported that the tools used improved both knowledge and confidence in the subject matter of interest. Some participants have even gone on to train their co-workers in the skills learned on the web site. Data Skills Online users are saying:

•“Overall, this experience has been extremely valuable to me, in raising my confidence level in using the Internet and the computer in general. I am much more comfortable with the terminology and various software capabilities, at a time when it is a professional survival skill.” (Web Design tool)

•“I thought I knew a lot about surveying for data. This short course broadened my knowledge and made me think about new ways to enhance and make data collection more useful.” (Primary Data Collection tool)

•“This was a very enlightening project. I can see many ways that I will be able to use this knowledge to gather and analyze data to determine if we are providing sufficient health care in my community.”(Developing an Analysis Plan for a Quantitative Study tool)

Data Skills Online has been developed with a grant from the Division of Research, Education, and Training in the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, HRSA. No continuing education units (CEUs) are offered. However, all users may

download and print out a Certificate of Completion. Six-month follow up evaluation surveys of individuals who completed at least one Data Skills Online tool revealed that several people had used their Certificate of Completion to apply for Continuing Education Units.

Please visit [www.sph.unc.edu/toolbox/](http://www.sph.unc.edu/toolbox/) to learn more about the Data Skills Online project and access the tools available.

## **PeriStats – An Interactive Web-based Perinatal Data Resource**

**By Michael Davidoff, March of Dimes**

PeriStats, launched last fall by the March of Dimes, provides quick access to maternal, infant and child health-related data at the state-level and for many indicators at the county-level. Data are also available for the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the United States. While originally developed for researchers, policy makers, health care providers and the general public, an overwhelming response from students shows that it provides considerable utility for graduate and professional studies.

On the site, users can request recent statistics on topics such as infant mortality, low birthweight, preterm birth, tobacco, alcohol and illicit substance use, cesarean section rates, and health insurance coverage. Detailed information by race, ethnicity, and maternal age for many indicators is also available. PeriStats users can select the output format for this information including useful graphs and tables, which can be printed or copied and pasted into reports and presentations. The PeriStats system uses data compiled from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, and the National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Governors Association (NGA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the March of Dimes.

To try PeriStats, go to [www.marchofdimes.com/peristats](http://www.marchofdimes.com/peristats). Please contact Michael Davidoff at the National Office of the March of Dimes if you have further questions – [mdavidoff@modimes.org](mailto:mdavidoff@modimes.org) or (914) 997-4549.

## FACULTY POSITIONS

### **Department of Community Health Sciences Tulane University School Of Public Health & Tropical Medicine**

The Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine is seeking a tenure-track faculty member in the Department of Community Health Sciences. This Department has sections in Maternal & Child Health, Health Education & Communications, and Nutrition. The Department is interested in applicants with expertise in any of these three areas who focus on community or population health, particularly those with expertise in health communication, community/population-based nutrition, and the promotion of health and prevention of illness in women and children. Responsibilities include teaching graduate students in introductory and advanced courses in public health, conducting related research, publishing scholarly work, and performing community service. The rank of the position will depend on the experience of the successful applicant. The position requires an earned doctorate in a relevant field, experience as a funded investigator, publications in peer-reviewed journals, and graduate-level teaching experience.

Minority applicants and women are especially welcome. Applications will be reviewed until the position is filled. Interested applicants should send letters of interest and resumes to:

Thomas Farley, MD MPH, Professor and Chair  
Department of Community Health Sciences  
Tulane University School of Public Health & Tropical  
Medicine  
1440 Canal Street, Suite 2301  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70112  
(504) 588-5391  
(504) 584-3540 fax  
e-mail [tfarley@tulane.edu](mailto:tfarley@tulane.edu)

Closing date: May 1, 2002

### **Assistant Or Associate Professor, MCH Nutrition University Of Tennessee, Knoxville**

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is seeking qualified candidates for a tenure track position at the Assistant/Associate Professor rank in nutrition or closely related area; R.D. required. Research and teaching experience required for rank of Associate Professor. Salary will commensurate with experience and qualifications. Plan, conduct and secure funding for nutrition research with emphasis on infants, children, or adolescents. Interest in collaborative research efforts. Teach graduate level courses in maternal/child nutrition, other graduate and/or undergraduate courses as needed. Participate in department,

college and university activities.

The position is available July 1, 2002 or when available. The position will be open until filled; however, for full consideration, applicants are encouraged to submit a curriculum vitae, transcripts, and arrange for three letters of reference to be sent to the search committee chair by March 15, 2001:

Jean Skinner, Ph.D., R.D.  
Chair of Search Committee  
Department of Nutrition  
The University of Tennessee  
1215 W. Cumberland Ave., 229 JHB  
Knoxville, TN 37996-1900  
Telephone: 865-974-6244  
FAX: 865-974-3491  
E-mail: [skinner@utk.edu](mailto:skinner@utk.edu)

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/TitleIX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services.

### **Assistant Or Associate Professor, Adult Nutrition University Of Tennessee, Knoxville**

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is seeking qualified candidates for a tenure track position at the Assistant/Associate Professor rank in nutrition or closely related area with graduate coursework in public health/public health nutrition; R.D./health agency experience highly desirable. Research and teaching experience required for rank of Associate Professor. Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications. Plan and conduct public health nutrition research with emphasis on adults and age-related disorders. Interest in collaborative research efforts. Teach graduate level courses in public health nutrition concentration, other graduate and/or undergraduate courses. Participate in department, college and university activities.

The position is available August 1, 2002 or when available. The position will be open until filled; however, for full consideration, applicants are encouraged to submit a curriculum vitae, transcripts, and arrange for three letters of reference to be sent to the search committee chair by March 15, 2002:

Betsy Haughton, Ed.D., R.D.  
Chair of Search Committee  
Department of Nutrition  
The University of Tennessee  
1215 W. Cumberland Ave., 229 JHB  
Knoxville, TN 37996-1900  
Telephone: 865-974-6267  
FAX: 865-974-3491  
E-mail: [haughton@utk.edu](mailto:haughton@utk.edu)

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title

VI/TitleIX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services.

## STUDENT INTERNSHIP POSITIONS

### March of Dimes Perinatal Data Center 2002 Mentoring/Internship Program

**Background:** The March of Dimes Perinatal Data Center (PDC) offers internships (20 hours/week minimum) for students in graduate or professional school for spring, summer and fall semesters.

**Program:** Internship activities will involve epidemiologic and statistical analysis of national and some state and local perinatal data, assisting PDC staff with development of publications and providing March of Dimes national and field staff, other health professionals, and the public, access to national and state vital statistics, survey data, and outcome and associated risk factor data primarily for: 1) program planning and evaluation, 2) policy development and advocacy, and 3) fund raising. Interns will have the opportunity to analyze individual and/or community level data from national data sets including the National Center for Health Statistics' natality and linked-birth infant death files, the Area Resource File and Census data files.

**Purpose:** To provide graduate or professional school students, interested in maternal and infant health, with field experience in perinatal epidemiological and statistical analyses for use in guiding public policy and planning maternal and infant health programs.

Questions about the internship can be directed to Joann Petrini, Director, Perinatal Data Center, 914.997.4515 or [PerinatalDataCenter@modimes.org](mailto:PerinatalDataCenter@modimes.org).

**Deadlines:** Applications for the summer internship are due by **March 31st**. Fall and Spring semester applications are ongoing.

For more information about the internship, visit <http://www.modimes.org/About2/EmployOpps/Postings/National/2002MentIntProg.htm>

### Spring ATMCH Meeting

The Spring ATMCH meeting will be held on Sunday, March 3, 2002 in conjunction with the annual AMCHP meeting. The ATMCH Student Research Symposium and the ATMCH Business Meeting will be held in Salon K.

Crystal Gateway Marriott  
1700 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Arlington, VA 22202

For hotel reservations at the Crystal Gateway Marriott,

please call 1-703-920-3230 or 1-888-236-2427. For more information about the AMCHP meeting, visit [www.amchp.org](http://www.amchp.org).

### ATMCH Executive Committee Meeting

Time: 10:00am – 12:00noon

### ATMCH Student Research Symposium

Time: 12:30-1:45pm

### ATMCH Business Meeting

Time: 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

The agenda for the Business meeting will be sent out to the ATMCH listserv by February 18, 2002.

This year, ATMCH has a table top exhibit (Booth Z) at the AMCHP meeting to disseminate ATMCH membership applications, brochures and any other ATMCH or academic MCH materials. We need few more volunteers to provide additional staffing for the booth for the following times:

Monday, March 4	10 a.m. - noon
	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Tuesday, March 5	10 a.m. - noon

If you are interested in volunteering at the booth or would like to place some flyers on the table, please contact Sandra Maldague at [smaldague@asph.org](mailto:smaldague@asph.org). Thank you to Gene Declercq, Jose Gorrin-Peralta and Arden Handler for volunteering.

### News From the ATMCH Secretariat

The ATMCH secretariat updates the membership on events and news relating to academic MCH, maintains and updates the ATMCH website and listserv, coordinates and staffs ATMCH meetings, and provides staff support for general ATMCH business, including the development of the member interest database and MCH curriculum database.

If you have any updates or changes to your contact information and interest areas, please send them to Ms. Kalpana Ramiah at [Kramiah@asph.org](mailto:Kramiah@asph.org). The website is updated on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Please pay your membership dues for 2001-2002 fiscal year, if you have not yet done so. Please note that only members in good standing will receive all ATMCH announcements.

Let us know how we're doing! We always appreciate hearing from our members. If you have any questions about the newsletter or upcoming ATMCH meetings, please contact Sandra Maldague at [smaldague@asph.org](mailto:smaldague@asph.org).

The *ATMCH Newsletter* is produced by Kalpana Ramiah, who works closely with Sandra Maldague and Allison Foster to staff the ATMCH secretariat.

You may reach us at:

**The Association of Teachers of Maternal and Child Health (ATMCH)**

**1101 15<sup>th</sup> St. NW Suite 910**

**Washington, DC 20005**

**Phone: 202-296-1099**

**Fax: 202-296-1252**