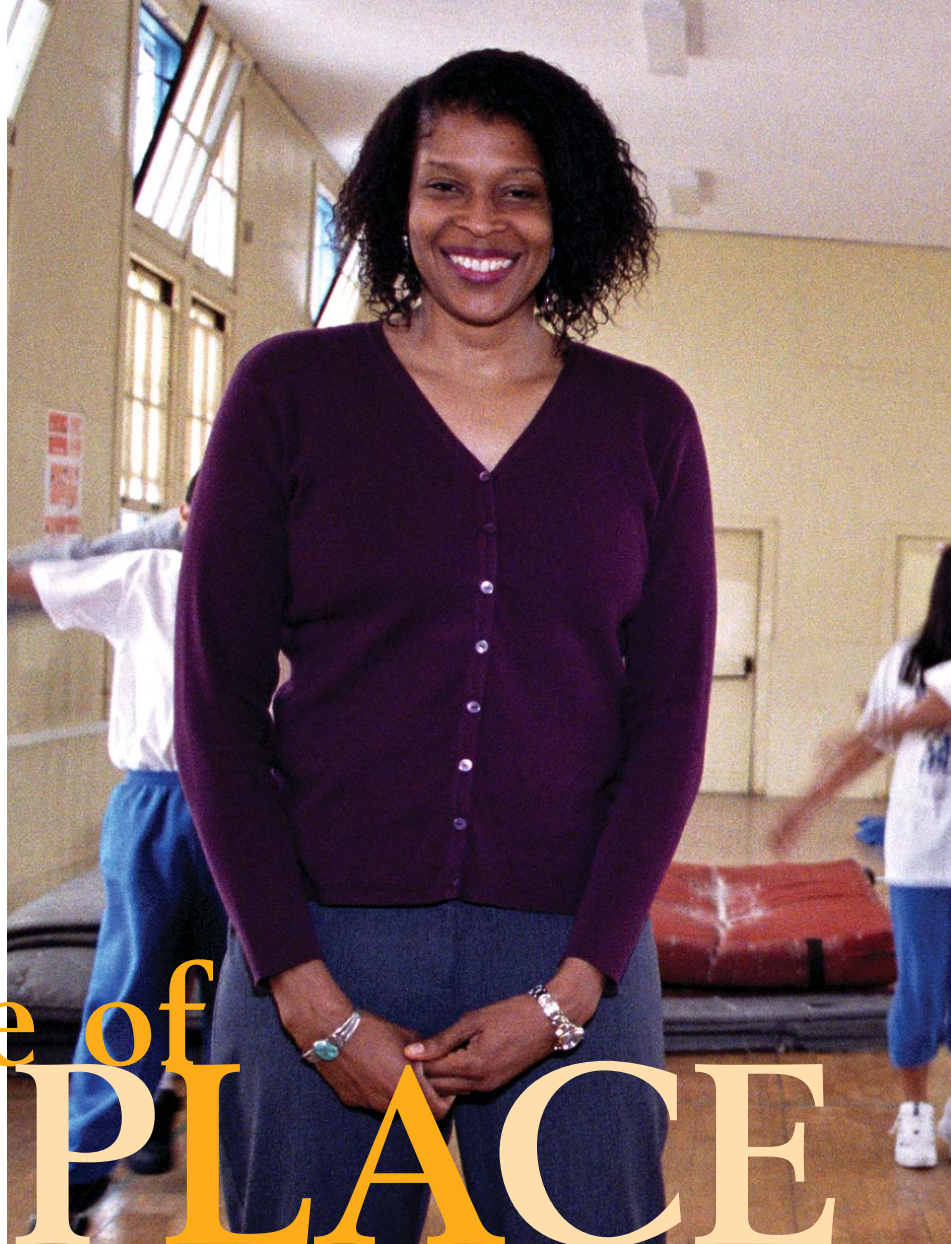


**IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH COMMUNITY-
BASED INSTITUTIONS
AND ACTIVISTS,
THE SCHOOL'S
FACULTY, STUDENTS
AND ALUMNI
ARE HELPING
TO BUILD STRONGER
NEIGHBORHOODS.**



A Sense of PLACE

“We’ve had years of interventions that are individually focused, and once the resources are gone, the behaviors typically return to what they were before. To make a long-term impact, you have to affect the environment.”

—Dr. Antronette Yancey

At Elizabeth Learning Center, a K-12 school

in Cudahy, Calif., 500 parents each week attend adult education and parenting classes. Neighborhood children begin a cooperative nursery program at age 1; by the time they start school, they’ve had four years of preschool education and enrichment, including Head Start. A wide range of preventive and primary health care services is offered.

One of five pilot sites for UCLA’s Community Education and Resource Centers (CERC) initiative, the Elizabeth model is about more than just integrating health, education and social services, according to Dr. Neal Halfon, whose Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, based in the School of Public Health, has played a prominent role in the Elizabeth center’s recent reconfiguration. “It’s engaging the community’s families in their children’s life-long learning trajectory,” says Mary View-Schneider, the center’s assistant director.

A second CERC site, Hope Street Family Center, is a collaboration between the UCLA center and the California Hospital Medical Center. Hope Street provides comprehensive child development and family support services for disadvantaged populations in the downtown Los Angeles area. Benefits for families enrolled at the center include home visits; early childhood education; licensed

Dr. Antronette Yancey of the School's faculty heads "Community Steps to Minority Youth Fitness," a middle school-based program of increased physical activity and education about healthier diet for a population at high risk for Type 2 diabetes.



child care; child development screening and assessment; medical, dental, and mental health services; parenting classes; adult education and vocational training; job placement; and youth services including tutoring, after-school programs, weekend activities and summer camp.

Halfon's heard the question before: What do early childhood education, vocational training and the like have to do with public health? His answer: Quite a bit. "We're in a new era of public health in this country," he says. In the first era, the focus was on infectious diseases; in the second, the field also sought to tackle chronic diseases with interventions designed to reduce risk factors and promote healthy lifestyles. Now a third layer has been added, one Halfon refers to as "Health for All."

"It's a much broader health-promoting agenda," he says. "The new model understands that your birth weight and the amount of nutrition you get in the first year of life is a strong predictor of whether or not you're going to get heart disease. It understands



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—Dr. Neal Halfon

that the amount that children are read to in the first year of life influences their vocabulary size at age 3, which influences their reading readiness at age 5, which influences their third-grade reading abilities, which influences their high school test scores and whether they get into college, which influences the kind of job they get, which influences whether or not they get Alzheimer's disease."

The Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities is steeped in community-building work. Among others, there's TIES for Adoption, an innovative model for moving foster children into permanent homes; the Proposition 10 School Readiness Program, in which experts at the center are providing technical assistance in the development of systems to ensure that children are cognitively, emotionally, and physically prepared to start school; and the Program for Integrated School and Community Solutions, a collaboration with eight school districts and community partners to integrate health and social services into the schools and assist the districts in launching comprehensive early childhood programs.

Chancellor Albert Carnesale launched the CERC initiative as part of a larger effort to increase UCLA's presence in the Los Angeles region in a way that best serves people in the community. Dean Linda Rosenstock is strongly committed to such efforts, and the School's new strategic plan identifies community partnerships in greater Los Angeles as a high priority. The "UCLA in L.A." focus is nowhere better exemplified than in the School of Public Health, which has myriad faculty research and outreach efforts (far too many to mention in this space) designed to promote the long-term well-being of the community. Between its faculty, students and

“Underserved patients tend not to access even services available to them. We knew we couldn’t just set up our services in Westwood and say, ‘Come to us.’ We had to go to them.”

—Dr. Mark Litwin



Erin Wilson

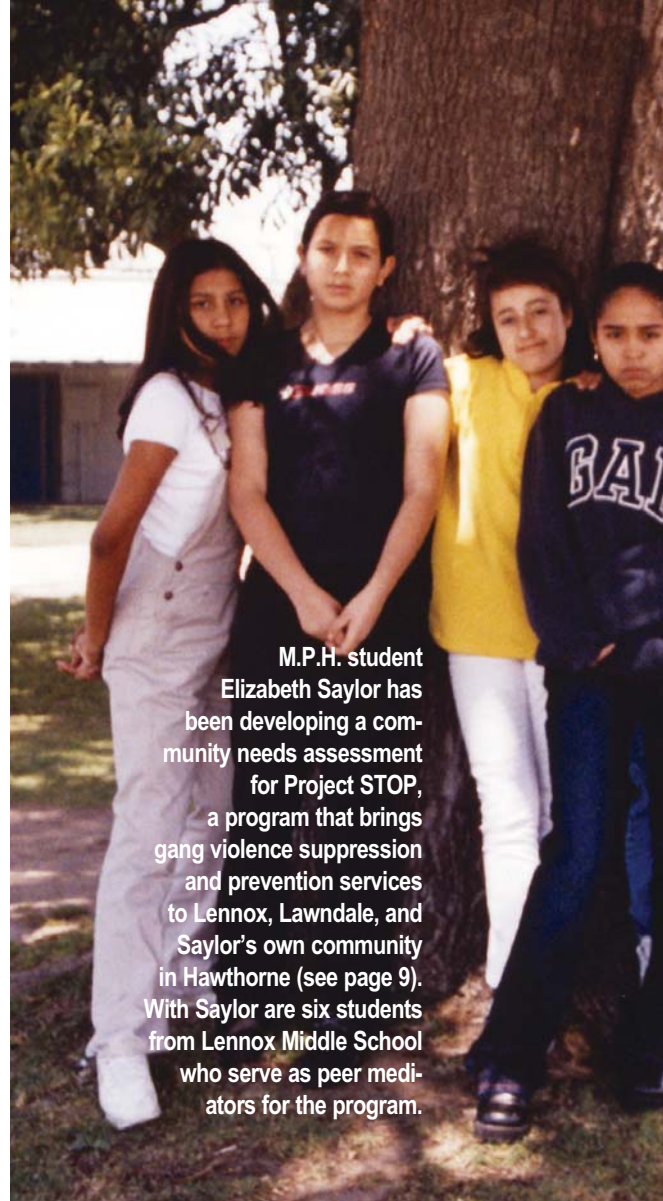
As part of her internship at Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles, Wilson has worked on City Project, an HIV prevention program for gay youths in the City of West Hollywood. Wilson has evaluated the HIV prevention training component of the program, conducting interviews and holding focus groups with staff and the program’s youth participants; she also took part in organizing the most recent training session and youth training graduation. “This is truly a community-driven project,” she says. “The youth developed it, and they want to sustain the project beyond the funding. Everything’s done in the community, and the activities planned are those that are most salient to them. For example, they wanted to hold rave parties, so we did raves.” Wilson and other project staff plan to disseminate the lessons learned in a variety of venues – in the hospital, to AIDS service providers in Los Angeles and to others interested in HIV prevention initiatives in the community, and at professional meetings.

alumni (see the accompanying sidebars), the School’s presence can be felt across virtually every neighborhood in greater Los Angeles, with initiatives ranging from the still-critical traditional approach of preventing the spread of disease to the broader “community-building” efforts of Halfon’s interdisciplinary center.

“Research strongly suggests that the environment in which children grow up affects their physical, psychological, and social development, and their opportunities and successes in life,” says Dr. Anne Pebley, Fred H. Bixby Professor of Population, Family and International Health at the School. “Unfortunately, most of that research has focused narrowly on the effects of family and home environment or school characteristics on children’s development and performance. Neighborhoods are another important part of a child’s environment, but have received considerably less attention.”

Pebley is director of the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A.FANS), which has collected data from a representative sample of 65 neighborhoods in L.A. County in an effort to address three issues: neighborhood, family and peer effects on children’s development; the impact of welfare reform at the neighborhood level; and residential mobility and neighborhood change.

Also active in the community is the Jonsson Cancer Center’s Division of Cancer Prevention and Control Research, based in the School. Initiatives include the Asian American Network for Cancer Awareness Research and Training – the first cancer prevention and control research initiative targeted specifically to Asian Americans; a partnership with the Greater Los Angeles Council on Deafness to conduct cancer prevention and control research among the deaf and hard of hearing, an underserved



M.P.H. student Elizabeth Saylor has been developing a community needs assessment for Project STOP, a program that brings gang violence suppression and prevention services to Lennox, Lawndale, and Saylor’s own community in Hawthorne (see page 9). With Saylor are six students from Lennox Middle School who serve as peer mediators for the program.

and understudied cultural and linguistic minority population; and testing and implementation of interventions to help inner-city sixth-graders in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) exercise more and eat more healthfully.

Identifying and reaching populations that are traditionally underserved can be challenging. Recently, the California Department of Health Services awarded an unprecedented \$50 million contract to UCLA to administer a statewide prostate cancer treatment program for indigent men who lack health insurance. “Underserved patients tend not to access even services that are available to them,” says Dr. Mark Litwin, associate professor in the schools of public health and medicine. “We knew we couldn’t just set up our services in Westwood and say, ‘Come to us.’ We had to go to them.”

The program, “IMPACT: Improving Access, Counseling and Treatment for Californians with

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Elizabeth Saylor

Saylor, an M.P.H. student, has been developing a community needs assessment for Project STOP, a collaborative program that brings comprehensive gang violence suppression and prevention services to the Lennox, Hawthorne, and Lawndale communities.

The program, a partnership among Richstone Family Center; the Lennox School District; and the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, Probation Department and District Attorney's Office, seeks to maintain successful prevention and intervention efforts in Lennox and expand those efforts into Hawthorne (where Saylor lives) and Lawndale, as well as to build an effective coalition that promotes interagency coordination and communication among the three communities. Services provided include counseling, mentoring, after-school activities, parenting classes, community outreach and education, curfew and truancy enforcement, a specialized supervision program for gang probationers, and coordinated efforts to aggressively apprehend, prosecute and remove hard-core gang offenders from the community. "This project has allowed me to use my existing knowledge and skills in community and family violence and prevention, while having the opportunity to become involved with a large-scale community project that has a significant impact on the community in which I live," Saylor says.

Beatriz Solis, M.P.H. '96

Solis, a doctoral student at the School, is director of the Department of Cultural and Linguistic Services for L.A. Care Health Plan, a nonprofit HMO serving more than half a million people who participate in the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs. L.A. Care created the department to ensure that its members – approximately half of whom speak languages other than English, and nearly 70 percent of whom are either African American or Latino – have access to all available services; and to improve communication between patients and health care practitioners. Workshops on cultural competence are offered to all participating practitioners, and recent seminars have addressed cultural and linguistic issues associated with barriers in access to care. "Providers with inadequate knowledge about language or culture can make bad diagnoses and prescribe the wrong treatment," Solis says. "Doctors need to be thinking about getting up-to-date knowledge about the language and culture of the patients they're treating, along with such things as the latest technology."



MAKING AN IMPACT WITH INDIGENT PATIENTS



IMPACT: Improving Access, Counseling and Treatment for Californians with Prostate Cancer, is the nation's most extensive state-led effort to battle prostate cancer, the second-leading cause of cancer death in men. The program, funded by the California Department of Health Services and directed by Dr. Mark Litwin, associate professor in the schools of public health and medicine, provides no-cost prostate cancer care to indigent patients. One of IMPACT's key components is the provision of nurse case managers (including Barbara Clerkin, above) who coordinate patients' care and ensure that they make, and keep, appropriate appointments.

Patricia Barreto, M.D.

Barreto, a pediatrician and student at the School through the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program, is focusing on the problem of the nearly 1 million children in California who are eligible for public health insurance programs such as Medi-Cal and Healthy Families, but are not enrolled. In collaboration with the health insurance outreach workers at the Venice Family Clinic and Burke Health Center – free clinics for low-income, mostly Latino families (a population with particularly troubling enrollment rates) – Barreto is trying to reverse the trend.

Health IDEA (Health Insurance Identification and Enrollment Assistance) is based on the observation of the clinics' health insurance outreach workers that if clinicians encouraged their patients to enroll in one of the programs, the patients would be more likely to do so. "In traditional medical training you don't learn about things like access to care; it doesn't fit neatly into the biomedical paradigm," Barreto says. "But we know that having poor access to care, of which health insurance is a component, leads to poor health outcomes. So this is not just a financial problem."

Lynn Kersey, M.A., M.P.H. '85

Kersey is executive director of Maternal and Child Health Access, which provides information, support, and technical assistance to health and social service organizations; assists individual women in achieving healthy pregnancies and obtaining quality health care for themselves and their children; and educates policy-makers and the public on the need to improve the health and social service systems for low-income women and families. Shortly after graduating from UCLA with master's degrees in public health and Latin American studies, Kersey helped to establish the Downtown Los Angeles-based organization as a way to address what she saw as a "less than seamless" system for low-income pregnant women and newborn children. "Initially it was pregnant women giving birth in the hallways at L.A. County hospitals and waiting six weeks to six months to get prenatal care visits," she says. "But as that started to be addressed, we knew there were additional, less visible problems in making sure that all of the health care needs of this population were met." In the future, she hopes to expand Maternal and Child Health Access to become a more comprehensive parent- and family-support organization.

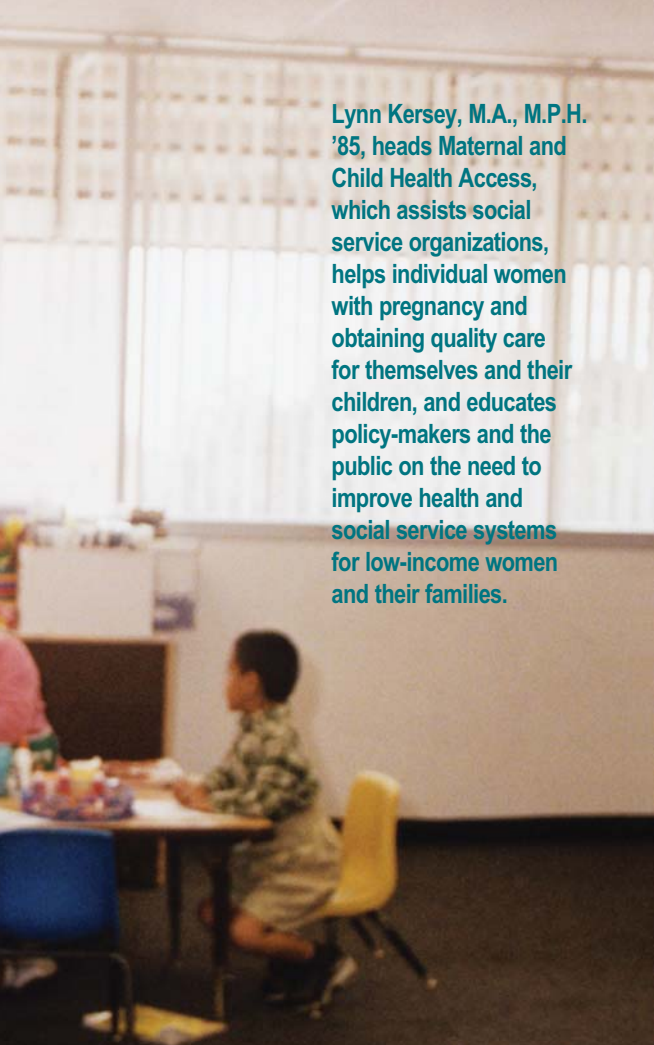


INTRODUCING A NEW CLASS OF STUDENTS TO PUBLIC HEALTH



In an effort to expose high school and community college students to the opportunities to make a positive impact on the communities in which they live through a career in public health, the School offered an introductory public health course at Compton Community College for the first time this spring. The course is taught by doctoral student Kynna Wright (inset, left), with assistance from M.P.H. student Daniel Craddock (inset, right).

Lynn Kersey, M.A., M.P.H. '85, heads Maternal and Child Health Access, which assists social service organizations, helps individual women with pregnancy and obtaining quality care for themselves and their children, and educates policy-makers and the public on the need to improve health and social service systems for low-income women and their families.



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Prostate Cancer,” has assembled a network of high-quality care providers, nurse case managers, administrators, and specialists in education, outreach and evaluation to coordinate the delivery of no-cost prostate cancer medical care throughout the state. Litwin estimates that once it’s fully operational, IMPACT will enroll up to 1,000 new patients each year.

Experts in nursing, nutrition, outreach, and health education have developed plans to educate communities about prostate cancer, including the importance of early treatment. “Most educational materials that are available for prostate cancer patients are geared toward educated upper- or middle-class individuals, and are not necessarily culturally or linguistically sensitive,” Litwin says. With guidance from focus groups and the existing research literature, IMPACT staff are determining how best to reach the disadvantaged groups the program serves, and developing new materials better tailored to these populations.

In 1998, a UCLA School of Public Health study headed by Drs. Charlotte Neumann and Wendelin Slusser surveyed more than 900 elementary students in LAUSD and found that 40 percent of the students were overweight or obese, and that on average the students were eating less than two servings of fruits and vegetables per day – significantly fewer than what is recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A year later, Slusser conducted an evaluation of a pilot project in LAUSD that placed salad bars in three elementary schools.

The troubling findings of the first study, combined with the encouraging results of the second, led to the LAUSD Nutrition Network evaluation project. Neumann and Slusser, along with faculty colleague Dr. Michael Prelip, are currently evaluating the district’s nutrition education programs and activities. Once the evaluation has been completed, the research team and the LAUSD Nutrition Network will collaborate with stakeholders – including teachers, parents, students, health and psychosocial services staff, administrators, and food service staff – to define the minimum criteria to be used for “Nutrition-Friendly” certification, modeled after the global Baby Friendly Hospital initiative that promotes infant breastfeeding facilities.

The soaring rate of Type 2 diabetes in children led another member of the School’s faculty, Dr. Antronette Yancey, to launch a pilot program, “Community Steps to Minority Youth Fitness,” based at two inner-city middle schools, one intervention and one control. Yancey is testing the impact of a program of increased physical activity and education about healthier diet on diabetes risk factors such as body mass index and cholesterol and blood pressure levels. While similar school-based interventions have been implemented in the past, most have taken place in relatively affluent neighborhoods with predominantly white populations. Yancey, with funding from the National Institute for Child Health & Human Development and working in close collaboration with the L.A. County Department of Health Services, was interested in whether such a program could be effective in a community with fewer resources and a population consisting mostly of

Nancy Wongvipat, M.P.H. '98

As manager of prevention programs at AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA), Wongvipat has been responsible for developing, implementing, evaluating and managing prevention programs for people living with HIV and those at risk for HIV. Her many responsibilities have included developing culturally relevant programs; conducting needs assessments; program evaluation and quality assurance; and writing health education articles. “Involving the community in program planning and implementation is crucial for APLA,” she says. “We always engage our target population in the formative research phases of program development through focus-group feedback, for example.” She notes that APLA is in the process of establishing an agency-wide community advisory board to provide ongoing feedback on APLA programs and services. In May, Wongvipat made what she called “an extremely difficult career decision” to leave APLA and accept a position as manager of health education for government programs (Healthy Families and Medi-Cal) at Health Net – a position that provides an opportunity for her to make an impact at the state-wide level while serving low-income populations.

Doris Estremera

Estremera entered the School looking to work with Latino immigrants. “I’ve always felt strongly about helping this marginalized, extremely vulnerable and hard-to-reach community,” she says. She found the right fit at the L.A. County Department of Health Services STD Program, where she is helping to develop a fotonovela for Latino immigrant day laborers. “Our goal was to provide a non-threatening, familiar, and appropriate means to discuss taboo and high-risk behaviors,” she explains. Estremera’s team incorporated day laborers in creating the stories, design, and characters of the fotonovela. Day laborers participated in focus groups, workshops, interviews, street outreach, and photo shoots on the streets and at local bars. “The guys have embraced the fotonovela and made it theirs,” Estremera says. “Discussing these issues with them is what gives me the energy and drive to continue working with this population in the future.”

Lisa Smith, M.P.H. '94, Dr.P.H. '00

Smith, a President’s Post-doctoral Fellow, is interested in community-based epidemiology and its role in the detection of STD/HIV, cervical cancer, and related health outcomes. “Community-based epidemiology involves the community of interest in every stage of the research, and educates this community about the statistical and epidemiologic approaches to achieving positive health outcomes,” she explains. Her current projects include a collaboration with staff at T.H.E. Clinic on a study of the impact of vaginal douching on early detection of sexually transmitted diseases. Smith has also been assisting the staff on how to make the best use of the abundance of data it has collected from various studies. “Often they get grants that expire and they have all of these data points, and nobody knows what to do with them,” Smith says. She recently submitted a grant seeking funding to conduct seminars to educate clinic staff and community health care providers and activists on how to interpret epidemiologic data. “This is all about empowering the community – to decide what their research is going to be, to enable the community to analyze its own data, and to be able to understand what the data means,” Smith says.

African American and Latino adolescents – the two groups disproportionately affected by escalating Type 2 diabetes rates.

Adequate physical activity and healthy eating can be particularly challenging for children who grow up in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods, Yancey notes. As schools face financial cutbacks and increasing pressure to raise test scores, physical education is being de-emphasized. In some cases, unsafe parks and the presence of gang activity leave fewer recreational opportunities in the neighborhood, at the same time that sedentary activities such as video games and computers are competing for kids’ attention inside. The most convenient and affordable eating choices are often at unhealthy fast-food establishments – which, in some neighborhoods, represent the only dining-out options.

That’s why Yancey believes that, while changing the mind-set of children and their parents when it comes to exercise and nutrition is an important goal, at least as important are efforts to develop programs that effectively change the institutions in which people spend their time – to make schools, workplaces and neighborhoods, particularly in resource-constrained areas, more supportive of a healthy lifestyle.

“We’ve had years of interventions that are very individually focused, and we know that as long as you put the resources in, people will go to these classes or whatever is being offered, and they will be effective,” Yancey says. “But once that intervention is over, and the resources are gone, the behaviors typically return to what they were before. To make a long-term impact, you have to affect the environment.”

CREATING A HAVEN FOR FAMILIES BASED ON HOPE



Hope Street Family Center, a collaboration between UCLA’s Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities (based in the School) and the California Hospital Medical Center, is a comprehensive resource center serving the downtown Los Angeles area. Benefits for enrollees include home visits; early childhood education; licensed child care; child development screening and assessment; medical, dental and mental health services; parenting classes; adult education and vocational training; job placement; and youth services including tutoring, after-school programs, weekend activities and summer camp.

UCLA SPH Alumni Play Important Leadership Roles in Operations of L.A. County Department of Health Services

It's the nation's largest county health department, serving 10 million people covering 4,000 square miles at a time of limited resources. In its efforts to fulfill its public health mission, the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS) is led by a UCLA School of Public Health faculty member – Dr. Jonathan Fielding, who serves as the county's director of public health and health officer – and a large contingent of UCLA School of Public Health alumni. In all, more than 60 graduates of the School hold positions with DHS. Among them:

LAURENE MASCOLA, M.D., M.P.H. '81, chief, Acute Communicable Disease Program. Mascola heads a program that conducts surveillance and controls outbreaks for as many as 70 diseases and disease syndromes in L.A. County. Her program also trains federal Epidemic Intelligence Service officers for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – a traineeship that Mascola herself went through beginning in 1982. Mascola had completed her pediatric residency and was prepared to subspecialize in pediatric gastroenterology when she took more than a year off to travel abroad. "It was then that I realized that in most parts of the world, people were dying of very simple things, and that public health was what was needed to get the most bang for the buck," she says.

ROSA PECHERSKY, M.S.W., DR.P.H. '83, administrator, Public Health Laboratory. Pechersky oversees the daily business operations of one of the largest public health laboratories in California, providing support for the county's disease control and environmental health activities. The laboratory, which has a staff of 130, serves all DHS facilities on matters of public health specimen testing. As part of the effort, a bioterrorism lab has been funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the past three years; following 9/11, CDC increased its appropriation to DHS by approximately \$24 million to expand the department's bioterrorism effort, including the Public Health Laboratory infrastructure. Previously, Pechersky served as manager of public health contracts and grants for DHS.

ROBERT SETTLAGE, M.D., M.P.H. '69, medical director, Sexually Transmitted Disease Program. In his current capacity, Settlege plays a major role in the continuing medical education program and credentialing process for clinicians working in the 13 county-affiliated STD clinics. As a member of the STD program's senior staff, he is also involved in policy and program directions. "I like working with people – nurses and public health investigators and physicians and pharmacists – to develop, maintain and improve organizations," he says. Settlege, medically trained as an ob/gyn, has worked at DHS for 31 years, starting as director of the Maternity and Infant Care Project.

INGRID LAMIRAULT, M.P.H. '83, director, Office of Ambulatory Care. Lamirault is responsible for developing policy recommendations on the delivery of ambulatory care services in the county's facilities and obtaining funds to assist in the delivery of those services. She also runs the department's public-private partnership program, a \$60 million effort in which DHS contracts with community clinics and other private providers to deliver primary, specialty and dental care. Lamirault served as director of DHS's Tobacco Control Program from 1988 to 1998.

CHERI TODOROFF, M.P.H. '88, director, Immunization Program. Todoroff's program seeks to increase the percentage of L.A. County children who are appropriately immunized, and to prevent the occurrence of vaccine-preventable diseases. The program conducts surveillance for such diseases, coordinates investigations of outbreaks, and provides professional education and training. Contracts with community clinics, community-based organizations and WIC agencies ensure the delivery of pediatric immunization services; the program also distributes vaccine doses to health care providers and school-based clinics to immunize uninsured or underinsured children. Todoroff supervises 80 full-time employees, including 10 UCLA School of Public Health alumni. "You can count on the graduates who come out of UCLA to have an excellent foundation in public health theory and practice," she says.

DENNIS BAUER, B.S. '71, M.P.H. '72, compliance officer, Office of Managed Care. Bauer ensures that the office which runs Community Health Plan, the county's Medi-Cal managed care program, complies with rules, regulations and audits put forth by the state Department of Managed Health Care and Department of Health Services. A 30-year DHS employee, he has also served as assistant director in the Office of Ambulatory Care and associate hospital administrator for LAC+USC Medical Center.

MARC STRASSBURG, M.P.H. '72, DR.P.H. '81, chief, Web Informatics Division. Strassburg recently moved from being DHS's chief epidemiologist to a newly created position in which he oversees the Internet activities of the department – developing information on public health issues and resources for the DHS Web site (www.ladhs.org), which is visited by about 100,000 people per month. "It's very different from my traditional work as an epidemiologist, but the attraction is in making all of the research that I and others have been doing for 20-plus years much more available," he says. Strassburg, who has also taught at the School for 15 years, has previous experience in smallpox eradication – expertise that is being tapped on county bioterrorism preparedness committees.



Mascola



Pechersky



Settlege



Lamirault



Todoroff



Bauer



Strassburg