



## Tom Chandler Named Interim Dean of Arnold School of Public Health

Tom Chandler, who has been ENHS chair for nine years, will serve as interim dean while a national search is launched for a replacement for Dr. Donna Richter who has left her position as dean to become executive director of the South Carolina Public Health Institute.

"Tom is an extremely well qualified administrator for the interim position," said Harris Pastides, USC vice president for Research and Health Sciences, adding Chandler also is a nationally recognized researcher in the effects of endocrine disrupting chemicals and the effects of nano materials in the environment.

Chandler is a member of the Delta Omega Public Health Honor Society and was the 1997 recipient of the Arnold School of Public Health Research Award for outstanding research accomplishments. In 1998, he received the USC Educational Foundation Research Award in Health Sciences.

In addition to his accomplishments on campus, he is one of three U.S. delegates to the environmental directorate (toxicity testing division) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris – a global environmental protection coordinating agency for the developed and developing world.

Chandler is actively involved in developing and validating internationally standardized test methods for the OECD for evaluating risks of reproductively toxic chemicals in aquatic systems. He holds major competitive funding from the USEPA, the NSF, and NOAA.

Chandler grew up in Hamlet, N.C., studied marine sciences at UNC-Wilmington, earned his master's and doctoral degrees from Louisiana State University, and joined the USC faculty in 1988 as a postdoctoral fellow at the Belle W. Baruch Institute. In 1992 he moved to the Department of Environmental Health Sciences.

## New Faculty Bring a Variety of Talents and Skills to the School

Nine new employees began their careers as tenure-track faculty in the Arnold School this fall. Five of them are in the Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior (HPEB).

They come from right here in our school and as far away as the University of Newfoundland. They each bring with them a set of skills and research skills that will only enhance the talent that already exists in the school. Here is a brief introduction.



*Dr. Lucy Annang*

Dr. Sonya J. Jones, a research assistant professor and deputy director of the Center for Research in Nutrition and Health Disparities, and Dr. Heather M. Brandt, a research assistant professor and co-investigator in the South Carolina Cancer Disparities Community Network, are already on the HPEB roster. They began their tenure-track appointments in August.

Jones earned a bachelor's degree in Latin American Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also earned a doctorate in nutrition from UNC-Chapel Hill. She was an assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville before coming to USC in September 2005.



*Dr. Clare Barrington*

An Iowa native, Brandt earned a bachelor's degree in health promotion from the University of Iowa in Iowa City. She came to Columbia in 1997 where she earned her master's and doctorate degrees in HPEB from the Arnold School. Brandt's research interests include cancer disparities among underserved populations, cancer prevention and control, and human papillomavirus (HPV)-associated cancers.



*Dr. Katrina M. Walsemann*

Dr. Katrina M. Walsemann comes to USC from the University of Michigan Population Studies Center where she has been a National Institutes on Aging postdoctoral research fellow. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of California-Davis and her master's degree and doctorate in Health Behavior and Health Education from the University of Michigan School of Public Health.

Dr. Clare Barrington has been a research assistant and study coordinator at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore where she recently earned her doctorate from the Department of International Health. She also earned a master's degree from the same department and a bachelor's degree with a concentration in International Health and Development Studies from Brown University.

*continued on page 18*

Breaking News



page 6



page 14



page 8

HealthBeat is published 2 times a year by the Office of the Dean and the Office of Public Information.

Contact us at  
 (803) 777-5037  
 Fax: (803) 777-4783  
 E-mail: lahollin@gwm.sc.edu

<http://www.sph.sc.edu/>

Professor and Interim Dean  
**G. Thomas Chandler, Ph.D.**

Editor/Director of Public Information  
**Lucy Hollingsworth**

Photography  
**Tom L. Johnson**  
**Michelle P. Jordan**  
**Mike Brown**  
**Kim Truett**  
**Keith McGraw**

Graphics  
**Caroline Meyer**

Contributing Writers  
**William Hughes**  
**Michelle P. Jordan**

## features

- 1** New Faculty Bring a Variety of Talents and Skills to the School
- 4** Winning Ways  
Arnold Faculty recognized for outstanding work
- 10** SCANA and USC in Partnership to Work on Employee Health Concerns  
SCANA Corporation and the University of South Carolina are part of an innovative effort to enhance the well-being of SCANA's 5,600 employees and their dependents while continuing to manage rising health care costs.
- 15** Probst Named Interim Chair of HSPM  
Stoskopf leaving to head SDSU Graduate School of Public Health
- 15** USC, Claflin University Open Molecular Virology Laboratory in Orangeburg
- 18** Richter Leaving Deanship to Head New Institute
- 19** Dash of Faith  
Healthy eating program honored by Healthy South Carolina Challenge



## research news

- 7** Among U.S. Youth, Whites Have Highest Rate of Diabetes
- 11** Lead Poisoning Leads to Behavioral Problems in School Age Children



- 12** SC Study Examines Why African Americans Did Not Evacuate in the Face of Hurricane Katrina  
The lessons learned in the study will hopefully help avoid a repeat of the racial and social injustices that were so evident in the aftermath of Katrina.

- 16** Five-year Study Will Examine the Potential for Recovery in Stroke Victims
- 17** USC Study Finds Family Violence More Likely in Urban Households

## alumni

- 20** Alumni News



## message from the dean

We are making GREAT strides in community engagement. To help foster innovations that can improve the public's health in South Carolina, researchers in the Arnold School have collaborated with the Department of Health and Environmental Control to create the South Carolina Public Health Consortium.

As many of you know by now, Donna Richter has left the dean's position to become the executive director of the South Carolina Public Health Institute. We will miss her leadership and direction, but wish her the best in her new role. (See story on page 18.) This fall will be a time of change for many of us as we launch the search for the school's permanent dean.

Beyond the administrative changes that are taking place in the dean's office, the fall semester is a time of change and renewal for everyone at the Arnold School. As the new crop of students and faculty begin arriving on campus, the halls are filled with an exciting buzz of activity. But fall is not just a time for new beginnings, it is a time to reflect on the successes and contributions the faculty, staff, and students have made over the last year. The Arnold School is a GREAT school of public health. It is on the cutting edge in community involvement, leadership, research, and teaching. The people who make up our school are a wonderful resource for the local community, the state, and the nation. We can be proud of the positive impact they make on peoples lives every single day.

We are making GREAT strides in community engagement. To help foster innovations that can improve the public's health in South Carolina, researchers in the Arnold School have collaborated with the Department of Health and Environmental Control to create the South Carolina Public Health Consortium. The consortium will receive \$50,000 a year for two years in matching funds from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support their efforts. The consortium is a nonprofit, multi-sector entity that works in partnership and collaboration with federal, state, and local public health agencies, universities, foundations, and other health-related organizations to foster innovations that improve community health.

We are making GREAT advances in research and teaching. This fall nine new faculty with varied interests and backgrounds will begin as tenure-track faculty in the school. Five of the new members are in the Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior. Dr. Sonya J. Jones, will be an assistant professor and deputy director of the Center for Research in Nutrition and Health Disparities, and Dr. Heather M. Brandt, a research assistant professor and co-investigator in the South Carolina Cancer Disparities Community Network, are already on the HPEB roster. They have received tenure-track appointments that began in August.

Dr. Katrina M. Walsemann comes to USC from the University of Michigan Population Studies Center where she has been a National Institutes on Aging postdoctoral research fellow. Dr. Clare Barrington has been a research assistant and study coordinator at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore where she recently earned her doctorate from the Department of International Health. Dr. Lucy Annang has been an assistant professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Department of Health Behaviors and an associate scientist in the Minority Health and Research Center. Dr. Matthew Kostek, who is joining the Arnold School's Department of Exercise Science, was a postdoctoral fellow at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington where he studied the molecular and genetics aspects of skeletal muscle.

Drs. Jijia Zhang and Hongmei Zhang are joining the faculty of the Arnold School's Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Jijia Zhang comes from the Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada where she completed her doctoral studies and presented her dissertation in June. Her research interests include accelerated failure time models, frailty model, mixture cure models, statistical computation and semi-parametric estimation methods. Hongmei Zhang has been an assistant professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of West Florida in Pensacola. Her research interests are statistics in bioinformatics, statistical methodology development, statistical modeling, and Bayesian data analyses.

Dr. Sean Norman joined the tenure-track faculty of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences in August. Sean has served recently as interim director of the new Environmental Genomics Core Laboratory housed in the Arnold School (a \$2.5 million dollar state-of-the-art center for genome-based research). He is a molecular environmental microbiologist with interests in bacterial metagenomics and its application to public health. I also congratulate Sean on his recent receipt of a prestigious \$750K NSF grant in environmental microbiology with his co-PI Dr. Alan Decho of ENHS (*feature to follow in the next issue of HealthBeat*).

And finally, we are making GREAT advances in leadership across the state and the nation. Dr. Edward A. Frongillo, a professor in the Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior, has been named to a group of leading health experts supporting greater U.S. public and private investment in global health research. Frongillo joins 50 colleagues as an ambassador in Research!America's Paul G. Rogers Society for Global Health Research.

Dr. Russell Pate, USC associate vice president for health sciences and professor in the Department of Exercise Science, has been named to the U.S. Health and Human Services advisory committee helping develop the first federal guidelines on physical activity.

Dr. Deborah M. Parra-Medina, associate professor in the Arnold School's Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior, has been honored with a 2007 South Carolina Women of Achievement Award for promoting the health and well-being of women.

Drs. James Hebert and Heather Brandt of the Arnold School of Public Health are among four professionals and one organization honored recently for their work in cancer control by the South Carolina Cancer Alliance.

These are only a few of the successes of the faculty, staff and students in the Arnold School. I am very pleased to be a part of the School's administration as the search for a new dean begins. 2006/07 set a remarkably high bar for research, teaching and clinical productivity in the school. With everyone's continuing dedication and hard work, I have every confidence that 2007/08 will be another successful and productive year. I am looking forward to working with each of you.

G. Thomas Chandler  
Interim Dean, Arnold School of Public Health

# Winning

## *Arnold Faculty recognized for outstanding work*

### **Pate named to HHS advisory committee on federal physical activity guidelines**

Dr. Russell Pate, USC associate vice president for health sciences and professor in the Department of Exercise Science, has been named to the U.S. Health and Human Services advisory committee helping develop the first federal guidelines on physical activity.



*Dr. Russell Pate*

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans is to be issued in late 2008. The report will provide science-based recommendations on the latest knowledge about activity and health, with depth and flexibility to target specific population subgroups,

such as seniors, children, and persons with disabilities, said HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt.

Pate is a nationally respected expert on the overall health implications of physical activity and, specifically, youth fitness. He has published more than 170 scholarly papers and authored or edited five books. He coordinated the effort that led to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/American College of Sports Medicine recommendations on Physical Activity and Public Health in 1995. He also served on an Institute of Medicine panel to develop guidelines on the prevention of childhood obesity and on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.

In addition, Pate is a former member of the science board of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports and a former president of American College of Sports Medicine. He has held leadership positions with the National Coalition on Promoting Physical Activity, the American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education, and the American Heart Association.

Pate ran three U.S. Olympic Trials marathons and twice finished in the top ten in the Boston Marathon.

### **Parra-Medina honored with 2007 South Carolina Women of Achievement Award**

Dr. Deborah M. Parra-Medina, associate professor in the Arnold School's Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior, has been honored with a 2007 South Carolina Women of Achievement Award for promoting the health and well-being of women.



*Dr. Deborah M. Parra-Medina*

Parra-Medina was among five women recognized for outstanding achievements by the S.C. Commission at the third annual conference, "A Seat at the Table," sponsored by the Columbia College Alliance for Women.

In its nomination of Parra-Medina, the USC Women's Studies Program and Partnership Council stated, "As an American child of Mexican immigrants, her life's work is to illuminate the roles of race, ethnicity, class, and gender in health and health behaviors, particularly in the Latino communities of the U.S. and to advocate for the health and education of families of lower socio-economic status."

After receiving her doctorate in epidemiology in 1998, Parra-Medina and her family relocated from San Diego to the University of South Carolina where she received the first joint appointment in Women's Studies and the Arnold School.

During Parra-Medina's career at USC she has helped build a statewide network of Latinos who are working on health issues. She also has been the principal investigator on eight major USC research grants totaling over \$3.3 million, and she has served as a co-investigator on numerous others.

She was a major contributor on the West Columbia Project, a collaborative research effort of Women's Studies core faculty and the West Columbia community to promote the empower-

# Ways

ment, health and well-being of women and girls in the area.

Parra-Medina has been an advisor on the Minority Mentoring Planning Project for the National Cancer Institute and has served on numerous university, department, and program committees.

In 2005, Parra-Medina was presented the Most Influential Latino Award for Outstanding Service to the Latino Community in South Carolina. She was given the award for her work as a role model and mentor to young Latinos by the Hispanic Leadership Council. In 2002, she received the Faculty Service Award by the Arnold School, the Community Service Award by the South Carolina Public Health Association and the Women's Studies Faculty Teaching Award.

## Frongillo named to panel of experts supporting greater role for U.S. in global health research

Dr. Edward A. Frongillo, a professor in the Department of Health Promotion Education and Behavior, has been named to a group of leading health experts supporting greater U.S. public and private investment in global health research.

Frongillo joins 50 colleagues as an ambassador in Research!America's Paul G. Rogers Society for Global Health Research.

"Health conditions in poor countries around the world are crying out for somebody to help – that somebody should be the United States," said Frongillo.

Frongillo noted that a recent case in which an Atlanta man traveled abroad with a potentially drug-resistant form of

tuberculosis proves that diseases cannot be contained within any country's borders.

Frongillo is an internationally recognized educator and researcher in nutritional sciences, who serves as the chair of his department. In addition to his administrative duties, Frongillo has been a consultant for the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Bank, the USDA's food and Nutrition Service, other international and national organizations and the private sector.

He will work to raise the visibility of global health research through the news media and in meetings with policymakers, opinion leaders, and the public. One of his central messages will be to stress the importance of effective collaboration among the nation's government, industry, academic, patient advocacy, and philanthropic research sectors.

Arnold School former Dean Dr. Donna Richter said Frongillo's appointment demonstrates his international stature as a distinguished researcher and brings recognition to the Arnold School as well for its contributions on the international public research front.



*Dr. Edward A. Frongillo*

"In our global society, health issues extend across all borders and have international implications. We are extremely proud that Dr. Frongillo has been chosen as a contributor to this important group and its crucial mission, said Richter.

"Investing in global health research is the smart thing to do for America and the right thing to do for the world," said former Michigan Rep. John Edward Porter, chair of the society's advisory council and Research!America board chair. "Dr. Frongillo has personally seen the value of saving lives and protecting health around the world, and his insights

will help bring this important story to more Americans."

The society, named for former Florida Rep. Paul G. Rogers, a champion for research to improve health, was established in 2006 by Research!America with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Research!America is the nation's largest not-for-profit public education and advocacy alliance working to make research to improve health a higher national priority. Founded in 1989, it is supported by 500 member organizations.

## Hebert, Brandt among group honored for helping in the battle against cancer

Drs. James Hebert and Heather Brandt of the Arnold School of Public Health are among four professionals and one organization honored recently for their work in cancer control by the South Carolina Cancer Alliance.



*Dr. James Hebert*

Hebert, a professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the Arnold School and principal investigator of the South Carolina Cancer Disparities Community Network (SCCDCN) grant, was honored for his

research in addressing health disparities in South Carolina and leading community-based research projects. The alliance noted his commitment to conducting research within the state to understand why rates for major diseases are much higher here than elsewhere. "If we are not willing or able to understand — let alone solve — our problems, no one will be able to understand or solve them for us," he said.

Brandt, a co-investigator on the SCCDCN project, was honored for her extensive work in cancer prevention. The alliance praised her ability to translate scientific research findings into terms that community members can understand. She works primarily with faith-based and community organizations to promote awareness about cervical cancer. She also has provided information to lawmakers about the HPV vaccine and developed resources for women in prison.



*Dr. Heather Brandt*

## USC's Speech and Hearing Center

# now makes house calls

Webcam technology allows clients to receive therapy at home

By Michelle P. Jordan

House calls, which had gone the way of rotary phones and black-and-white TVs, are making a comeback – but with a very modern twist.

Thanks to modern technology, Dr. Cheryl Rogers is able to provide speech and language therapy services right in patients' homes – without ever leaving her own office.

In December, Rogers, a clinical assistant professor, speech-language pathologist and certified auditory-verbal therapist with the University of South Carolina's Speech and Hearing Center, implemented the center's first telepractice system in which therapy services are provided in real time online via webcams linking her office with her client's home.

The result is that now, when it is time for her son's speech and language therapy appointment in Columbia, Catherine O'Grady of Fort Mill, doesn't have far to go.

She simply picks up her 9-month-old, Daniel, and strolls a few feet into the family's computer room, where Rogers is waiting online to guide O'Grady and her son through an hour-long therapy session.

"It's amazing that (the telepractice) is working like it is," said O'Grady, whose son has a severe hearing impairment and wears hearing aids. Daniel has been receiving weekly auditory-verbal therapy – a specialized therapy for children

with hearing loss, and which promotes listening and spoken language – from Rogers since he was seven weeks old.

The center's new program couldn't have come at a better time for this busy mother of three young sons. In addition to Daniel, O'Grady and her husband, Kurt Merkle, also are the parents of Steffen, 5, and Lewis, 3.

"We really want to do as much (therapy) as recommended, which



*From her office in Columbia, Dr. Cheryl Rogers guides Catherine O'Grady of Fort Mill, and her son, 9-month-old Daniel Merkle, through a long-distance auditory-verbal therapy session via webcam.*

means we're on top of an aggressive therapy schedule," O'Grady said. The weekly two-and-a-half-hour commute from Fort Mill to Columbia and back, though, definitely was getting to be a drain on the family.

With the commute, traffic, and side trips to drop off and pick up the older children at school and a babysitter, 90-minute appointments evolved into

six-hour-long events for O'Grady. Factor in the cost of gas and childcare, and the costs were beginning to wear, as well.

With only a \$40 investment in a webcam for their home computer and a high-speed internet connection, O'Grady and Daniel now make the commute to Columbia only every two weeks, with therapy being provided in the alternating weeks via telepractice. Besides the convenience, O'Grady feels the practice has only enhanced Daniel's progress in therapy.

"It keeps me refocused and teaches me what to do (to encourage Daniel's speech and language) during all the other times when we're not in therapy," O'Grady said. "It's still an aggressive approach to optimize his speech and listening ability."



Photos by Michelle P. Jordan

Training the family is part of the overall auditory-verbal therapy goal, said Rogers of Daniel's play-based therapy. With the help of telepractice, the family is able to be trained in their home environment, not just in an office setting, making it easier for Daniel's learning to carry over into other situations.

"Parent involvement is crucial because learning doesn't just happen in the one hour we're together," Rogers said. "(Telepractice) gives the parents the opportunity to really take the reins while you talk them through the process, using their own toys."

*continued on page 16*

## USC researcher contributes to report: Among U.S. youth, whites have highest rate of diabetes

White youths have the highest rate of diabetes among all racial/ethnic groups in the United States, and type 1 is the most common form of diabetes among youth, according to a study in the June 27 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

The study reports that the annual number of newly diagnosed U.S. youths with type 1 diabetes is approximately 15,000.

“Type 1 and type 2 diabetes are more common than expected,” said Dr. Elizabeth Mayer-Davis, a diabetes researcher in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and one of the paper’s authors.



Dr. Elizabeth Mayer-Davis

“For youth under age 10, who’ve been diagnosed with diabetes, almost all have type 1 diabetes,” she said. “Among African-American youths over age 10, about 60 percent have type 2, and about 40 percent

have type 1. Type 2 diabetes occurs in about 20 percent of white children diagnosed with diabetes over age 10.”

To put those statistics in perspective for the Palmetto State, about 265 youths are diagnosed with diabetes each year.

“Childhood diabetes is much less common than childhood asthma and slightly more common than childhood cancer,” Mayer-Davis said.

Having diabetes affects a child and family’s lifestyle. The long-term health effects, including blindness, nerve damage and cardiovascular and kidney diseases, can be serious if diabetes is not managed through diet, physical activity, and medication, she said

The study is part of the SEARCH for Diabetes in Youth Study Group, a na-

The researchers identified 2,435 youths who were diagnosed with type 1 and type 2 diabetes in 2002 and 2003. The estimated overall incidence of diabetes in youths is 24.3 per 100,000 annually.

The report in *JAMA* also states that the incidence of type 1 diabetes appears to have increased worldwide during the past two decades. Although type 2 diabetes

*White youths have the highest rate of diabetes among all racial/ethnic groups in the United States*

tional research program begun in 2000 to determine the prevalence and incidence of diabetes among U.S. youth. The university is one of six clinical sites for the program. Funding is from the Division of Diabetes Translation at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, a part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Mayer-Davis chairs the national study and is the principal investigator for the SEARCH site in South Carolina. Dr. Angela Liese, also a researcher in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, is an investigator for the SEARCH program.

Dr. Dana Dabelea, a SEARCH investigator at the University of Colorado – Denver and the lead author on the *JAMA* report, said the number of youths with newly diagnosed diabetes varies across major U.S. racial and ethnic groups and across age groups.

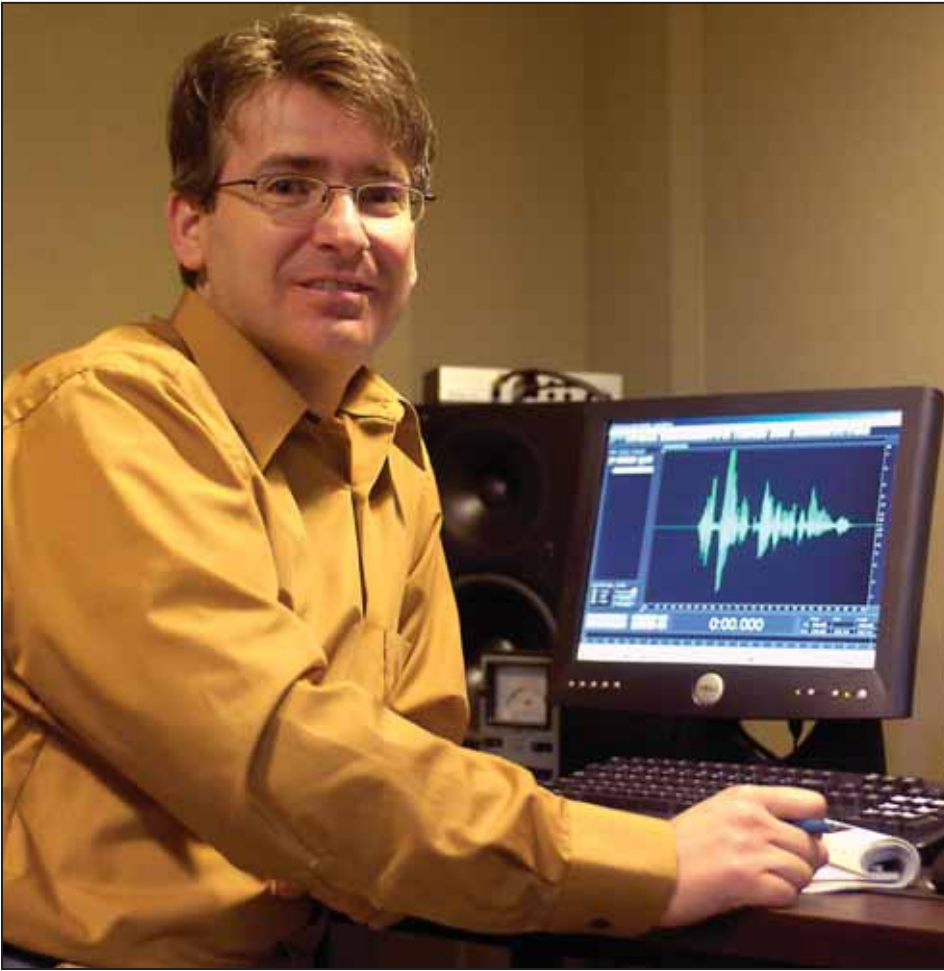
traditionally has been viewed as a disorder in adults, it is increasing in youths, especially racial/ethnic minority populations.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which a person’s own immune cells attack and destroy the beta cells of the pancreas, which produce the hormone insulin needed for survival. Many researchers believe that the disease arises from a combination of susceptibility genes and environmental triggers, such as an infection or dietary component, that have not yet been identified, Mayer-Davis said.

“Like any chronic disease, diabetes requires understanding the disease and its treatment and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and a diet, to maintain an appropriate weight for the individual,” Mayer-Davis said. “Compliance with medications, as prescribed, is vital to an individual’s health.”

### Among the study’s other findings:

- ◆ Among ages 10-14, type 1 diabetes was most frequent among non-Hispanic white youths (32 cases per 100,000 annually). For African-American and Hispanic adolescents, the incidence was the same: 19.2 cases per 100,000. Type 1 was much less common among Asian-Pacific Islander (8.3 cases per 100,000) and American-Indian youths (7.1 cases per 100,000).
- ◆ Newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes was extremely rare in children under age 10 and gradually increased with age. Among minority adolescents and young adults 15-19 years old, the highest incidence was among American Indians (49.4 cases per 100,000), Asian-Pacific Islanders (22.7 cases per 100,000), African Americans (19.4 cases per 100,000) and Hispanics (17 per 100,000).
- ◆ Although still relatively infrequent, type 2 diabetes was found among non-Hispanic whites ages 15 - 19 (5.6 cases per 100,000).
- ◆ The incidence of type 1 diabetes from this study is higher than the incidence of insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus reported by previous U.S. childhood diabetes registries.



Dr. Eric Healy, associate professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders was awarded a \$1.5 million, five-year NIH grant to continue work aimed at better understanding how humans process speech and how hearing problems influence that process.

**T**here is urgency to his mission because some 25 million Americans already have hearing loss, double the rate 30 years ago. These losses have “a profound influence on social and emotional health,” said Healy.

“It’s a serious problem,” he said. By the time Americans turn 70, “twenty percent either use a hearing aid or have obvious difficulty hearing speech. You can increase that to 40 percent for people over 80,” he said.

The first wave of an estimated 80 million Baby Boomers will reach age 70 in just nine years.

**COMD researcher Healy receives \$1.5 million NIH grant to continue**

# speech, hearing,



The current grant comes from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders which, for the past three years, funded Healy's research at the Speech Psychoacoustics Laboratory in the Department of Communication Science and Disorders.

Healy explained that listening to speech is an effortless process that goes unnoticed for most people. The reason for that is because the processing mechanism is so powerful and effective.

Healy's research is aimed at understanding exactly what constitutes normal hearing so that when something goes wrong, an appropriate treatment can target the problem.

Healy's work has allowed him to assemble a team of consultants and graduate students, and has forged additional collaborations with researchers around the world.

Healy earned his doctorate in psychology at the University of Wisconsin-

Milwaukee where he concentrated on human cognition and perception. He also performed post-doctoral work in psychoacoustics at the Arizona State University-Tempe before joining the USC faculty in 2001.

In recent years Healy also has presented technical papers and chaired sessions at the Acoustical Society of America, an organization representing some 7,000 professionals working in acoustics around the world.

# studies

# SCANA and USC in Partnership to Work on Employee Health Concerns

Columbia-based SCANA Corporation and the University of South Carolina are part of an innovative effort to enhance the well-being of SCANA's 5,600 employees and their dependents while continuing to manage rising health care costs.

The \$9.8 billion utility-based holding company has established working relationships with both the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and the USC School of Pharmacy.

SCANA has launched their own campaign to fight the national trend of rising health care costs. In a survey of 573 large employers, conducted by Watson Wyatt Worldwide and the National Business Group on Health, data revealed that annual median increases for health care costs will remain at eight percent in 2007. What's more, employers expect cost increases to stay at eight percent through 2008. While costs remain high, they have become more predictable in recent years. Eighty-two percent of employers also said their health care costs came in at or below budget in 2006, as did 84 percent in 2005, the survey reported.

SCANA's proactive campaign for managing health care costs includes introducing a wellness initiative called LiveWell. Life Counts.<sup>SM</sup> This initiative actively involves employees and their families in health and wellness decisions through communications and resources.

SCANA operates its own health and wellness resource center which includes an in-house full-service pharmacy, two full-time health coaches, counseling and education programs on wellness issues such as exercise and diet, smoking cessation, stress and blood pressure reduction and depression prevention, as well as a formal disease management program and an employee assistance program.

The pharmacy offers a selection of free generic and reduced-cost medications for certain chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes to some 15,000 active and retired employees and their dependents who are enrolled in a company sponsored medical plan in the Carolinas and Georgia. In support of this service, SCANA employs three USC pharmacy students each year in the pharmacy. SCANA's pharmacist, Daniel Bundrick, works with each student to help them gain valuable working experience.

SCANA's pharmacy program mirrors similar efforts at other larger employers such as Pitney Bowes, Mohawk Carpets, Marriott International and the state of Maine which also offer free/reduced-cost drugs to manage chronic health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Managing chronic diseases has particular meaning at SCANA where the employee turnover rate is only five percent and long-term employment is the norm.

"This is an example of making investments in people for the long run," said SCANA's director of compensation and benefits, Chris McSwain.

At the Arnold School, epidemiologists are analyzing data from company's medical and pharmacy claims, voluntary employee health risk assessments and other information from SCANA's human resource information system. All data is confidential and meets HIPAA and privacy standards. It is aggregated so that the identity of an individual remains anonymous.

USC epidemiologist, Dr. Robert McKeown, said after studying the data that Arnold School experts can advise the company on ways it can reduce disability claims, disease, illness and injuries while increasing health and wellbeing. SCANA and USC signed a memorandum of understanding on the project. "The contract is written in such a way that we jointly can apply for grant funding and test interventions in the workplace," said McKeown.

SCANA's health care costs increased by 201 percent between 2001 and the end of 2003, but the LiveWell. Life Counts<sup>SM</sup> initiative helped reverse the trend and the company ended 2005 with costs down three percent from the year before. This initiative has helped stabilize health premiums for the company over the past three years.

McSwain hopes the USC-SCANA partnership will be as successful as the SCANA pharmacy and LiveWell Resource Center.

"We're still in the beginning of this partnership," said McSwain, "but, in the end, I'm certain we'll all have gained value. Managing health care costs is a critical issue for all businesses. Analyzing the data and being able to use that information to educate our employees on topics that directly impact their own health and well being is essential to addressing costs."

# Study shows lead poisoning leads to behavioral problems in school age, urban children

Decades after lead was banned from paint and gasoline, a new five-year study of children from four U.S. cities shows that lead poisoning results not only in lower IQ scores but also learning and behavioral problems in school age urban children.

The study appeared in the March issue of *Pediatrics*. Dr. Bo Cai, an assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at USC's Arnold School of Public Health and one of the lead authors on the report, said parents should remain concerned about lead long after toddlerhood.

The analysis was based on data from 780 children exposed to high levels of lead in four U.S. cities (Baltimore, MD.; Newark, NJ; Philadelphia, PA and Cincinnati, OH). The researchers examined associations between blood lead concentrations at different ages, IQ, and behavioral test scores.

Although the blood lead concentration in 5-year-olds had no direct effect on behavior, Dr. Cai said, seven-year-olds with higher levels of the toxic metal in their blood were more likely to suffer IQ deficits, and independently, they were also more likely to exhibit behavior problems such as aggression, inattention and impulsivity -- an area that has not received as much study.

For years parents have been urged to be vigilant about lead exposure in very young children, but the study suggests that there is probably no safe age for parents to be unconcerned about the danger of lead poisoning.

Children are at risk in an estimated 25 percent of U.S. homes that still contain deteriorating lead paint, which was banned in 1978. Children also are exposed when they play in yards contaminated by lead paint dust or emissions from leaded gasoline which was phased out in the early 1990s.

The study was part of a larger effort to test a chelating agent, a type of medicine designed to filter lead from children's bodies. The medicine did indeed reduce concentrations of lead in the blood, but it did not have any measurable impact on intelligence or behavior.

The children's blood was tested starting at age 2; all measured between 20 and 44 micrograms per deciliter of blood, though the levels declined somewhat as they got older. The federal guideline is 10 micrograms; many health experts say even 10 is too high. The children were given IQ and behavior evaluations at ages 5 and 7. Behavior scores were based on lengthy questionnaires filled out by teachers and parents.

For every increase of 10 micrograms per deciliter of blood, children scored about five points worse on a 100-point scale that measures "externalizing" behavior problems, such as aggression and acting out. Also, for every 10-microgram increase, the children were nearly 11/2 times more likely to exhibit these types of problems. The effect was present even after taking into account the fact that some behavior problems could be the result of a lower IQ, said principal investigator Aimin Chen, who is now at Creighton University. An effect on behavior was evident even after authors controlled for poverty, ethnicity, parental education, and whether the child had a single parent.

Cai joined the faculty at the Arnold School last year. Prior to this, he worked as a research fellow in National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) of NIH. His work mainly focuses on statistical methodology with applications in public health. He is a member of the Research Consortium on Children and Families (RCCF) and was recruited to USC as part a Faculty Excellence Initiative coordinated by RCCF.

# SC study examines African Americans did not evacuate in the face of Hurricane Katrina

According to a study by the faculty in the Department of Health Services Policy and Management, confusing directions from authorities, perceived racism, and faith they could ride out the storm, were cited by many African Americans as reasons for not evacuating New Orleans in the face of Hurricane Katrina. The study also concluded that “culturally sensitive logistical planning for the evacuation of minority, low-income and underserved communities” is vital for all future disaster preparedness planning.

The USC study, which appeared online in the First Look section of the *American Journal of Public Health*, is based on focus groups of black New Orleans residents who were evacuated to Columbia, S.C. following the Aug. 29, 2006 storm.

According to the authors, it is believed to be the first study to examine the interaction of personal and social factors in African Americans’ evacuation. Dr. Keith Elder was principal investigator of the study. Others included Dr. Sudha Xirasagar, Dr. Nancy Miller, Shelly Ann Bowen, Dr. Saundra Glover, and Crystal Piper.

In addition to better preparedness plans, the study noted: “It is very important as well that the perception of race-based inequities be explored in depth, to understand their contribution to the disproportionate

casualties and suffering experienced by minorities in emergencies such as that created by Hurricane Katrina.”

The lessons learned in the study will help avoid a repeat of the racial and social injustices that were so evident in the aftermath of Katrina.

## SIX GROUPS INTERVIEWED

The Katrina study looked at six focus groups with 53 African Americans who were evacuated to Columbia within two months of the storm. Participants said among the reasons they did not evacuate were: they had successfully ridden out a hurricane in the past, they had no money for gasoline to leave the city, they were afraid to leave their homes and have their valuables stolen, and they had a fear that police would stop them if they tried to leave.

Many residents said their religious faith gave them confidence they could survive the storm. Additionally, experience with riding out other storms was reflected in comments such as “If I survived Hurricane

**The lessons learned in the study will hopefully help avoid a repeat of the racial and social injustices that were so evident in the aftermath of Katrina.**

Betsy, I can survive this one too. We all ride the hurricanes, you know.”

Other residents said they had no money to pay for gasoline because it was late in the month. “The hurricane came at the wrong time. We were waiting for our payday,” one participant said.

The study reported that all focus groups reported dissatisfaction with the government because of its perceived apathy toward low-income African Americans. Successive city administrations were criticized because of their tolerance of obsolete drainage systems and levies bordering the lower Ninth Ward where most of the participants resided.

“Our streets had always overflowed with water and stuff from the sewer after big storms,” one evacuee reported.





# trina

Elder said many of the residents also feared police reprisal if they crossed into affluent parishes to reach shelters or get to evacuation routes.

“The people in the lower Ninth Ward, who were so severely affected by the storm, believed that they had to look out for themselves and could survive the storm as they had done for many years,” he said. “Evacuees also said that there was confusion about the severity of the hurricane because of conflicting evacuation orders from the mayor and the governor. When evacuation orders came, it was too late for many people to leave.”

Xirasagar said federal, state, and local emergency-management agencies must develop preparedness plans that address the needs of minority and low-income

people, including plans that include timely evacuation orders, maps that clearly identify evacuation routes, vouchers or cash for gasoline, and other essential items.

“Planning must adequately address the needs of under-served communities,” Xirasagar said. “What happened to the residents in New Orleans could happen to people in many coastal areas of the United States.”

#### **SIMILARITIES TO CHARLESTON, SC**

“In fact, Charleston, S.C., isn’t that different from New Orleans, Elder said. “It ranks high in its vulnerability. You have a large number of minorities, many of whom are elderly, who live in poverty and have little education. They clearly are at risk if a hurricane threatens the coast.”

The AJPH report is timely, Xirasagar said, given the recent predictions that the 2007 hurricane season will have more storms than 2006.

“This is the time for everyone to examine their disaster plans and make arrangements for those who are most vulnerable,” Xirasagar said.

Additional study is needed, Elder said, to examine what “receiving cities” can do to assist people when they are evacuated.

“In Columbia, for example, evacuees said that the transition was much easier than they imagined,” he said. “We need to look at the needs of the receiving cities and know what went right for those who had positive experiences. This is valuable information for future disasters.”

# Webster, Irwin Receive 2007 Norman J. and Gerry Sue Arnold

# ALUMNI AWARDS

***A University of South Carolina graduate who has spent his career in the battle against heart disease and another who has focused on cancer prevention are the recipients of the 2007 Norman J. and Gerry Sue Arnold alumni awards.***

The Norman J. Arnold Medal was presented to William A. Webster, Ph.D. who earned his master's degree in exercise science from USC in 1973. He has worked for 28 years at the Greenville (S.C.) Hospital System University Medical Center where he is director of clinical cardiology research.

The Gerry Sue Arnold Award was presented to Melinda L. Irwin, Ph.D. an assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Yale University School of Public Health. A researcher interested in physical activity, obesity, and breast cancer prevention and prognosis, she received her doctorate in Exercise Science from USC in 1999.

The Arnold awards, named after the school's leading benefactors, were presented during the school's 20th Annual Hooding Ceremony on May 10 at the Koger Center for the Arts. The Norman J. Arnold Medal honors an alumnus who graduated more than 10 years ago. It carries a cash award of \$5,400 and a bronze medal. The Gerry Sue Arnold Medal honors an alumnus who graduated within the last 10 years. It carries a cash award of \$3,600 and a commemorative plaque.

Webster, who won the Norman J. Arnold Medal, has a bachelor's degree in business administration from The Citadel and a doctorate in exercise physiology from Florida State University. He joined the Greenville Hospital System in 1978 as director of cardiac rehabilitation. Later he was director of the hospital's Heartlife

Program, the first and oldest cardiac rehabilitation program in the state and one of the largest programs of its kind in the nation. Webster worked to organize and develop guidelines for comprehensive cardiac rehabilitation programming in South Carolina.

He is a fellow of both the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Association of Cardiovascular Pulmonary Rehabilitation, serving on the executive board of both organizations and as chair of various committees of each.

"Twenty-six years ago there were two cardiac rehabilitation programs in the state. Today there are approximately 40," said Webster.

Irwin, who was presented the Gerry Sue Arnold award, is currently working on two studies examining the effect of exercise on biological markers of breast cancer among survivors.

If these studies, and others, demonstrate that exercise can significantly improve disease-free survival, exercise could be prescribed as an integral part of breast cancer therapy, and could possibly even replace toxic and costly treatments among those women for whom chemotherapy is not very beneficial.



*The Norman J. Arnold Medal was presented to William Webster, Ph.D.*



*The Gerry Sue Arnold Award was presented to Melinda Irwin, Ph.D.*

Irwin is involved in other National Cancer Institute studies on associations between exercise and cancer. She has participated in National Institutes of Health review groups focused on physical activity, obesity, and cancer.

She also has published more than 40 manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals on the effect of exercise on breast cancer biomarkers, adherence to exercise in randomized trials, and physical activity and body composition issues.

Irwin has a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary, a master's from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also has a master's in public health from the University of Washington.

The alumni awards are the latest example of the Arnold family's philanthropy. Norman Arnold made a major gift in 2000 to endow the University of South Carolina's School of Public Health, which now bears his name.

## 20th Annual Hooding Ceremony marks formal commencement for Arnold School graduates



*Dr. Lonnie King*

Newly minted public health graduates will have an unprecedented opportunity to make a difference, according to a nationally recognized infectious disease expert who spoke at the Arnold School of Public Health's 2007 Hooding Ceremony held May 10th. Addressing degree candidates at the Koger Center for the Arts, Dr. Lonnie King said public health practitioners have "an opportunity to lead lives of incredible possibilities." King, director of the CDC's National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne and Enteric Diseases in Atlanta, was the keynote speaker for an audience of hundreds of parents, friends, and well-wishers.

## Probst named interim chair of HSPM; Stoskopf leaving to head SDSU Graduate School of Public Health

Dr. Jan Probst has been named interim chair of the Department of Health Services and Policy Management at the Arnold School effective June 1, 2007.

She succeeds Dr. Carleen Stoskopf who left to become director of the Graduate School of Public Health at San Diego State University.

“Dr. Stoskopf has been at the Arnold School for 19 years. While it is always sad to see a colleague go, we can all take pride in knowing that one of our own is accepting the challenge of greater leadership. We all wish her ev-



Dr. Jan Probst

ery success in this exciting new role,” said former Dean Donna Richter.

Stoskopf has been a faculty member in the school since 1988. She earned a bachelor's degree in 1978 from Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN and a master's degree from the University of Minnesota in 1997. She earned her doctorate in 1989 from Johns Hopkins University.

In her new job, she will direct the activities of a 25-year-old public health school with an enrollment of about 340 students and five separate divisions covering a range of health-related disciplines.

SDSU is one of the 23 campuses of the

California State University System with an enrolment of about 33,000. It is one of four nationally accredited schools of public health in California.

Stoskopf says she's excited by SDSU's new PhD program in global health which will prepare graduates to become public health researchers and professional leaders in global health settings.

Stoskopf is already an expert in running doctoral programs abroad, as she has been instrumental in developing the Arnold School's programs in Korea and Taiwan.

Distance learning, another strong feature of Stoskopf's department at USC, is something she would like to strengthen at SDSU where she officially started work.

## USC, Claflin University open new molecular virology laboratory in Orangeburg

The University of South Carolina and Claflin University have opened a new molecular virology laboratory to help reduce HIV/AIDS and HPV/cervical cancer rates in the Orangeburg community and elsewhere.



Dr. Sandra Glover EXPORT is a five-year effort supported by a \$7.5 million grant from the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, part of the National Institutes of Health.

“We envision that this laboratory will be a site where breakthrough research is conducted. This lab will also expose students to new knowledge and allow them to gain skills necessary to conduct advanced scientific research,” said Dr. Sandra Glover, associate dean for health disparities and social justice at USC's Arnold School of Public Health. Glover is also principal investigator of the EXPORT project and serves as director of the USC Institute for Partnerships to

Eliminate Health Disparities (IPEHD). The institute has established research, training and outreach relationships between USC and the state's historically black colleges and universities.

Dr. Omar Bagasra, a Claflin professor and director of the school's South Carolina Center for Biotechnology, said the laboratory is housed in a former residence that was renovated at a cost of about \$200,000. It contains new, state-of-the-art equipment valued at more than \$1 million.

Bagasra said the lab will accommodate about ten graduate students and be available to visiting scientists from around the globe. Dr. Samina Hassanali will manage the lab.

Dr. Kim Creek, a professor at the USC School of Medicine who has coordinated cancer research programs between USC and Claflin, said training minority students in cancer research is also a major function of the lab. Administrators at both universities say training health professionals from minority and underserved populations will advance the cause of reducing, eliminating or preventing health disparities in South Carolina.

When the EXPORT Project is completed, the lab will be available to provide molecular diagnostic service for research and other uses, said Bagasra. They are already working with the Orangeburg Department of Public Safety to do local forensics research, which allows evidence to be studied without sending it to Columbia.

## SPM student Banky Olatosi awarded 2007 Trustee Fellowship

Banky Olatosi, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Health Services Policy and Management at the Arnold School of Public Health, has been selected to receive a 2007 Trustee Fellowship award from the USC Graduate School.

Banky, a native of Nigeria who came to the U.S. in early 2004, earned his master's degree in public health at the University of Minnesota...in less than one year! At the end of his master's program Banky was looking for a doctoral program to continue his studies. His brother, an infectious disease specialist who practices in Camden, suggested USC.

Unfamiliar with the school, Banky came to Columbia to talk with Dr. Carleen Stoskopf, then chair of the HSPM Department. He liked what she told him and enrolled in the fall of 2004. In addition to his studies, Banky currently works at the SC Rural Health Research Center.

His interests in graduate school have focused primarily on HIV/AIDS, but health disparities, reproductive health, and infectious epidemiology also hold his attention.



Banky Olatosi working for Project EXPORT (Excellence in Partnership for Community Outreach, Research on Health Disparities, and Training), a research, education, and public outreach collaboration between the University of South Carolina, Arnold School and Claflin University.

# Five-year study will examine the potential for recovery in stroke victims

**W**hy do some people recover nearly completely following a stroke while others remain impaired for the rest of their lives? Dr. Julius Fridriksson is working on a five-year \$1.62 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to find an answer.

“We will be looking at potential for recovery, trying to predict who will do well in therapy and who will not,” said Fridriksson, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. His research will have a clear impact on public health and important implications for many aging baby boomers and the increasing number of people suffering from obesity, two groups at high risk for stroke.

“If you want to research strokes, South Carolina is the place to be. In fact, that was one of the main attractions when I came here from the University of Arizona where I got my Ph.D.,” says Fridriksson,

South Carolina is part of what has been called the “Stroke Belt,” a region that also includes Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee where stroke death rates are substantially higher than the rest of the country. Within the stroke belt, the

highest stroke death rates are clustered in the Coastal Plains regions of Georgia and the Carolinas. This region has been called the “Stroke Buckle.”

Statistics from DHEC indicate strokes disproportionately affect African American men. With a 33 percent higher rate than that of white men, African-American men had the highest stroke mortality rate in all of the race and sex groups in 2004, according to the agency.



“Studies in animals indicate that intensive treatment very early following a stroke can actually worsen a patient’s condition.” — Dr. Julius Fridriksson

Fridriksson has put together a team that will work very closely with a group of 60 volunteer stroke victims over the next five years. Many of them are expected to come from the stroke recovery groups at the USC Speech and Hearing Center where they receive therapy to improve their language function. Others will come from Palmetto Health Richland where the USC Medical School has employed a nurse to focus exclusively on stroke care and stroke research.

The researchers will use a state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine at the McCausland Center for Brain Imaging to examine the brain physiology of the volunteers before and after treatment. The purpose is to see if it is possible to predict recovery in stroke victims and to identify those parts of the brain that assume control of functions impaired by the stroke, Fridriksson said.

In addition to advancing medical knowledge, the study will help relieve the financial burden often placed on the victims. The participants get all of their treatment free and for much longer than Medicare or private insurance is usually willing to pay. Fridriksson says medical insurance hasn’t kept pace with the research when it comes to stroke treatment.

“A lot of payment for treatment is offered immediately following a stroke when the brain is really not ready for treatment and people just haven’t adjusted. This is the time when insurance companies and Medicare pay the most money,” he said. A better approach would probably be to hold onto the money and pay for treatment later. In fact, studies in animals indicate that intensive treatment very early following a stroke can actually worsen a patient’s condition.”

## House Calls, continued from page 6

While telepractice is both beneficial and convenient, O’Grady and Rogers prefer it not be Daniel’s only means of therapy. In-office appointments provide the physical contact between a therapist and a patient that can compensate for the small time delays, limited room views and reduced sound quality sometimes associated with telepractice.

For those who have limited access to treatment, though, this program can be invaluable as “extensive travel often results in client fatigue and distraction, reducing the patient’s or families’ desire for, or benefit from, services,” said Danielle Varnedoe, director of the center

that provides hands-on experience for speech-language pathology students in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

If the increasing number of journal articles is any indication, this burgeoning field of telehealth is set to take off, with many diverse applications. Research has shown telepractice is effective in treating a wide range of communication disorders.

“Research in the area of telehealth practices with individuals with communication disorders is encouraging,” Varnedoe said. “A number of treatment outcome studies in the areas of adult neurogenics, dysphagia, and voice dis-

orders found no differences in treatment results or patient satisfaction as compared to ‘face-to-face’ treatment.”

Currently, the USC Speech and Hearing Center is implementing this telehealth service on a case-by-case basis based on candidacy criteria, with the goal of making specialized therapy services more accessible to patients who live at a distance from the center, located at 1601 St. Julian Place, Middleburg Office Park.

For more information, contact the USC Speech and Hearing Center at (803) 777-2614. For more information on children and hearing loss and auditory-verbal therapy, visit [www.agbell.com](http://www.agbell.com).

USC study finds

# Family Violence

More likely **in urban households**

***Violent disagreements occur in 10.3 percent of American homes – with urban children more at risk than those living in rural areas – according to a study by University of South Carolina researchers. Another 31.5 percent of children live in homes where disagreements involve heated arguments and shouting, behavior children may consider violent.***

The study's results, published in the February issue of the journal *Pediatrics*, found a higher prevalence of violent disagreements among families living in urban areas (10.7 percent) than those living in rural counties (8.3 percent - 9.9 percent). It was one of the first studies to assess violence in the homes of rural children, and to report that violent disagreements occur more often in black households than Hispanic and white households.

The researchers defined "violent disagreements" as those with hitting or throwing, even rarely, and "heated disagreements" as those with heated arguments and shouting but without hitting or throwing, said Dr. Jan Probst, director of the S.C. Rural Health Research Center at the school.

"This study was conducted to help us develop national estimates of the prevalence of violent disagreements in the homes of children in the United States," said Probst, who conducted the study with lead author Dr. Charity Moore, former deputy director of the S.C. Rural Health Research Center and a current faculty member at the University of North Carolina.

"We also wanted to study rural areas because many women living in rural communities often lack access to domestic-violence services," she said. "This increases the likelihood that rural children will have repeated exposures to violence."

Researchers used data from the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health.

Probst said the study is significant because witnessing domestic violence increases a child's chance of emotional or behavioral problems during childhood. It also raises the risk of the child being in an abusive relationship in adulthood.

"Two of every five children live in households where disagreements can lead to behavior that is frankly violent or that children interpret as violent, Probst said.

"Given how common these behaviors are, physicians, healthcare professionals and others should be knowledgeable about community services and resources that assist families in dealing with stress and violence," she said.

University of South Carolina researchers who also contributed to the study are Dr. Mark Tompkins, Dr. Steven Cuffe, and Dr. Amy B. Martin

## Among the study's other findings:

- Parents living in rural counties were less likely to report violent disagreements than those in urban areas.
- Parental stress was the factor most closely associated with violent disagreements. Parents who reported high stress levels were three times more likely to report violent disagreements than parents reporting less stress.
- Children between the ages of 12 and 17 were more likely to live in homes with violent or heated disagreements than children ages five and under.
- Parents who reported high stress levels were three times more likely to report violent disagreements than parents reporting less stress.



Dr. Sonya Jones



Dr. Matthew Kostek



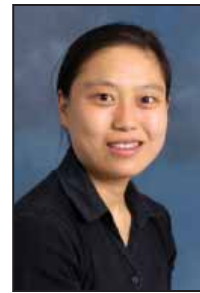
Dr. Sean Norman



Dr. Katrina Walsermann



Dr. Hongmei Zhang



Dr. Jiajia Zhang

Dr. Lucy Annang has been an assistant professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Department of Health Behaviors and an associate scientist in the Minority Health and Research Center. She was also the former director of graduate programs. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Emory University and a master's degree in health behavior and a doctorate in health education and health promotion from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Dr. Matthew Kostek, who joined the Arnold School's Department of Exercise Science, was a postdoctoral fellow at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington where he studied the molecular and genetics aspects of skeletal muscle. He earned a bachelor's degree in applied science from Youngstown State University in Ohio. He earned a master's degree in exercise physiology/cardiac re-

habilitation from Ball State University in Muncie, IN and a doctorate in kinesiology from the University of Maryland.

Dr. Jiajia Zhang and Dr. Hongmei Zhang joined the faculty of the Arnold School's Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Hongmei Zhang has been an assistant professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of West Florida in Pensacola. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in electronic engineering at the Nanjing Research Institute of Technology in Naming, China. She also earned a master's degree in mathematics at Truman State University in Kirksville, MO and a master's degree and a doctorate in statistics from Iowa State University, Ames, IA. Her research interests are statistics in bioinformatics, statistical methodology development, statistical modeling, and Bayesian data analyses.

Jiajia Zhang came from the Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada where she completed her doctoral studies and presented her dissertation in June. She has bachelor's and master's degrees in statistics from East China Normal University in Shanghai, China. Her research interests include accelerated failure time models, frailty models, mixture cure models, statistical computation and semi-parametric estimation methods.

Dr. Sean Norman joined the tenure-track faculty of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences. Sean has served recently as interim director of the new Environmental Genomics Core Laboratory housed in the Arnold School. He is a molecular environmental microbiologist with interests in bacterial metagenomics and its application to public health.

## Richter leaving deanship to head new institute

Dr. Donna L. Richter left her deanship at the beginning of the fall 2007 semester. Richter, who has served as dean of the Arnold School since December 2003, will now lead a broader venture to promote public health priorities statewide.

Richter has taken the position of executive director of the South Carolina Public Health Institute. This new initiative will be based at USC and will serve as a catalyst in promoting collaboration and innovation in addressing public health challenges and emerging threats.

"This institute will elevate the discourse on public health priorities in South Carolina and do so by reaching beyond the university in bringing together key stakeholders across all public health sectors," said Dr. Harris Pastides, USC vice president for research and health sciences. "The mission of this institute will promote effective responses to critical public health challenges while focusing, in part, on policy issues."

Richter plans to build upon existing efforts

of the Arnold School and the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) in establishing the new institute. During her tenure as dean of the Arnold School, Richter was instrumental in forging a strong partnership between the Arnold School and DHEC through the South Carolina Public Health Consortium.

"The current work of the consortium has demonstrated the synergy that is possible when key public health entities work together with a common purpose," said Dr. Lisa Waddell, Deputy Commissioner for Health Services, DHEC. "Dr. Richter's leadership and vision will ensure a successful launch of this critically important institute for our state."

Richter envisions building on the consortium model by engaging all of the health sciences at USC along with other academic institutions and key public and private-sector partners.

"I look forward to playing a founding role in what will be a bold new step to address the public health issues of our time," said

Richter. "This is an exciting opportunity to galvanize partners and optimize efforts to improve the public's health."

Currently, Richter is principal investigator on another grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that fosters such emerging institutes. Waddell, representing DHEC, serves as co-principal investigator.

"It is this funding and other support that will be used to move the concept of the South Carolina Public Health Institute to the next level," said Richter. "It will now be possible for our state to be more actively engaged in the national network of public health institutes that exist in more than half the states."

The USC-based institute will benefit from a close partnership with the South Carolina Public Health Consortium and the Arnold School's Office of Public Health Practice, both under the direction of Dr. Lillian Smith. Additional leadership in the development of the institute will be provided by Dr. Lee Pearson and Ms. Regina Fields.

# Dash of Faith

healthy eating program

honored by **Healthy South Carolina Challenge**

**“Dash of Faith,” a healthy eating program sponsored by the USC Cancer Prevention and Control Program and the S.C. Cancer Disparities Community Network, is the winner of a 2007 community award presented by the Healthy South Carolina Challenge.**

Dash of Faith, which involves members of two Columbia area African-American Baptist churches, was recognized at an awards ceremony held at the S.C. Governor’s Mansion on May 24. Gov. Mark Sanford and First Lady Jenny Sanford presided over the celebration recognizing community efforts to improve health and wellness.

The Healthy South Carolina Challenge is an initiative of Mrs. Sanford and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.



**Brook Harmon** said Bethlehem Baptist Church (1218 Lyon St.), said Brook Harmon, principal investigator for the project. Harmon is a registered dietitian with a master’s degree in exercise science and a staff member of the Cancer Prevention and Control Program, in USC’s Office of Research.

Harmon said a focus group of Central Baptist Church members collaborated with her research team to plan menus and cooking classes for church functions. She said members wanted to focus on preparing traditional Southern



fare using healthy recipes. Participants also explored healthy ethnic foods, such as traditional Mediterranean dishes, which focus on high consumption of fruit and vegetables, bread, wheat and others cereals, olive oil and fish. Central Baptist Church was the intervention church for the study while Bethlehem Baptist Church was the control group.

Bethlehem members carried on their church meal activities as usual. A group of Central Baptist Church cooks, however, were treated to a 6-month program of cooking classes that focused on healthy preparation methods, food selection and new recipes. Loutrina Staley, who is studying nutrition at S.C. State, taught most of classes, but staffers from DHEC and members of the community also contributed. In addition to learning new ways to prepare traditional foods, the cooks also had many guest speakers present on topics such as food safety, diet’s role in health, and foods mentioned in the Bible.

Harmon said the program at Central Baptist Church ended in April. The next phase of the program is to draw from the data and other lessons learned at Central and make them part of classes for members of Bethlehem to run from June to October.

# alumni news

1990

**Wanda B. Taylor, Dr.Ph. (HPEB)**, former assistant professor of health education at South Carolina State, died of a heart attack on Sunday, June 10, 2007.

1996

**Timothy Blinkyey, MHA (HSPM)**, is the national director for Medicare Risk and Reconciliation for Wellpoint, Inc., in Worthington, OH.

**Bob Cushman, MHA (HSPM)**, is a senior consultant with Medseek, Inc., in Charlotte, NC.

**Mike Wehmuller, MHA (HSPM)**, is director of Home Healthcare Division at Longmont United Hospital in Longmont, CO.

1997

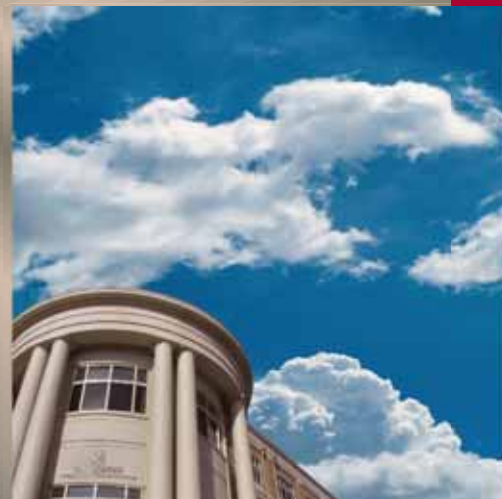
**Julie Lawrence Verver, MHA (HSPM)**, had a baby girl, Penelope Margaret, born on October 6, 2006.

2000

**Charity Moore, Ph.D. MSPH (1997) (EPI/BIO)**, **Daniel Patterson, Ph.D. (2004) MPH (2001) (HSPM)** and have new jobs in Pittsburgh, Penn. Daniel is a research assistant professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and Charity is an associate professor of medicine at the Center for Research on Health Care Data.

2001

**Mark Versnick, MPH (HSPM)**, is a 2nd year general surgery resident at Orlando Regional Medical Center.



## alumni information Update

Alumni, please send us information **about your job changes, research activities, honors received, and personal and professional activities.**

**Send your news to:** Lucy Hollingsworth, Arnold School of Public Health, HealthBeat, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, or lahollin@gwm.sc.edu

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

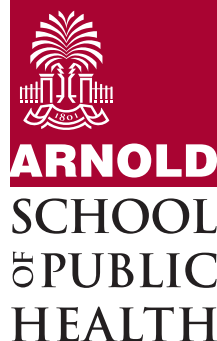
Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_ Program and Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security # (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

News or Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

University of South Carolina  
Arnold School of Public Health  
Columbia, SC 29208



UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA