A new study from UC Davis finds wage increases are associated with lower smoking prevalence, particularly for male workers and those with a high school education or less.

The study concluded that a 10 percent increase in wages is associated with about a 5 percent reduction in smoking prevalence among men who have high school educations or less. Wage increases during the study period improved the chances of workers quitting the habit by up to 3.4 percentage points, reported researchers Juan Du and COEH faculty J. Paul Leigh, professor of public health sciences and researcher with the Center for Healthcare Policy and Research.

Published in the August 2015 issue of the Annals of Epidemiology, the study demonstrated that low wages lead to more smoking, providing additional evidence that lower income contributes to poor health habits. “Our findings are especially important as inflation-adjusted wages for low-income jobs have been dropping for decades and the percentage of workers in low-paying jobs has been growing nationwide,” Leigh said. “Increasing the minimum wage could have a big impact on a significant health threat.”

The national study drew data on wages, smoking status, and state of residence for full-time workers aged 21-65 years from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics from 1999 to 2009. Researchers restricted their study sample to those who smoked during the study period or when they were younger. On average, 52 percent of the sample smoked in any given year.

continues to page 3
Reviewing this issue of Bridges, it strikes me that it does a great job of highlighting the impressive contributions of women in occupational and environmental health professions – dating back to Ancient Egypt – and it remains a difficult and dangerous job. There are two main types of firefighters, structural and wildland, and this issue of Bridges features stories about both.

The first story (found on pages 8-9) is about women structural firefighters and their exposure to chemicals that may increase the risk of breast cancer. Why do we have to be concerned about chemical exposures during structural fire fighting? Don’t firefighters wear protective gear since they are working in hazardous environments? Yes, but often they take off their SCBAs during the mop-up and tear-down phase of a fire fighting. It is an unfortunate practice because during mop-up and tear-down exposures to toxic chemicals that are characterized by incomplete combustions leading to pyrolisis products that may be carcinogenic. Other sources of firefighter exposures to hazardous chemicals are the foams used to fight certain fires and fire engine diesel exhaust.

Several years ago two UC Berkeley Environmental Health Sciences gradu- ates, Megan Schwarzman and Sarah Janssen, were supported by a grant from the California Breast Cancer Fund to investigate and list chemicals for which there is evidence of a link between exposure and breast cancer risk. Their work, the Breast Cancer and Chemicals Policy Project (coeh.berkeley.edu/greenchemistry/ cbrp.htm), listed over 200 chemicals for which there is animal evidence of mammary cancer risk. Based on this list, it is reasonable to be concerned about the breast cancer risk of women structural firefighters.

To address this concern, COEH faculty member Rachel Morello-Frosch teamed up with San Francisco firefighters to conduct a novel bio-monitoring study, again funded by the California Breast Cancer Fund, that will screen for exposure to over 700 compounds. As is often the case with a Morello-Frosch study, the firefighters themselves have been involved in the design of the study design. I look forward to seeing their findings – I think they will have a major impact on how best to protect all structural firefighters, not just those who are women.

The second story (found on page 10) involves the exposure of wildland firefighters, some of whom also happen to be women, including the featured firefighter in the story, Kathleen (Kat) Navarro. In full disclosure, Kat is my doctoral student, but not one to shy away in awe of her courage and physical strength. When she told me that she wanted to study the exposure of wildland firefighters to ambient polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), I had no idea that she would end up undergoing grueling training to become a certified US Forest Service firefighter.

Monitoring ambient exposures of wildland firefighters is extremely important because they are unlike structural firefighters, they cannot wear protective gear since no such gear currently available is practical. US Forest Service “Hotshot” crews use tankers to work on fires that cover large distances, carry heavy, huge loads in the back of the trucks, and have to spend long hours on the fire line. SCBAs that weigh 25 pounds when their tanks are full are only last for 30 minutes or so and clearly cannot be used by wildland firefighters. In other words, these firefighters who put themselves at great risk to protect our forests and adjacent homes have no protection from inhala- tional exposure to fire smoke.

Wood smoke consists of toxic gases and carbon particles that have complex interrelationships between exposure and increased breast cancer risk. These are responsible for which there is animal evidence of mammmary cancer risk. Moreover, with climate change we can expect more catastrophic wildfires and thus more exposure of wildland firefighters. The fact that COEH provided an effective way to provide respiratory protection to wildland firefighters is a glaring gap in occupational safety and health.

Continuing with the theme of women’s contributions, COEH maintains three of our COEH graduates who are taking leading roles in academia. We are proud of Rachel Jones, Dana Drew-Nord, and Sa Liu, and pleased that they are helping to fulfill the COEH mission of training and inspiring future gen- erations of leaders in occupational and environmental health.

Our student internship profiles fea- ture women’s leadership around the world, including Amee Reval’s work with the California Department of Public Health in Ahmedabad, Gujarat (page 6) and Dawn Surat’s work with the National Guestworker Alliance in New Orleans (page 11). And of course, it is not that they have the well-known associations between smoking and health insurance premi- ums as well as between smoking and productivity losses. We encourage employ- ers incentive to pay higher wages to reduce smoking incidence among their workforce.

“Many traditional wellness programs focus exclusively on behavioral issues – trying to get people to eat right or exer- cise more, but finding that these are not very valuable and important. But the one thing they’re missing is the contribu- tion of objective and structural issues that influence people’s health,” says Laura Stock, director, LOHP. “Do you have access to fresh and healthy food? Do you know that you are safe to get exercise? Are you exposed to hazardous conditions at work? Our program is designed to look at all of these factors, but to look at the conditions in which people are living and working, which are the major determinants of health.”

In keeping with its mission, LOHP is looking at ways to incorporate programs into workplaces that might find it more challenging to find the resources to address health risks associated with unhealthy work- ing conditions, according to Stock.

LOHP’s Healthy Jobs Initiative aims to promote a comprehensive ap- proach to occupational health by examining the structure of jobs. LOHP defines a healthy job as one that provides a living wage, protects against workplace haz- ards, supports health-promoting policies, stress, provides reasonable workloads, and protects against workplace discrimination. As part of this initiative, LOHP will begin partnering with inter- ested organizations to explore ways of integrating occupational health and safety or wellness programs towards the goal of promoting healthy jobs.

LOHP has also recently become a member of the NIOSH Total Worker Health Program whose mission is to foster integration of worker health protection and health promo- tion through collaborations with public and not-for-profit organizations. Learn more about LOHP’s Healthy Jobs Initiative: http://lohp.org/ healthy-jobs-initiative. Visit NIOSH to learn more about WOH. www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/boil total-health.html
Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention: A New Digital Story Series Educates Dental Hygienists

For dental hygienists, spending hours treating patients in a stooped posture can aggravate muscles and joints of the back, neck, shoulder, arm, and hand. If ignored, occasional symptoms of stiffness and pain may lead to chronic injury, according to COEH chief of the Population Health Branch Irva Hertz-Picciotto. “Dental Hygiene Work: Pain is NOT in the Job Description.”

To prevent or reduce musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), COEH faculty and the California Dental Hygiene Association and the Occupational Health Branch of the CDPH launched an innovative “Digital Story” series for dental hygienists. The course focuses on common MSDs and their causes, how hygienist and patient positioning can prevent injury, and how to select dental instruments that will help alleviate pain. Registered dental hygienists in the state of California can earn Continuing Education credits by completing a home-study course of the series called “Dental Hygiene Work: Pain is NOT in the Job Description.”

Watch the videos made available by the CDPH: http://www.cdpsh.ca.gov/dental-hygiene/DentalHygiene.aspx#PUR

Learn more by visiting the University of California’s Ergonomics program website: http://ergo.berkeley.edu/research

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) awarded COEH faculty Irva-Hertz Picciotto and Kent Pinkerton a 5-year, $8 million grant to fund the new UC Davis Environmental Health Center. The center joins a network of 21 federally funded core centers tasked with addressing the nation’s most pressing environmental health issues.

“The inclusion of UC Davis as a new core center brings its unique research facilities, broad collaborations, and community-engagement to our network,” said Claudia Thompson, chief of the Population Health Branch at NIEHS. “This important addition will advance NIEHS’ goals of promoting state-of-the-art research and understanding how the environment affects people’s lives.”

UC Davis has scientific experts in four schools—medicine, veterinary medicine, engineering, and agricultural and environmental sciences—who will collaborate on studies of toxics that affect brain, lung, immune system, reproductive, and metabolic health.

Exposures of special interest, according to Hertz-Picciotto, director of the center, include particles and compounds in ambient air, contaminants in drinking water and food, and chemicals in household products or personal-care items. A significant focus will be the San Joaquin Valley.

One of the major strengths of the UC Davis center is that it includes experts in both veterinary and human medicine, along with scientists in the College of Engineering, according to co-director Pinkerton, a specialist in lung biology. That combination gives human-health researchers unique access to laboratory resources, field studies, and animal models for testing the health outcomes of toxic exposures.

Another focus will be training the next generation of environmental scientists in collaboration with the UC Davis Clinical and Translational Science Center.

“The funding gives us an opportunity to reinvigorate environmental health science,” Hertz-Picciotto said. “We are excited about the partnerships we can inspire and the potential for finding answers to the persistent environmental problems that are impacting the health of people in our region.”


The Roadmap tool consists of 2 guidance documents and a worksheet. Step by step, the tool helps researchers plan their 2p goals during the research process and breaks dissemination planning into discrete chunks. Research teams are encouraged to work together to map their 2p plans. “We’ve heard from research teams that this is helpful because it makes sure everyone’s on the same page,” says Chang.

“The roadmap tool helped us identify the principle components necessary for developing a dissemination plan for our research. It provided a conceptual framework that helped us identify the key audiences. When we used it I was struck by how we changed our approach and even our language based on simply identifying the key audience for our research.”

Jack Dennerlein, Professor, Department of Physical Therapy, Movement & Rehabilitation Science, Northeastern University
Investigating Health Issues in a Global Context

Many travel to foreign continents for the first time – enhancing their understanding of how cultural, social, and environmental factors play into global health.

Amee Raval, a graduate student in the UC Berkeley Industrial Hygiene and Global Health and Environment program, led a pilot study assessing environmental heat exposures among a cohort of traffic police at four traffic intersections in Ahmedabad, Gujarat (India). These workers are particularly susceptible to heat stress because of their uninterrupted sun exposure in a hot climate – temperatures average over 100°F during the summer months.

For the past several decades, India has experienced an overall increase in heat waves accompanied by an increase in heat-related deaths, Raval reports. In May 2015, over 2,000 died during what is considered the fifth deadliest heat wave in history.

Her research, a joint project between the Indian Malawi Institute of Public Health, Gandhi Nagar, and the Natural Resource Defense Council involved measuring weekly heat exposures among traffic police using a wet-bulb globe temperature (WBGT) area monitor as well as a backpack-mounted WBGT. The research team also captured infrared photos of heat-emitting sources at each study site – quantitative data Raval will analyze as part of her thesis. She also administered baseline and biweekly questionnaires to investigate heat-related symptoms, local adaptation strategies, and barriers associated with strategies to confront heat.

Currently, the research team is comparing the WBGT and personal temperatures collected during the pilot with city temperature data captured by the Indian Meteorological Department. They are also analyzing the questionnaire data to in order to make recommendations to Ahmedabad City Police’s Traffic Commissioner related to personal protective equipment and uniform improvements.

After experiencing the intensity of congested traffic junctions in a rapidly urbanizing city like Ahmedabad, Raval says she left with an immense amount of respect, gratitude, and concern for the police officers that work in these environments every day. “The combination of extreme summer heat, smoky air pollution, and loud noise from honking creates a dangerous and stressful work environment that has significant implications for the officers’ health and well-being,” says Raval. “It is crucial that our findings are linked with policy recommendations to expand protective gear and coolings resources by the City Traffic Department.”

Raval’s fieldwork was made possible through COEH’s Suzanne Llewellyn Schick Student Award, which funded her research costs as well as travel and living expenses.

This year Graham Flitz travelled to Chikwawa, a town in Southern Malawi, to participate in the Adult Lung Health Study, which is an investigation of whether a cook stove intervention can reduce the prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a major cause of illness and mortality in areas of the world that rely on biomass fuels for cooking and heating.

The study builds on two research projects out of the United Kingdom – the Cooking and Pneumonia and the rural Burden of Lung Disease study on which Kirk Smith is collaborating. Flitz, a master’s student in the UC Berkeley Global Health and Environment program, accompanied research teams to remote villages in Malawi where over 1,200 residents were recruited for the studies.

After measuring lung function and administering a questionnaire on COPD, flitz found that COPD was prevalent among nearly 20% of male respondents and 9% of females.

As the study continues, it will be important to see how much clean cook stoves are able to reduce the risks rural villagers face from such a basic human activity.
After much discussion, the team decided to conduct a chemical biomonitoring study that uses traditional methods combined with a novel, discovery-driven approach called non-targeted analysis of environmental contaminant levels in a population. This method allows for the identification of novel chemicals and metabolites that have not yet been previously studied.

According to Moroless-Frosch, this discovery-driven approach to human biomonitoring for environmental chemicals facilitates the selection of novel compounds for confirmatory and quantification based on a general suspect screen that takes into account the novel and unprecedented information about their likelihood of detection in a study population. More than 200 chemicals have been shown to cause mammary tumors in animals, according to the Breast Cancer and Chemicals’ Policy Project, and with this new innovation, researchers can screen for over 700 compounds.

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Although the study, funded by the California Breast Cancer Research Program, is not going to answer directly whether women in San Francisco face higher breast cancer rates because of chemical exposures on the job, Moroless-Frosch says it will elucidate what kinds of compounds appear to be highest in this population. “We can then use these results to think of ways to intervene, in cooperation with the fire department, with occupational safety steps or broader policy changes that could reduce chemical exposures and better protect all firefighters,” says Moroless-Frosch.

“The Scientific Guidance Panel contributes to the list of potential chemicals to monitor,” adds Bradman. “We can add chemicals and elevate certain substances in a list of priority. Importantly, Biomonitoring California is also pioneering strategies to return individual test results to participants. This program is an example of the importance of this aspect of the program.”

Bradman also serves on the Science Advisory Council for the National Center for Healthy Housing in California Child Care Regulatory Work Group, and the Eco-Healthy Child Care program uses the California Biomonitoring Network.

COEH affiliates on the nine member Scientific Guidance Panel include Megan Schwartz from the UC Berkeley School of Public Health and Thomas McKone, a retired senior scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and an adjunct professor in the UC Berkeley School of Public Health.

For more information on Biomonitoring California, visit http://www.biomonitoring.ca.gov.
Navarro Goes into the Wild to Measure Firefighters’ Exposure to PAHs

By anyone’s standards, Kathleen Navarro a PhD student in the UC Berkeley Industrial Hygiene program, has gone to extraordinary lengths in recent months to collect field data for her PhD thesis. For her study, she is assessing wildland firefighters’ exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) during fire fighting activities and while off-duty at base camp. Studies show that PAHs, formed by the incomplete combustion of carbon-containing materials such as wood, adversely affect lung function and the cardio-pulmonary and immune systems.

But to sample air quality at a wildland fire event, her collaborators at the University of California at Berkeley and the U.S. Forest Service required her to first complete Basic Fire Training, a 32-hour course mandatory for all personnel engaged in fireline operations, including emergency firefighters. “Every rookie wildland firefighter goes through the training,” says Navarro. “It’s four days of eight hours in a classroom. Then the last day you do a field hike to cut a fire line up and down a hill.”

She was one of three women in a class of 35. “The training was very much like a boot camp.” After returning from morning break on the first day, four people were late. The result? Ten push-ups.

“It was literally the hardest thing I’ve ever done. It tested my mental and physical limits,” added Navarro. On the last hike, people were dropping out from the stress, but for Navarro, quitting was not an option. “What it came down to was, I realized if I want to do this project, this is what is required of me. It sparked me to become fully certified as a firefighter.”

Occupational Health Internship Program

Qualified as a Wildland Firefighter Type II, Navarro took field samples last summer at the Roughfire in Kings Canyon National Park, which burned 151,623 acres, and the 5,700 acre Willow fire in the Sierra National Forest.

At the wildland fires, Navarro spent days with different crews and then joined a crew to fight the fire. “I figured I might as well help out and do what I can,” explains Navarro. “Also, being out there on a fire line helped me think, if I want to reduce exposure, what can I do?”

Projects are designed to maximize interaction between workers and students. OHIP is an applied research experience where students learn about the occupational safety and health field from the workers’ perspective. Project work emphasizes worker interviews and site evaluations. At the end of the project, teams provide a “give back” product to the workers and their union or worker organization, present their project at a national NIOSH video conference, and produce a final report.

Commitment is full-time, including possible evenings or weekends.

Deadline
Friday, February 19, 2016

Compensation
Undergraduate Students = $4,000
Graduate Students = $5,200

For eligibility information, contact Elaine El-Akari or Diane Bush with OHIP at 510-642-5507 or visit: http://www.aec.uc.edu/ohip.

OHIP Project with the National Guestworker Alliance Aids Shipyard Workers

The Occupational Health Internship Program (OHIP) expanded its reach to New Orleans this past summer with the first-ever study of hazards facing Latino immigrant workers employed in the shipyards of southeastern Louisiana. The National Guestworker Alliance (NGA), the host organization, had established relationships with the workers over the previous year. The NGA and Louisiana Occupational Health and Injury Surveillance (LOHIS) Program provided project oversight and guidance.

OHIP intern Dawn Surratt, a graduate student in UCF’s Occupational and Environmental Health Nursing program and her colleague, Adam Kline, a public health graduate student from Tulane University, conducted 32 quantitative surveys and 12 qualitative interviews with the shipyard workers to identify experiences of intimidation, retaliation, and discrimination on the job site and health.

Fifty-six percent of the workers reported feeling pressure to work faster than non-immigrant American co-workers, often at the expense of safety. Confined space violations and heat exposure were also prevalent. For instance, over 50 percent of workers reported feeling nauseated, lightheaded, or dizzy due to working in the sun or hot enclosed spaces, with a majority experiencing more severe symptoms such as muscle cramps and generalized weakness. Another 35 percent reported their forearm prohibited from taking a break to cool off.

Surratt and Kline also assessed the workers’ exposure to other shipyard hazards: histories of occupational injuries and illnesses; capacity to access medical treatment and worker’s compensation; levels of job-related stress; and knowledge of OSHA.

At the end of the project, Surratt and Kline presented their findings to the workers and OSHA-Baton Rouge staff with the objective of improving working conditions for Latino immigrant shipyard workers.

This project was selected for presentation at the 2015 American Public Health Association conference held in November in Chicago, Illinois. Ms. Surratt’s travel to the conference was made possible by a Cook-Snyder Scholarship from the Association of Occupational and Environmental Nurses – an award that provides funds to occupational and environmental health students like Surratt who attend professional meetings to disseminate their survey results.

COEH Loses Friend, Dr. Julia Quint, Occupational and Environmental Health Leader

Dr. Julia Quint, one of the Bay Area’s most respected public health advocates, passed away on November 14, 2015, at age 75. Retired Chief of the Hazard Evaluation and Intervention Program (HEIS), an occupational health program of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Dr. Quint worked as a research scientist at UCSF and the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory before joining CDPH in 1981.

Dr. Quint devoted her career to furthering programs and policies focused on the protection of workers, communities, and the environment. She served on the California Department of Toxic Substances Green Ribbon Panel, the Scientific Guidance Panel of the California Biomonitoring Program, the CECNRSO World Trade Center Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, the National Healthy Nail Salon Alliance Research Advisory Committee, the CDPH Environmental Health Tracking Advisory Group, and the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Health Impact Assessment.

“I know I speak for all of us at COEH in saying that Julia was an inspiration. She had a tremendous impact on our field and on so many levels. She had tremendous integrity as both a scientist and an advocate – a combination that few can maintain so graciously,” said Chaitra Surratt who attend professional meetings to disseminate their survey results.

“HEIS and COEH worked hand-in-hand as both organizations were founded and grew up together,” added Baker. “Julia provided major thought leadership in this development. She was endlessly generous with her time and expertise and was a great booster of the Labor Occupational Health Program and, in general, of making technical information readily available to workers and communities.”

The National Guestworker Alliance

http://www.ngawga.org

The National Guestworker Alliance (NGA) is an advocacy organization whose mission is to improve the health and safety of immigrant workers in the United States, particularly in the key industries of agriculture, construction, and hospitality.

Click here to download.

The National Guestworker Alliance
http://www.ngawga.org

OHIP (Occupational Health Internship Program) is a unique paid summer internship program where UC Berkeley graduate students work with workplace safety & health experts on projects with a focus on Latino immigrant workers. This year, in addition to projects focusing on the health hazards faced by shipyard workers in New Orleans, OHIP internships included work with the National Guestworker Alliance (NGA) on shipyard worker injury and illness surveillance.

Prior to joining CDPH in 1981, Dr. Quint was an environmental health scientist with the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, a research scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory and a research scientist at UC San Francisco. Dr. Quint earned her PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Southern California.
The goal of the Center is to integrate first-hand how a multidisciplinary team and training from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to establish the UC Epicenter for Prevention of Healthcare Associated Infections, one of the world’s leading occupational health professionals by hosting an NP intern every quarter and an OEM resident each year. With Drew-Nord’s background, and her husband’s expertise in Internal and Occupational Medicine, the clinic’s interdisciplinary practice offers students diverse insight into the occupational and environmental health field.

With their practice thriving, she and Dr. Nord were considering adding another medical provider to meet demand. But Burgel’s enthusiastic presentation at the OccMed conference of the NP role – and the program at UCSF – gave her an alternate idea. “What do you say I go back to school and do my NP and become the other provider?” she said to her husband when he arrived at the conference. Soon after, she began the program, completing her MS in 2000, and her PhD in 2009. She has been a UCSF faculty member ever since.

Drew-Nord research has focused on the cardiovascular risk factors of career firefighters. In addition to her teaching responsibilities in the Department of Community Health Systems in the School of Nursing, she is the co-coordinator of the Masters Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN) Screening Committee, which reviews all applicants to the program. She has mentored dozens of students over the years and considers it one of her most meaningful roles as a professor.

Her clinic, Premier COMP Medical Group, located in Pleasanton, California, offers a wide array of occupational health services, from Beryllium screening for the employees of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, asbestos surveillance for the Calaveras Dam, hazardous material examinations for companies involved in major construction and roadway projects, to annual Wellness-Fitness Initiative examinations for four East Bay Area fire departments. They also provide workers’ compensation medical exam services, such as retail, construction, public safety, transportation, food service, and health care.

In 2007, the clinic became a training site for future generations of UCSF occupational health professionals by hosting an NP intern every quarter and an OEM resident each year. With Drew-Nord’s background, and her husband’s expertise in Internal and Occupational Medicine, the clinic’s interdisciplinary practice offers students diverse insight into the occupational and environmental health field.

Alumnae Shine in Academia

Rachel Jones
PhD ’09 MPH ’03

Microbial risk assessment has been a central theme of Rachel’s research since her graduate student days at UC Berkeley. Now an assistant professor and associate director of the Industrial Hygiene program in the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Division, School of Public Health, University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Jones’ expertise in the field began during her PhD training through a collaboration with Mark Nicas at UC Berkeley, an emeritus professor and an investigator in the Center for Advancing Microbial Risk Assessment.

The Center, established by the United States Department of Homeland Security and the Environmental Protection Agency, is a consortium of international scientists, researchers, and students interested in risk assessment for microbial agents and control of infectious diseases.

Through the Center, Jones broadened her professional network and observed firsthand how a multidisciplinary team of scientists can collaborate to improve public health. Recently, Jones received a $2.2 million, 3-year cooperative agreement from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to conduct research to protect health workers who care for patients with Ebola and other infectious diseases.

The goal of the Center is to integrate multidisciplinary perspectives and approaches to infection control and industrial hygiene to find effective ways to prevent health workers from acquiring infections as a result of their occupation.

Jones says UC Berkeley gave her the skills she needed to launch a successful career in academia. “Mark’s advice was very influential on my development as a researcher,” and I felt well-prepared to establish an independent research program as a result of his mentorship and collaboration,” reports Jones. “Mark’s national occupational health programs at a senior management level, she had opened her own clinic in 2001, Premier COMP Medical Group, along with her husband and business partner, Stephen Nord, a physician Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Occupational Medicine.

With their practice thriving, she and Dr. Nord were considering adding another medical provider to meet demand. But Burgel’s enthusiastic presentation at the OccMed conference of the NP role – and the program at UCSF – gave her an alternate idea. “What do you say I go back to school and do my NP and become the other provider?” she said to her husband when he arrived at the conference. Soon after, she began the program, completing her MS in 2000, and her PhD in 2009. She has been a UCSF faculty member ever since.

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Liu says she honed her skills as a researcher while a PhD student in the EHS program, from hands-on air sampling planning and field sample collection, to conceptually proving hypotheses through specific aims, including using statistical and mathematical tools. She appreciates the collaborative culture at EHS. “It provides a very rich environment in which students are exposed to many research ideas and ongoing projects, and they have the opportunity to interact with faculty members and other researchers. I think this prepared me well for my career.”

The 2016 COEH M. Donald Whorton Writing Award

The M. Donald Whorton Writing Award is offered by the Northern California Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH). The award program strives to honor the late Dr. Whorton by encouraging and recognizing important new voices in occupational and environmental research.

Students and recent alumni (within five years of graduation) from any of the COEH-affiliated programs are eligible to submit a manuscript for consideration. Papers may be co-authored; however the student must be the first or senior author. Papers must be recently published or accepted for publication.

The Award $500.00

Plus recognition in the COEH Bridges newsletter and an invitation to present at a COEH event.

Due Date: March 1, 2016

http://coeh.berkeley.edu/students/WhortonAward.html

Sponsored By

http://coeh.berkeley.edu/bridges
LOHP Promotes Workplace Safety for Teens

One hundred teens in Berkeley and San Francisco have taken part in the Labor Occupational Health Program’s (LOHP) new Teens Lead @ Work project, an innovative health and safety training initiative launched in June 2015 designed for young workers ages 14-17.

Teens are twice as likely to become injured on the job—every nine minutes another teen worker becomes injured in the United States. Fast food restaurants and retail businesses rank high among U.S. industries for risk of adolescent worker injuries, reports the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

Led by LOHP research analyst and COEH alumna Kelsie Scruggs, Teens Lead @ Work project is disseminating health and safety information to teens in a way that will keep them interested and teachable. This summer, LOHP hired four local students for paid, part-time internships through the Berkeley YMCA-PG&E Teen Center, and Berkeley Youth Work to train workers through the Latinos en Estasis youth program.

Positive feedback on Teens Lead @ Work opened the way for new partnerships—Berkeley High School will be offering the program year-round through their College and Career Center. “They’re really excited to bring mats into what we’ve been providing, which historically has been college readiness and not career readiness,” says Scruggs. “Their program is working with youth who will be placed in internships.”

LOHP’s Teens Lead @ Work builds on a pilot funded by the Berkeley Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s Susan Harwood grant program, which supported training programs for young workers from September 2013-2014. The program is also supported by a grant from the UC Berkeley Chancellor’s Community Partnership Fund.

At YouthWorks, the Berkeley YMCA-PG&E Teen Center and Berkeley Safety Alternatives. They also travelled to San Francisco to train workers through the Latinos en Estasis youth program.

In the media

COEH faculty were featured in a number of news outlets. Here are some highlights.

More stories and additional links can be found on-line at south.berkeley.edu/bridges.

In an interview on Michigan Radio’s Fresh Air show on July 9, 2015, John Balmes explained how exposure to burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan might be affecting the respiratory health of veterans.

Autism Daily Newscast covered the findings of a study by J. Paul Leigh published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, which projects the life care costs for people within autism spectrum disorder in the United States. The study forecasts annual direct medical, direct non-medical, and productivity costs combined will be $268 billion for 2025. The story appeared on August 2, 2015.

US News & World Report quoted Dr. Paul Blanc in an article investigating how the drought in the western United States is affecting lung health. The article appeared on August 11, 2015.

The Daily Californian quoted John Balmes in an article covering Berkeley City Council’s proposal to increase the legal age of purchasing tobacco products and electronic cigarettes to 21 years. The story appeared on August 26, 2015.

The Fresno Bee quoted John Balmes on August 29, 2015, in a story highlighting the health risks of elevated air pollution stemming from the Rough fire in Kings Canyon National Park in California.

On September 10, 2015, Medscape interviewed John Balmes about the health effects of ambient air pollution on increasing the pathologic processes involved in several of the health outcomes.

The New York Times Contributing Op-Ed writer Mark Bittman drew national attention to CHAMACOS, the Center for the Health Assessment of Mothers and Children of Salinas, in an article on October 30, 2015, about the viability of deploying solar cookstoves in the developing world to reduce the health effects of household air pollution. Smith argued “gas and electric are the best clean cooking options because they work regardless of the weather or time of day.”
COEH Loses Friend, Dr. Julia Quint
continuing from page 11

John Balmes, Director of the COEH, remembers Julia “as a toxicologist who used her training and expertise to protect worker health with consummate skill, tireless energy, and, above all with a passionate sense of fairness and justice. I feel a profound sense of loss with Julia’s passing. She was truly one of a kind and will be greatly missed.”

Dr. Quint received several public health awards during her career, including a lifetime achievement award from the Western Regional Pollution Prevention Network, the Helen Rodriguez Trias “Lighting the Way” award from the California Public Health Association, and the Health and Safety Activist award from the American Public Health Association.

The Dr. Julia Quint Work Environment Scholarship fund has been created in her honor within UC Berkeley’s School of Public Health to support the next generation of public health students, following the vocation that Julia dedicated her life to pursuing. Donation checks can be mailed to UC Berkeley School of Public Health’s Office of External Relations and Development or submitted online at http://give.berkeley.edu/supportph (make a note that the gift is in memory of Julia Quint).

18TH ANNUAL SUZANNE LLEWELLYN COEH STUDENT PROJECT AWARD

The Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH) invites applications from graduate students and medical residents wishing to conduct a multidisciplinary research project in occupational or environmental health. Teaching, service, community intervention, and policy projects will also be considered. The purpose is to encourage students to work in teams with students from other disciplines in order to better address real world problems.

Environmental Health Summer Internship for Undergraduates

The STEER (SHORT TERM EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR RESEARCH) PROGRAM IS A PAID EIGHT WEEK, RESEARCH INTERNSHIP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY.

Interested in How the Environment Affects Human Health?
Gain valuable experience and join other students who are interested in careers in the environmental health sciences working on research projects that could be important for future academic and career opportunities.

Application Deadline February 26, 2016
Information and Application STEER.berkeley.edu

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