

UCLA

# PUBLIC HEALTH

JUNE 2011



*building healthier futures for half a century*

# UCLA PUBLIC HEALTH

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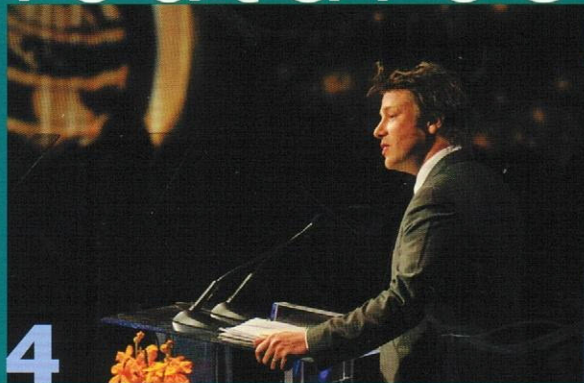
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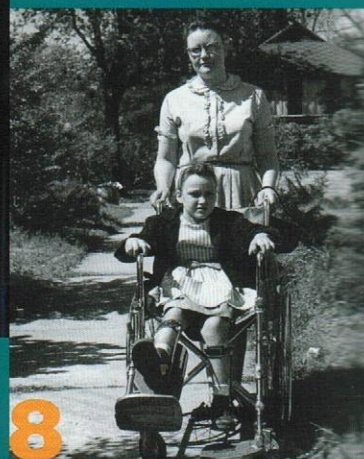
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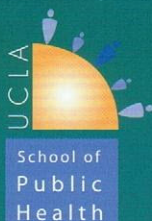


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E-mail for Application Requests: [app-request@admin.ph.ucla.edu](mailto:app-request@admin.ph.ucla.edu)

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# dean's message

FIFTY YEARS AGO, the Regents of the University of California voted to establish the UCLA School of Public Health. In this issue, we commemorate that historic decision and look back over five decades of accomplishment.



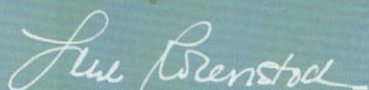
Beginning on page 10, you will find 50 achievements that showcase some of the ways UCLA has improved lives around the world during the past 50 years. The list includes Dr. Lester Breslow's landmark study in the early 1960s identifying seven healthy behaviors (including not smoking, regular exercise and weight control) that could significantly extend and enhance life, as well as more recent research, such as Dr. Beate Ritz's studies linking pesticide exposure to an increased risk for Parkinson's disease. Although this list is incomplete, it provides a good sampling of how our faculty have been influential and instrumental in bringing about advances in public health.

The UCLA School of Public Health was created the year President John F. Kennedy challenged in his inaugural speech, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," ushering in an era of individuals committed to service. Many signed up to volunteer for the Peace Corps and learned firsthand about public health challenges in developing countries. The Peace Corps, which is also celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, has served as a critical pipeline to the field of public health, inspiring a career path for many of our faculty, students and alumni. We've shared a few of their stories (and photos) beginning on page 19.

Though we honor the school's history, our students, faculty and alumni remain focused on the health challenges of today and tomorrow. In May the school launched its latest major initiative, the Global Bio Lab at UCLA. Designed in collaboration with colleagues at Los Alamos National Laboratory, the lab was created to serve as a first line of defense against an influenza or other disease outbreak or bioterrorist event. This lab is the first of its kind,

utilizing high-speed, highly automated systems to process large samples quickly. We welcomed Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Congressman Henry Waxman to campus to help us launch this state-of-the-art facility.

Finally, I'd like to encourage you to read excerpts from the winning submissions from our first-ever student competition. Challenged to identify the most pressing public health issues of the next 50 years and how they would tackle them, our students offered eloquent, insightful presentations. We were all reminded that we have tremendously bright, talented and capable students. They represent the future of public health, and we are in good hands.



Linda Rosenstock, M.D., M.P.H.  
Dean

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**UCLA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
ALUMNI AND FRIENDS RECEPTION**

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2011**

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Washington Convention Center (WCC), Room 202B

During the Annual Meeting of  
the American Public Health Association,  
October 29 – November 2, in Washington, DC.

**THE LAST  
THREE DEANS  
HAVE BEEN  
MAJOR  
CONTRIBUTORS  
TO BOTH  
THE SCHOOL  
AND PUBLIC  
HEALTH.**

# paving the way:

## Lester Breslow

**Through a seven-decade career** as one of public health's leading

figures, Dr. Lester Breslow has established a track record for being ahead of his time. So it's not surprising that along the way, some of his most prescient ideas have been met with, shall we say, skepticism.

After completing his service in World War II, Breslow approached California's director of public health proposing to start a chronic disease program in the state. Even as a young local health officer in Minnesota, Breslow had harbored big ideas about where the field should be headed: He saw a population that was living longer and, as a result, beginning to suffer more from age-related chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer and stroke. "There was a focus almost exclusively on communicable diseases when I started," Breslow recalled a few days after his 96th birthday. "I felt public health needed a broader vision." By the end of the war, he was also interested in studying the possible link between tobacco and chronic disease risk. California's public health director wasn't hearing any of it. "He said, 'Why don't you bring those crazy ideas back to Minnesota and try them there,'" Breslow says with a smile.

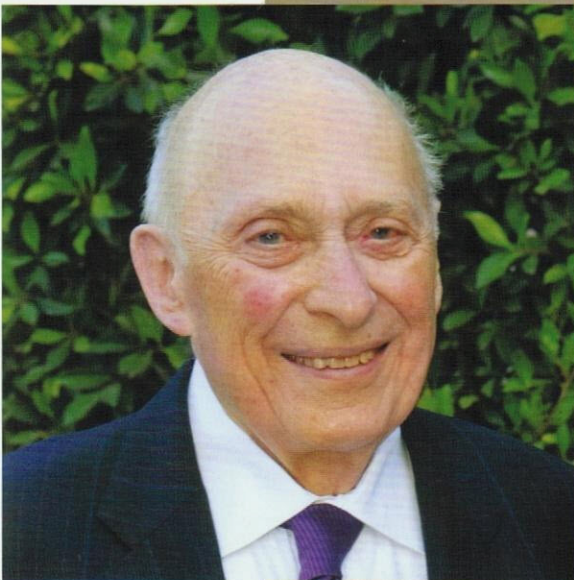
Ultimately, Breslow got the job he sought and would end up in the position of the man who had dismissed his vision. But as he rose to the level of California's top health official, he continued to encounter skeptics in high places. By the 1960s, Breslow was interested in studying whether lifestyle behaviors – from regular exercise and sleep to maintaining an optimal weight and not smoking or excessively drinking – influenced health and longevity. The response of the National Institutes of Health panel of scientists who reviewed his initial study proposal: "Unanimous rejection," Breslow says, smiling again. "They and many others thought the idea was bizarre."

More often than not, Breslow's "bizarre" ideas would become conventional wisdom. Three of his studies linking tobacco use to disease were later cited in the U.S. Surgeon General's landmark 1964 report. His Alameda County studies – which found, among other things, that a 45-year-old male who followed six of seven healthy habits had a life expectancy 11 years longer than a peer who followed three or fewer – helped to usher in a new era of health promotion.

**"There was a focus almost exclusively on communicable diseases when I started," Breslow recalled a few days after his 96th birthday. "I felt public health needed a broader vision."**

As California's public health director Breslow had another idea that was ahead of its time – the concept that the organization of medical services has a major impact on the population's health, and that it should be studied as a scientific discipline. Two other leading advocates of that idea, Milton and Ruth Roemer, were on the faculty at the UCLA School of Public Health; they were influential in bringing Breslow to the school, where he would serve as dean from 1972 to 1980, and as a dean emeritus ever since.

Among Breslow's most enduring legacies was to increase public health's attention to chronic diseases. And yet, some six decades after California's public health director suggested he take his "crazy" ideas back to Minnesota, Breslow was characteristically outlining a new, more ambitious vision for his profession. At age 89 in 2004, he was the featured speaker at the school's annual lecture established in his name. Breslow proposed a new era focused more comprehensively on promoting health rather than on merely combating infectious or chronic diseases. By now, given his track record, skeptics were much harder to find.



# Roger Detels

For just about as long as HIV/AIDS has been an issue in Southeast Asia, India and China, something has been particularly striking about the leaders of the programs to combat the epidemic in those regions: So many have trained at the UCLA School of Public Health under the tutelage of Dr. Roger Detels, professor of epidemiology and dean of the school from 1980 to 1985.

Since Detels received federal funding to establish the UCLA/Fogarty AIDS International Training and Research Program in 1988, nearly 150 health professionals, most of them from developing Asian nations, have come to the school for master's- and doctoral-level education. Trainees learn epidemiologic techniques and research methods that prepare them to return to leadership positions at home. And lead they have: Graduates have gone on to become ministers of health, to head AIDS and other disease surveillance programs, and to conduct critical research – often collaborating with Detels. Through his connections, Detels has consulted with numerous government and public health officials in these countries over the years – and his network of graduates in high places has served as an invaluable resource for UCLA faculty colleagues.

It was in Asia that Detels, while training to become a physician, was first drawn to public health. As a third-year medical student he spent six months at the Naval Medical Research Unit in Taiwan. “That experience made me realize that approaching one patient at a time wasn’t the way to make the biggest impact on health,” he says.

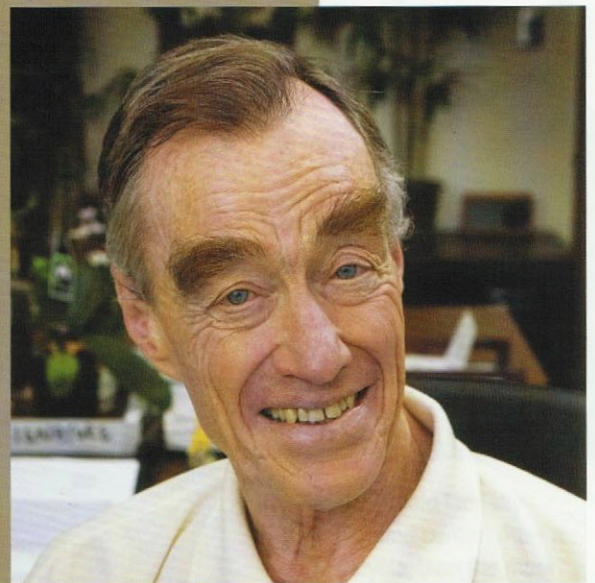
“I’ve met amazing, highly committed individuals. To help them develop as trainees and then to see them walk into leadership positions in their home countries and make a difference has been fantastically rewarding.”

He joined the school’s faculty in 1971 and had been making important discoveries showing the long-term effects of exposure to Los Angeles air pollution and a genetic susceptibility to multiple sclerosis when, in 1981, a UCLA physician, Dr. Michael Gottlieb, wrote the first report of an immune deficiency disorder affecting gay men. “I realized this was a model I could study through a cohort approach because we knew who was at risk for getting the disease and it had a very high incidence,” Detels says.

He began recruiting students from UCLA’s Gay and Lesbian Association as volunteers for a study in which they would anonymously respond to a series of questions and donate blood specimens. By 1983 Detels had enough data to successfully apply to the National Institutes of Health. UCLA and three other universities became the Multicenter AIDS Cohort (MACS), the first study to examine the natural history of AIDS. Twenty-eight years later, Detels continues to run the UCLA site; in that time MACS has followed more than 6,000 volunteer participants and published more than 1,200 papers, contributing pivotal insights on transmission, immune response, treatment, and genetic factors that, among other benefits, are integral to current efforts to develop a vaccine.

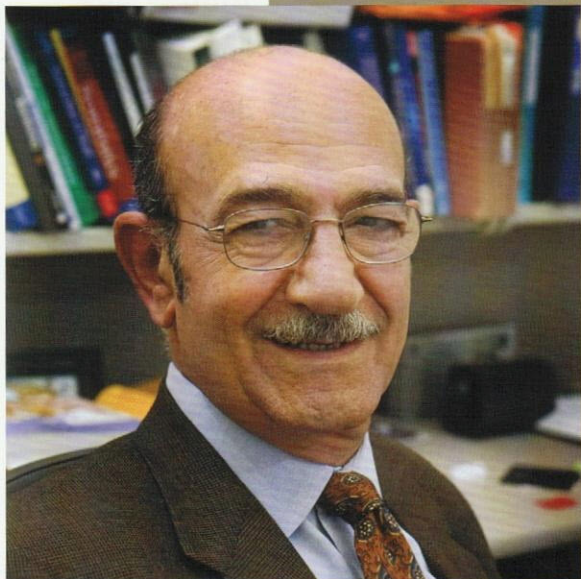
Detels is also the senior editor of the *Oxford Textbook of Public Health*, considered the ultimate resource for public health. The fifth edition of the ambitious undertaking was released in 2009, and a sixth is in the works. While the first two volumes focused primarily on the developed world, Detels takes pride in having brought a global perspective to the most recent editions.

Global health has been a major priority for the school over much of the last decade, and it could be argued that no one embodies that focus more than Detels and his international network of current and former students. When he isn’t visiting his former protégés for professional collaborations, Detels is in constant email contact. “It’s like having a large family,” he says. “I’ve met amazing, highly committed individuals. To help them develop as trainees and then to see them walk into leadership positions in their home countries and make a difference has been fantastically rewarding.”



# Abdelmonem A. Afifi

**As a leading biostatistician** on the school's faculty for all but four years of its existence, Dr. Abdelmonem A. Afifi has concerned himself with complex formulas – work that is essential to drawing sound conclusions from research data. But when it comes to Afifi's legacy, the numbers fail to tell the whole story. If skill with the minutiae of biostatistics has fueled Afifi's scholarly pursuits, it's his interpersonal and leadership acumen that have served a broader constituency – whether it's the scores of public health students he has mentored or the school he led during 15 years as dean.



After graduating from Egypt's Cairo University with a degree in mathematics, Afifi came to the United States on a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue his Master's in Statistics at the University of Chicago and Ph.D. at UC Berkeley. As he finished his Ph.D. his adviser, Dr. Robert Elashoff, was getting married in Los Angeles and invited Afifi to the wedding. As it happened, Elashoff was marrying the daughter of Dr. Wilfrid Dixon, who founded the Division of Biostatistics at the new UCLA School of Public Health. Dixon invited Afifi – at the time still undecided on whether to return to Egypt – to present to the division. Afifi impressed to the point that he was offered a faculty position. It's been 46 years and counting.

From the beginning he was a prominent scholar. The first of a series of four papers he and Elashoff published based on Afifi's dissertation was, for many years, among the most oft-cited papers on the subject of missing values – how to handle incomplete data, an inevitable problem when studying human subjects. In addition to his technical work, Afifi and his colleague Dr. Virginia Clark sought to make statistics accessible to a wider audience. Their 1984 textbook *Computer-Aided Multivariate Analysis*, aimed at non-statisticians, would show great staying power: Afifi and Clark recently sent the fifth edition to the publisher.

By the mid-1970s, Afifi's focus was broadening. "I always wanted to know everyone," he says. "When the school was small enough, I'd have parties and invite every faculty member to my home. Soon I became interested not just in socializing but in learning about their work." Colleagues elected Afifi to the faculty executive committee, and by the mid-1980s as its chair. In 1985, he was asked to serve as acting dean during the search for a successor to Dr. Roger Detels; by 1987 he was chosen to guide the school, a position he held until 2000.

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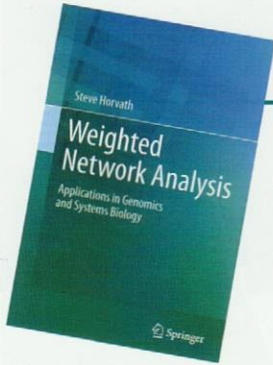
His goal was to take the school from "pretty good" to elite. "We already had a strong faculty, but we lacked the internal structure that goes with a major school," Afifi says. So he organized the school into five departments (Biostatistics, Community Health Sciences, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology and Health Services), each with its own staff. The move resulted in strengthened individual units – and a stronger whole. A second major challenge: Whereas once the school had relied on the state for most of its funding, amid substantial reductions Afifi realized that continued growth depended on faculty generating a portion of their own salary through grants, thus freeing up some state money to hire additional faculty. The result was the beginning of a more sustainable model that continues to be vital to the school's growth.

More than a decade later, Afifi finds reward in both the challenging research projects he takes on and in mentoring students. He's been a member of more than 190 doctoral dissertation committees, chairing 29 of them, and former protégés span the globe. "I learn so much from working with these bright young minds," he says. "It's a constant reminder that this was the right path for me."



## bookshelf

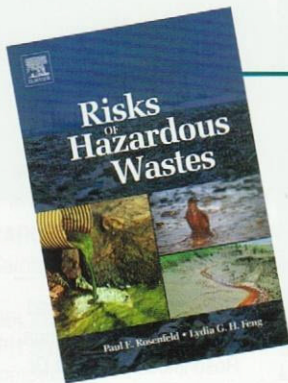
...recent books by UCLA School of Public Health authors



### *Weighted Network Analysis: Applications in Genomics and Systems Biology*

by **Steven Horvath**. Springer.

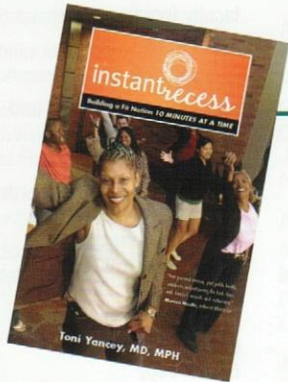
Presents state-of-the-art methods, software and applications surrounding weighted networks. The book is intended for students, faculty, and data analysts in many fields, including bioinformatics, computational biology, statistics, computer science, biology, genetics, applied mathematics, physics, and social science. Only a minimum knowledge of statistics is required.



### *The Risks of Hazardous Waste*

by **Paul E. Rosenfeld** and Lydia Feng. Elsevier Publishing.

Provides a background of the many aspects of hazardous waste, from its sources to its consequences, focusing on the risks posed to human health and the environment. Explains the legislation and regulations surrounding hazardous waste while providing case studies of mismanagement, highlighting deficiencies in science and regulation, and discussing measures to tackle society's hazardous waste problems.



### *Instant Recess: Building a Fit Nation 10 Minutes at a Time*

by **Toni Yancey**.  
University of California Press.

Physical activity in all levels of society continues to plummet. Drawing on solid scientific research, personal experience and her own poetry, Yancey calls for an approach that respects diversity and is grounded in the cultures of those most at risk. *Instant Recess* proposes regular 10-minute exercises that are easily incorporated into school, work, and community life.

## faculty honors

**RON ANDERSEN** was the 2011 recipient of the American Association for Dental Research Honorary Membership Award on the basis of significant contributions to dental research.

**RON BROOKMEYER** was awarded the Presidential Citation of Cooper Union at the college's 151st commencement.

**E. RICHARD BROWN** has recently served on the Institute of Medicine Committee on a National Surveillance System for Cardiovascular and Select Chronic Diseases, and an Institute of Medicine Committee on Future Directions for the National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Reports. He received the Henrik L. Blum Award for Excellence in Health Policy from the American Public Health Association.

**JONATHAN FIELDING** was appointed by President Obama to the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion and Integrative and Public Health.

**JOHN FROINES** received the California Air Resources Board's Clean Air Award for 2010 in the category of Air Pollution Research.

**PATRICIA GANZ** received the American Cancer Society Medal of Honor and the American Society of Preventive Oncology Distinguished Achievement Award.

**KIMBERLY GREGORY** received the ACOG Mentor Award from the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

**DIANA HILBERMAN** is serving on the executive committee of the Association of University Programs in Health Administration.

**RICHARD JACKSON** chairs the Committee on Health Impact Assessments of the Institute of Medicine; and the Policies and Practices Work Group of the National Conversation on Chemical Exposures, a joint project of the Centers for Disease Control

## new faculty

WELCOME TO

**DR. TINA CUNNINGHAM**  
*Biostatistics*

**DR. PAMELA YEH**  
*Environmental  
Health Sciences*

and Prevention and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Public Health Law Association.

**MARK LITWIN** received the 2011 Distinguished Service Award from the American Urological Association for his contributions to the establishment of the discipline of health services research in urology.

**MICHAEL LU** was appointed by Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius to chair the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality.

**VICKIE MAYS** was appointed by House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi to fill the House of Representatives seat on the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics.

**CHARLOTTE NEUMANN** received the Nevien Scrimshaw Award for Distinguished Service to Nutrition at the African Nutritional Epidemiology Conference of the Kenya Medical Research Institute, in collaboration with the Council of the African Nutrition Society. The award is in recognition of her dedication to maternal and child health and nutrition and research in sub-Saharan Africa.

**LINDA ROSENSTOCK** was appointed by President Obama to the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion and Integrative and Public Health. She is chair of the Preventive Services for Women Committee of the Institute of Medicine and was awarded the James P. Keogh Award from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

**CRISTINA TIRADO** was appointed director of the Center for Public Health and Climate Change at the Public Health Institute in Oakland. She was also nominated as moderator of the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition's Working Group on Climate Change and Nutrition.

**LEAH VRIESMAN** was a 2010-11 U.S. Senior Fulbright Award recipient, conducting research and teaching health care management at the University of Applied Sciences in Neu Ulm, Germany.



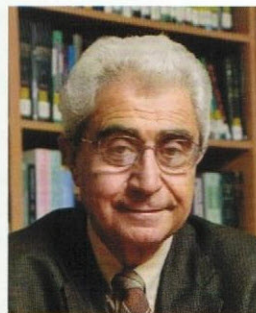
**DR. NIKLAS KRAUSE** has joined the faculty as director of the NIOSH Southern California Education and Research Center and professor in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences. Krause's research focuses on the occupational epidemiology of musculoskeletal and cardiovascular diseases. He has been investigating the causes of work-related musculoskeletal injuries, and how to predict and prevent prolonged work disability after these injuries. Krause has worked with immigrant workers in the

hospitality industry using a community-based participatory research approach, and is currently investigating the effects of occupational physical activity, long working hours and shift work on cardiovascular disease and mortality in a population-based, 20-year prospective cohort study of aging workers. Prior to coming to UCLA, Krause was associate professor in residence in the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine of the Department of Medicine at UC San Francisco. He received his medical degree and a doctoral degree in orthopedic medicine from the University of Hamburg, Germany, and a doctorate in epidemiology from UC Berkeley.



## health forum at UCLA (SPH)

In an era of health care reform, it is crucial for health leaders to have a place to gather, discuss and debate the way forward. That is the impetus behind The Health Forum at UCLA (SPH), a new series of regularly scheduled free public programs featuring health leaders discussing critical issues in the field. The entire first year is devoted to looking at issues related to health care reform, with the first four of the series conducted in partnership with Blue Shield Foundation of California. The inaugural event in May addressed how health care reform affects the safety net; in June a panel representing five major health care organizations gave firsthand accounts of electronic health record implementation. Go to [www.ph.ucla.edu](http://www.ph.ucla.edu) to see video of these events and to check the calendar for upcoming forums.



### NEW ASSOCIATE DEAN —

Dr. Haroutune Armenian is the school's new associate dean for academic programs, effective July 1, following Dr. Hilary Godwin's return to the Department of Environmental Health Sciences faculty. Armenian, a professor in the Department of Epidemiology, brings a wealth of academic administrative experi-

ence, having served as president of the American University of Armenia and director of the Master of Public Health Program at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Armenian was among the first to apply epidemiologic methods to study the effects of civil war at the population level during the 1980s in Lebanon, and to study the long-term effects of an earthquake in Armenia during the 1990s. His most recent research focuses on cancer within the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study and psychopathology as a determinant of physical illness. Armenian received his M.D. from the American University of Beirut School of Medicine, and his M.P.H. and Dr.P.H. from Johns Hopkins.



**CONGRESSWOMAN KAREN BASS**, representative for the 33rd congressional district and former California Assembly speaker, spoke at UCLA this spring about the impact of the proposed cuts to the nation's health care system. Bass also addressed how cuts to federal programs and services may affect the research budgets of federal agencies and universities such as UCLA.

## summer institute in women's health and empowerment

For the first time, the UCLA School of Public Health, in collaboration with the UC Global Health Institute's Center of Expertise on Women's Health and Empowerment, will host a Summer Institute in Women's Health and Empowerment.

The institute will provide graduate students interested in improving women's health and well being globally with foundational knowledge and skills from several disciplines. Students will be given access to actual case studies and databases on women's health, which they will analyze and use to develop presentations.

Upon completion of the four-credit institute, students will have the skills to explain the scope, causes and consequences of women's health disparities globally; describe and apply interdisciplinary empowerment frameworks to women's health issues; use analytical tools to assess the main approaches that have been used to improve women's health and empowerment; develop a policy advocacy strategy or program plan for advancing women's health and empowerment; and identify career paths and resources, as well as interacting with potential mentors in this area.

Current UC graduate students (from any discipline) or entering graduate students are eligible to apply, as are international students who have completed a bachelor's degree elsewhere. To apply by July 28, visit [www.summer.ucla.edu/institutes/womenshealth/overview.htm](http://www.summer.ucla.edu/institutes/womenshealth/overview.htm).

## rosenstock, fielding receive presidential appointments

In January President Obama announced the appointment of Dr. Linda Rosenstock, dean of the UCLA School of Public Health, and Dr. Jonathan Fielding, professor at the school and director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, to a 15-member Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion and Integrative and Public Health.

"I am honored to serve on the advisory group," said Rosenstock. "The work we do in public health – including prevention and health promotion – is an important component of the Affordable Health Care Act, and I believe the advisory group has a tremendous opportunity to help improve the health of America."

Created by the Affordable Care Act, the group will advise the National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council, the government-wide body made up of cabinet secretaries and independent agency leads, on how best to bring prevention and wellness to the forefront of the nation's efforts to promote health.

"Our nation will be greatly served by the talent and expertise these individuals bring to their new roles," said Obama. "I am grateful they have agreed to serve in this administration, and I look forward to working with them in the months and years ahead."

### INTERACT WITH US!

You can learn about happenings at the school, participate in discussions on public health topics of the day or reconnect with former classmates and favorite faculty members through the school's Facebook page, and follow UCLASPH on Twitter for important updates.

In addition, alumni are invited to join the UCLA School of Public Health Alumni Network on the professional networking site LinkedIn.



### DID YOU KNOW?

You are a lifetime member of the UCLA School of Public Health Alumni Association if you are a graduate of the UCLA School of Public Health and its executive programs.

If you would like more information about the activities of the Public Health Alumni Association, please call (310) 825-6464 or email [phaa@support.ucla.edu](mailto:phaa@support.ucla.edu).

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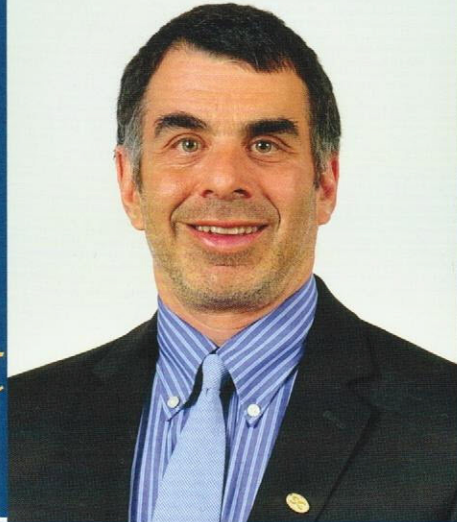
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Los Angeles County Director of Health Services  
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