Institute for Health Research and Policy
A university-wide multidisciplinary institute administered through the School of Public Health

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Advancing Health Practice and Policy through Collaborative Research

PIONEERING RESEARCH

Informing Policy

MENTORING CAREERS

Engaging Community

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
Over 20 years ago I received the “pink sheets”—the NIH reviews—on my first R01 submission. The grant wasn’t funded, so I asked some colleagues to read my proposal with the reviewers’ comments, and meet as a group to help me plan the revision. I received lots of good advice, but I remember distinctly one senior faculty member gently saying, “Generally it’s important that the proposed research methods match the study’s specific aims.” Clearly, the reviewers made a wise decision against funding that proposal!

I tell this story not to embarrass myself, but because this experience aptly illustrates the key qualities of an intellectual community. Such communities, according to a recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education,1 are diverse and multigenerational, flexible and forgiving, and respectful and generous. As a young investigator, I had a supportive intellectual community in which it was okay to “fail” and where senior investigators cared enough about my success to take the time to read my grant and give me direct and constructive feedback.

IHRP embodies the values of intellectual community. Our leadership works hard to ensure that students, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty at all levels have opportunities to share ideas, celebrate their successes, and most importantly, learn from their challenges in developing and maintaining productive research programs. The success of our culture is evident on every page in this report and in our many activities, from our Distinguished Lecture series to research seminars and roundtable discussions of works in progress, to co-sponsorship of campuswide forums for networking and exchanging ideas.

Of course, it’s not the laundry list of activities that’s important. As the Chronicle article stated, “Larger than the sum of its activities and structures, intellectual community is both a reflection and a product of the rich exchange of ideas and perspectives that characterizes scholarly life at its best.” I am proud to say this is what you find at IHRP.

sidewalks, parks, bike paths, neighborhood safety, absence of street traffic—conventional wisdom says these factors foster physical activity, but little research has examined such influences on the exercise levels or weight of teens, 17 percent of whom are overweight in the United States. Sandy Slater, senior research specialist in the Health Policy Center, is studying this issue with a new federal grant.

Dr. Slater has developed a conceptual model that considers socioeconomic, demographic, and built environment influences on teen weight across a range of settings, from rural areas to densely populated city neighborhoods. Using a national sample of adolescents, she will construct and correlate various indices that describe the communities in which teens live. Then she will examine how the built environment of schools and the routes teens take to get there are related to their physical activity and their mode of travel.

“I hope to determine what aspects of the built environment are important for increasing youth physical activity and reducing obesity,” Dr. Slater said. “I also hope to learn whether certain aspects of the built environment affect youth differently from adults, as documented in the literature. These findings can help inform policymakers and lead to community-based interventions to reduce adolescent obesity.”

Dr. Slater is conducting this research as one of the first investigators in the country to be awarded the K99/R00 grant.

Dr. Slater’s primary mentor for the first phase of this grant is Frank Chaloupka, distinguished professor of economics and director of the Health Policy Center, for whom she has worked on the ImpacTeen initiative (see pp. 8–9).

In the second, independent phase of the grant, Dr. Slater will conduct a pilot study that examines further the relationship between the built environment and weight of younger children. Focusing on six elementary schools, she will survey first, third, and fifth graders in detail, and characterize the built environment of their schools and communities, including opportunities for physical activity.

As an IHRP post-doctoral fellow, James Thrasher laid the foundation for the work he’s doing today to reduce the health burden of tobacco use in the United States and middle-income countries, particularly Mexico.

“My current research activities would not have happened without the fellowship,” said Dr. Thrasher, who worked at the Mexican National Institute of Public Health during his fellowship in IHRP’s Cancer Education and Career Development Program. There he strengthened and expanded professional relationships with Mexican tobacco control experts.

“Face time with your colleagues is always important, particularly when building multidisciplinary research teams and working across cultural and linguistic boundaries,” Dr. Thrasher said. Now an assistant professor in the University of South Carolina School of Public Health, Dr. Thrasher is conducting several research projects, including two studies in Mexico, one of which promotes stronger tobacco control policies in mass media.

At IHRP, we routinely celebrate the successes of students, fellows, and junior faculty. These successes reflect senior investigators’ commitment to mentoring, training, and providing opportunities for feedback and growth.
engaging the community

If you want research to help the community, you need to involve the community in research. At IHRP, we conduct research through partnerships with the community—residents, their health care providers, service organizations, public health professionals, and more—based on respect and shared goals.

For IHRP Partner, Research Is One Step to Ending Breast Cancer Disparities

African American women are far more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer at an advanced stage and die of the disease than white women, especially in Chicago.

This terrible fact was long known by African Americans, including Margaret Davis, executive director of the Healthcare Consortium of Illinois (HCI) and a nurse for more than 30 years. When IHRP researchers were looking in 2002 for a community partner in a study that aimed to understand why this was true, Ms. Davis joined them.

"Research allows you to alter policy," said Ms. Davis, who received the PATH (People Are Today's Heroes) Award from Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich in 2007 in recognition of her work as a nurse and health advocate.

Partnering in the study by the Center for Population Health and Health Disparities, Davis and HCI participated in monthly steering committee meetings, conducted focus groups with South Side communities affected by breast cancer, developed the survey instrument with researchers, attended annual conferences, and collaborated in the development of presentations, posters, and abstracts.

"Our perspectives as health professionals, community representatives, and advocates were not only valued but also utilized [by the research team],” wrote Ms. Davis in a 2007 report to the National Institutes of Health, which funded the study.

Directed by Richard Warnecke, professor emeritus of epidemiology, public administration, and sociology, the study examines how neighborhoods, social networks, and cultural beliefs affect the care of women diagnosed with breast cancer. The study, which involves 1,200 women living in Chicago, is conducted jointly by IHRP and the UIC Cancer Center.

Ms. Davis credits Dr. Warnecke and his colleagues for the way they involved the community in the study.

“Very few researchers do community-based participatory research,” Ms. Davis said. “The ones who do it get good results, but it takes so long, and the timeline for research is fast. There's a lot to do in five years.”

Under the center's grant, Ms. Davis and HCI, a network of health care and service organizations working toward greater access to quality health care for vulnerable populations, facilitated a task force serving Roseland, Pullman, West Pullman, Riverdale, and South Chicago, a neighborhood with a large minority of Latinos, who also face breast cancer disparities. The task force, composed of breast cancer survivors, health care professionals, and representatives of service organizations, has met monthly for almost five years to identify and remove obstacles to breast cancer screening and treatment.

The group has educated women about breast self-exams and helped them find low-cost mammography services near their homes while it advised the center’s
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Scientific Perspective Benefits Mentoring Organization

David DuBois, a psychologist whose research focuses on the positive development of youth, is spending time outside the university these days. He is working with Big Brothers Big Sisters to learn how the organization can incorporate evidence-based decision-making in its services. Funded as a William T. Grant Foundation Distinguished Fellow, Dr. DuBois is shadowing Chicago program staff and participating in their activities to understand their work and how the organization is run. He is also a key member of a task force on organization improvements in the national office. Big Brothers Big Sisters provides and professionally supports adult mentors to 246,000 at-risk youth nationwide. Dr. DuBois has partnered with the Chicago chapter for five years to conduct research, including a pilot study of a mentoring-based intervention designed to promote health knowledge and positive health behavior among teens.

“It has been enormously valuable to have David’s expertise available on a day-to-day basis,” said Art Mollenhauer, chief executive officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago. “His suggestions and insights have been a great help in benchmarking our local practices against the latest in research findings. David’s work is particularly exciting because it promises to enhance the capacity of programs like ours to ask and answer important questions about our services and their effectiveness for ourselves, rather than depending entirely on outside research.”

Research Partners Found in Churches

Two Chicago area churches are helping physician Ben Gerber to recruit participants for a research study called Exercise Your Faith. Dr. Gerber is evaluating the effectiveness of a weight maintenance program delivered by the Internet to digital video players in the homes of women who belong to the churches. Half the women in the study will receive the video-based program and personalized counseling through regular phone conversations. The other half will receive only phone support.

The pastors and elders of Carter Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago and Valley Kingdom Ministries in Oak Forest are supporting recruitment for this study.

The churches’ support is “phenomenal,” said Sandra Franklin, who directs the study’s outreach to the communities. “They’re great recruiters and great motivators.”

Dr. Gerber, assistant professor of medicine, said he is trying to build on the substantial social support African American women receive in their churches as a way to promote health goals. If successful, he hopes the pilot study will evolve into a larger randomized study.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases is funding this two-year pilot study.
New Grants

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded Frank Chaloupka, distinguished professor of economics, $1.6 million in February 2007 to study food environments and physical activity in elementary schools. Dr. Chaloupka and his colleagues in the Health Policy Center also are examining those schools’ district-level wellness and other policies that may affect children’s obesity.

Sherry Emery, research associate professor of economics, received a $2.4 million grant from the National Cancer Institute to investigate the impact of anti-smoking television advertising on youth, young adult, and adult smoking behaviors.

With a $3 million grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research, Laurie Ruggiero, professor of community health sciences, and colleagues are studying a new approach that aims to improve how people with diabetes take care of their condition. In the five-year study, diabetes patients will receive support from specially trained, certified medical assistants in addition to the care they receive from their doctors and other health care providers in the Sinai Health System, Access Community Health Network, and University of Illinois Medical Center.

Research Findings in the News

In the first year of the Medicare Part D benefit, medication therapy management programs were implemented by insurers to help older Americans use their medicines more effectively. Enrollment in these programs was primarily based on the number of chronic conditions, types of chronic conditions, and the number of medications prescribed, found Daniel Touchette, assistant professor of pharmacoeconomics, and colleagues. They published their survey findings of 21 distinct medication therapy management programs offered by 70 health plans in the November-December 2006 issue of the Journal of the American Pharmacists Association.

More than 92 percent of Illinois dentists provide oral cancer examinations for their patients, but many do not perform the procedure thoroughly or at optimum intervals. Charles LeHew, IHRP research specialist, and colleagues in the UIC College of Dentistry reported this in the spring 2007 issue of the Journal of Public Health Dentistry.

Seniors who do not have children to help care for them are less likely to have to go into a nursing home if they live in a state that spends more on home-and community-based services, found Naoko Muramatsu, professor of community health sciences. She discussed her findings in the May 11, 2007, issue of the Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences.

Marketing cigarettes in places where teens shop increases their cigarette use, found Sandy Slater, senior research specialist, when she conducted her dissertation research on tobacco marketing practices and youth smoking attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. She published her findings in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine in May 2007.

Despite the availability of tried and true methods to quit smoking, young adults do not take advantage of...
Most Illinois residents eligible for Medicaid do not know either about the program or their eligibility, reported Dianne Rucinski, senior research scientist at IHRP, to the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation, Division of Insurance, in 2007. Dr. Rucinski also found a large gap between what people are willing or able to pay for health insurance and the cost of coverage. In 2006, 14% of Illinois residents lacked health insurance. Dr. Rucinski directs the Health Evaluation Collaborative of the UIC School of Public Health.

If every woman of the age recommended for mammograms in the Chicago area tried to get screened every two years, only two thirds could be served, found Carol Ferrans and colleagues working on the Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force, which held a summit in March 2007 and released a report and policy recommendations in October 2007. Dr. Ferrans and colleagues believe low access to mammography is one reason why black women in Chicago are 68% more likely to die of breast cancer than white women. Dr. Ferrans, professor and associate dean for research in the College of Nursing, serves as deputy director of the Center for Population Health and Health Disparities. Other CPHHD investigators, including director Richard Warnecke and Garth Rauscher, also serve on the task force, which is now establishing a non-profit organization to address racial disparities in breast cancer treatment and outcomes.

Proven smoking cessation treatments that can double their chances of quitting, found Susan Curry, professor of health policy and administration, and her colleagues in the August 2007 issue of the American Journal of Public Health.

IHRP Distinguished Lectures

Robert Kaplan, professor and chair of the health services department at the University of California at Los Angeles, presented “New Definitions of Disease: Implications for Population Health and Health Care Costs” in November 2006.


Informing Public Policy

School-based interventions that aim to reduce obesity among children should “reflect evidence-based methods for promoting behavior change,” according to a Society of Behavioral Medicine policy brief written by Marian Fitzgibbon, director of the Health Promotion Research Program, and colleagues in October 2006. The statement also called on policymakers to provide funding to schools to implement and rigorously evaluate such initiatives.
alarmed by a steep rise in smoking, drinking, and illicit drug use among youth in the mid-1990s, U.S. policymakers called for change. But little evidence existed about what policies would work for youth.

In response, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) established an interdisciplinary research collaborative, Bridging the Gap, to identify policies and programs that reduce risky health behavior among teens. The foundation invited UIC’s Frank Chaloupka, now distinguished professor of economics, to co-direct the project with Lloyd Johnston of the University of Michigan.

“Bridging the Gap has established itself as one of the country’s most productive, highly respected, and influential health policy research initiatives,” said Tracy Orleans, distinguished fellow and senior scientist at RWJF.

The portion of Bridging the Gap led by Dr. Chaloupka, called ImpacTeen, became the cornerstone of the research portfolio of IHRP’s Health Policy Center and, so far, has grown into an 11-year, $23 million project. “ImpacTeen has provided extraordinary scientific leadership to the nation’s policy-based efforts [to reduce risky youth health behavior],” Dr. Orleans said.

From the beginning, ImpacTeen researchers pursued a strategy to communicate their findings to policymakers and the public. In addition to publishing more than 110 scholarly articles over the past decade, they published papers online at www.impacteen.org. Through the RWJF communications office, ImpacTeen researchers communicated findings of policy significance to advocacy organizations, such as the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, which had skill in courting the media and could push for evidence-based policy changes.

Following are a few examples of ImpacTeen’s many contributions to health policy.

Influence of Advertising

ImpacTeen’s specialty is merging and analyzing large complex data sets such as those from Nielsen Media Research and University of Michigan’s Monitoring the Future, an annual survey of behaviors, attitudes, and values of U.S. teens and young adults. Based on these data, ImpacTeen found in a first-of-its-kind study that youth were more likely to disapprove of tobacco and smoke less in states that sponsored anti-tobacco advertising.\(^1\)

On the other hand, ImpacTeen reported in 2006 that anti-tobacco ads directed at parents and sponsored by the tobacco industry seemed to have harmful effects on older youth, lowering their perceptions about the danger of smoking and increasing their likelihood of smoking.\(^2\) RWJF supported the findings with a news release and coordinated communication with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and the American Legacy Foundation, which issued their own press releases and contacted the National Association of Attorneys General. Six months later, Phillip Morris, the last tobacco company to air such ads, announced it would stop doing so.


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**Highlights from a Decade of ImpacTeen Research**

At IHRP, the passion investigators have for their work extends beyond the publication of their findings to seeing individuals adopting healthy habits, health care professionals using better models of care, and communities becoming healthier.
Pricing Effects
Beginning in 1997, ImpacTeen researchers began building evidence of the influence of price on teen consumption of cigarettes, alcohol, and illegal drugs such as cocaine and marijuana. For example, in 2003 they found that “higher cigarette prices, irrespective of the way they are measured, reduce probability of youth cigarette smoking.”

They worked with the American Medical Association and other advocacy organizations to communicate their findings to state legislatures. Dr. Chaloupka has testified in many states over the years, providing data specific to the locale on the effects of proposed policies, the corresponding reduction of teen consumption, the sustainability of tax revenue, and other economic issues. Today, anti-tobacco organizations list higher excise taxes as a measure critical to reducing teen smoking.

Scope Expanded to Obesity
More than one of every three children under 18 in the United States is overweight or obese. Calling obesity among U.S. children a “serious public health epidemic,” RWJF funded ImpacTeen in 2005 to expand its research to include the study of obesity among children and adolescents.

ImpacTeen researchers are applying the research methods they developed to reduce teen use of tobacco and other addictive substances to obesity, studying the associations between teen weight and the marketing of food products, the availability of physical activity, and school policies. In October 2007, ImpacTeen published a supplement to the American Journal of Preventive Medicine focusing on obesity among U.S. youth.

For more highlights of ImpacTeen’s research history, see www.ihrp.uic.edu/health-policy-center.

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communicating our findings

Selected Publications

Researchers affiliated with IHRP published more than 100 scholarly articles in 2006–2007. Here is a sampling.


Financial Profiles

- For every dollar of state support received in FY2007, the Institute for Health Research and Policy generated $24 in research funding.

- With state line and extramural funding, the institute received more than $17 million in FY2007.

- Governmental, nonprofit, and private agencies awarded institute-affiliated investigators more than $16.4 million in new and continuous grants in FY2007.

- The institute has been awarded $135.2 million in research grants since it was established in 1997.

### Overall IHRP-Associated Funding, FY2007
(Total: $17,058,345)

- State Funding $683,057 (4%)
- Grant Indirect Costs $4,376,790 (26%)
- Grant Direct Costs $11,998,498 (70%)

### IHRP Extramural Research Funding, FY2007
(Total: $16,375,288)

- State and Local Government $452,215 (3%)
- Associations, Foundations and Private Agencies $1,206,430 (7%)
- Federal Government $14,716,643 (90%)

### Cumulative IHRP Research Funding, 1997–2007
(Awards through June 30, 2007)

- Millions of Dollars Awarded

- Fiscal Year

- Cumulative IHRP Research Funding, 1997–2007 (Awards through June 30, 2007)
Institute for Health Research and Policy, 
FY2007

Grant Activity
Proposals submitted: 46
Number of these proposals funded to date: 25
Research projects conducted: 65
Total IHRP-associated research funding dollars: $16.4 million

Staffing
Professional staff members: 119
Fellows funded by National Institutes of Health training grants: 13
Graduate research assistants employed on research projects: 74
Undergraduates and other graduate students employed: 79

Scholarly Activity
Peer-reviewed articles published by IHRP-affiliated researchers: 102+
Conference presentations made by IHRP-affiliated researchers: 96+
Policy consultations provided by IHRP-affiliated researchers: 43+

Community Partnerships
Community organizations, health agencies, advocacy organizations, and other groups that partnered with IHRP-affiliated researchers: 239
Chicago area schools where IHRP conducted research: 32

Campus Relationships
UIC schools and colleges whose faculty members conduct research at IHRP: 11
UIC departments whose faculty members conduct research at IHRP: 39
Collaborating faculty: 91