From the Chair

“Everything the power of the world does is done in a circle.”

Black Elk
Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux

It was time for me to write a new “From the Chair.” Before I began, I asked to see a draft in hopes that the theme would naturally emerge...and it did. The theme that seemed obvious to me is the circle; inside you will see the evidence of our ongoing cycle of birth, growth, death and, often overlooked, rebirth.

The academic year is a naturally repeating circle that starts in late summer, flows through the fall and winter into spring and then ends, only to be reborn again in August. As you turn these pages, you’ll come upon stories of some who have stayed in this circle year after year. You’ll also find stories of some who are joining, some who are leaving, and still others who are remembered. Dr. Kathleen Gilbert exemplifies a long-serving faculty member who has taken on the new challenge of HPER Associate Executive Dean. Julie Bollinger and Caroline Kingori represent the numerous students who join for a few years, achieve, and then leave to pursue other goals. New faculty members Drs. Hsien-Chang Lin, Laura McCloskey, and Beth Meyerson are joining while long time academic advisor, Harriet Castrataro has left (but not completely) and opened a place for another new joiner, Shannon Stryjewski. We honor long-serving Dean-Emeritus Tony Mobley and remember former Chair Dr. James Crow and alumnus Dr. Bernard Lohr. Pick up the Pulse next year and you will see different names but the same predictable cyclical pattern.

As you will also see, while the circle provides the pattern of our years, other forces influence the developments that appear and disappear across the years. Shaped by developments in Indiana, the US and across the globe, we have gradually been changing the focus of our collective work and as a result, we are taking on a new identity. Currently we are transitioning to a school of public health, so when you open a future issue of the Pulse, you may see that the transition is complete. In a real sense, this will signal that the School of HPER has come to an end only to be reborn in this different form. The re-named school will maintain the same mission but have a broader array of avenues for pursuing that mission. For example, Drs. Lin and Meyerson bring new areas of teaching and research to AHS in the form of public health policy and public health economics. As a School, we’re creating a Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics with plans to hire a chair and several additional faculty members who will join our faculty in September 2012.

We hope you will continue to be involved in our circle, knowing that there will always be a place for you in our family. Yet, as with all families, things change. Our pledge is to continue to send you updates that keep you abreast of events associated with our continued growth as a Department and School and that allow you to join in the celebration of our impending rebirth.
Dr. Hsien-Chang Lin

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Hsien-Chang Lin to our AHS faculty this fall with his expertise in health policy management and his strong background in quantitative methodologies. Hsien-Chang (pronounced “shen chang”) received his bachelor’s degree from National Taiwan University in 2002 double majoring in Sociology and Economics.

After earning an MA in Economics in Taiwan, he enrolled at the University of Michigan in 2005. First he earned an MA in Applied Economics. Then in 2010 he completed a joint doctoral degree in Health Services Organization and Policy, in the School of Public Health, and in Social and Administrative Sciences, in the College of Pharmacy. Thus, Dr. Lin is able to reach across a variety of disciplines to bring us important economic perspectives on health policy.

Exactly how does he do this and what unique dimension can he add to our School of Public Health? One way Dr. Lin has achieved his goals is through studying pharmaceutical outcomes. He points out that the use of pharmaceuticals is increasing in our society. Therefore, we cannot overlook medical adherence in public health. There are many reasons patients might not take the medicine their physicians prescribe: economic reasons (can they afford it), knowledge of the medicine (do they know what the benefits are), and cultural beliefs (does the medicine have a stigma in their culture). It is a complex set of issues. In that sense, researchers with an economic background can add to the scope of public health knowledge.

In a recent project Dr. Lin studied a very large data set of patients diagnosed with a major depressive disorder (“Antidepressant Utilization, Adherence, and Health Care Spending in the United States” in Health Outcomes Research in Medicine, May, 2011). One finding is that “Hispanic patients had the lowest level of antidepressant adherence and were associated with lower total health care spending among all other races/ethnicities.” It is this kind of information that leads Hsien-Chang to conclude that “Differences in antidepressant adherence and health care spending across patient factors could have important policy implications for health disparity.”

Dr. Lin has done research along these lines with psoriasis, acne, and glaucoma too. In fact, he believes our MPH students, even those without a medical background, will be able to study a variety of diseases with analysis of patient adherence issues.

His pharmacy background also makes him ideally suited to study the place of pharmacists in the community health team. Finally, Hsien-Chang is interested in physician prescribing patterns. Eventually findings about patients, pharmacists, physicians, and medicines can be turned into policies that will improve the health of many and perhaps cut medical costs too.

When asked why he chose IUB, Hsien-Chang says that he likes the Midwest, he likes IU’s comprehensive offerings, and he likes our School’s reputation. His family in Taiwan are all in education related fields. His parents are retired high school teachers, his younger sister is a junior high teacher, and his older brother is a journalist for a newspaper. He likes classical music (another reason to choose IU), and he is very excited about our upcoming transition to a school of public health. This spring Hsien-Chang is teaching Organization and Administration of Public Health Programs. We are certainly fortunate to have him as a new member of our public health team!

Dr. Laura McCloskey

We are grateful to have new faculty member Dr. Laura McCloskey join us this fall. Dr. McCloskey’s undergraduate training was in English and Psychology, and she earned her PhD in Psychology from the University of Michigan focusing on Developmental Psychology. This spring, Dr. McCloskey is teaching Health Care in Diverse Communities at the undergraduate level and Program Evaluation at the graduate level. Then in Fall 2012, she will teach the masters level course Social and Behavioral Determinants of Health.

As a psychologist working at the University of Arizona, Dr. McCloskey found herself becoming more and more interested in the physical health outcomes of violence and stress. Her research interests include

- The health effects of violence against women and children
- Public health remedies to address disparities in the health of girls and women
- Global violence against women
- Adolescent girls at risk

In addition to the University of Arizona, she was on the faculty at Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, Wayne State University (where she was the Director of the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute, Department of Psychology), and University of Illinois. She is very pleased at the opportunity to be involved in our new school of public health initiative. Laura says, “I like to build things.”
Laura McCloskey, cont...

When asked why she focused on violence, Dr. McCloskey replied that she studied perfectly healthy young children in her doctoral program. However, as she worked at University of Arizona on a grant relating to the kids of battered women and then took a sabbatical at Harvard, attending conferences and programs, she began to develop a clinical zeal in hopes that the research into violence could change the outcomes for some of its victims and even reduce violence.

She is also interested in international issues and has collaborated on research in Tanzania, Lebanon, Italy, Colombia, and South Africa. Laura believes that the research done in high-income countries can have a positive effect on health outcomes in low-income countries.

Here at IUB, Dr. McCloskey will be the Director of the Center for Research in Health Disparities. This Center will be up and running within a year, with a speaker series starting in the fall. It will bring together local IU faculty members in our School and in schools across campus to study and share their research on health disparities. Over time, she hopes to include some key community players and to stimulate research and collaborations.

Laura is very pleased to be in Bloomington. She likes this part of the Midwest and hopes to do some kayaking and hiking. In fact, she believes IUB is the most charming campus in the Big Ten. We think so too, and we are delighted to have her aboard.

Dr. Beth Meyerson

Our department is pleased to welcome Dr. Beth Meyerson as an Assistant Professor of Public Health Administration & Policy and Co-director of our Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention. Dr. Meyerson has extensive experience in policy research and development for AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). She has worked in academic settings, government settings and in private consulting both in the US and abroad. In fact, if you ask her, she will say, “AIDS is the reason I am in public health.”

Like several of our new faculty, Beth hails from Michigan. She received an Honors BA from University of Michigan in 1988 at a time when AIDS was infecting some of her fellow students. These friends faced the dual challenge of a deadly disease and the disclosure of their sexual orientation -- often to unsupportive parents and family members. Supporting her friends became one of Beth’s earliest experiences with HIV/AIDS.

After her undergraduate degree, Dr. Meyerson attended Harvard Divinity School. There she did an internship at a women’s shelter in Roxbury, seeing up close the effects of poverty, gangs and drugs. She worked with a Buddy Program which pairs supporters with AIDS patients. During a hiatus from Harvard, Beth served as associate pastor of her home church in Michigan, where she became known as the AIDS lady because she was one of the few religious leaders willing to visit hospital patients with AIDS. She soon met her spouse Jill, moved to Indianapolis and completed her Master of Divinity in 1992 at the Christian Theological Seminary. In Indianapolis, she worked as a hospital chaplain to establish AIDS focused chaplaincies using the oncology model. In conversations with reluctant hospital staff, Dr. Meyerson would often say, “What if you take out the word ‘AIDS’ and put in the word ‘cancer’? Then how would you proceed?” This helped others rethink their stigmatized approach to AIDS.

Moving to St. Louis, Beth directed Client Services for a local AIDS service organization and soon found herself working as the “AIDS Czar” for the state of Missouri. In that role, she helped knit together community groups and state level agencies to boost AIDS services in Missouri and to normalize the approach to HIV prevention. There she earned a Public Health Certificate from St. Louis University in 1998, and in 2002 she completed her PhD in Public Policy Analysis and Administration “because we desperately needed a public policy skill set in public health. We still do,” states Beth emphatically.

The consultancy chapter of her career began in 1998 as she was completing her PhD. Dr. Meyerson started the Policy Resource Group, LLC a firm specializing in policy research and strategy with domestic and international emphases. During the ensuing years, Dr. Meyerson served on an Institute of Medicine Committee, advised countless country, state and local governments on HIV and STDs and managed to teach periodically at both the Saint Louis University School of Public Health and Walden University. Beth says that she loved working with students, “because as an adjunct, I could bridge the practice and theory gap through my experience.”

Beth is very happy to be opening a new chapter of her life at IUB. She taught 44 MPH students in our fall Public Health
Health Foundations and Leadership class and is developing a Public Health Policy seminar for Spring 2013. Her research is now focused on structural changes in the health system to help expand access. One project seeks to implement high risk HPV testing for the early detection of cervical cancer. “As we face the policy war on our reproductive health clinics – particularly in Indiana – we know that STD clinics will serve as likely the only safety net provider for people who need sexual health services,” Beth says. Her second project is focused on expanding HIV rapid testing in rural pharmacies. “We have a tremendous intersectoral coalition developed for the planning of this pilot project,” said Beth. Both projects are exciting new dimensions that will serve IUB and Indiana well as we forge a healthier state and nation. We are grateful to have a dynamic new faculty member like Dr. Beth Meyerson in our AHS family.

Students: Be sure to join one of our AHS clubs!

American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) for Safety majors or minors
Kirby Piatek - President; Email: kpiatek@umail.iu.edu
Adam Santos - Vice President; Email: aasantos@umail.iu.edu

Dietetics Club for Dietetics and Nutrition majors
Mary Nelson - President; Email: nelsonmk@indiana.edu
Allison Shaw - Vice President; Email: shawas@indiana.edu
Augusta Hasse - Secretary; Email: ahasse@indiana.edu
Christine Allegritti - Treasurer; Email: camallegr@indiana.edu

Eta Sigma Gamma for all AHS majors, undergraduate and graduate
Julie Bollinger - President; Email: jubollin@indiana.edu
Sam Shadler - Vice President; Email: ranshadler@indiana.edu

Shannan Stryjewski
New AHS Undergraduate Advisor

Applied Health Science is fortunate to have Ms. Shannan Stryjewski (pronounced Stry-eh-ski) as our new undergraduate advisor. Shannan joined us in August, 2011. Since then she has met with hundreds of students to help them with schedule planning; grad school, internship and career options; and campus opportunities. She advises Dietetics, Human Development and Family Studies, Nutrition Science and Safety majors. (Paulene Hardy now advises Public Health and Health Secondary majors.)

Shannan received two degrees from IU: a BA in Psychology with a minor in Human Development and Family Studies in 2009 and an MS in Counselor Education in 2011. She is also a Hoosier, having spent most of her life in the Merrillville and Valparaiso areas. While at IU, Shannan has worked in a variety of roles: as a server at the Eigenmann Eatery, as an executive assistant for a company that worked with government contracts, as a verbal behavioral instructor for kids with autism, and as an academic counselor for IU Athletics and University Division. She has put herself through school and learned a wide range of skills in the process.

Some of the influences Shannan cites in her career path to becoming a college advisor have been her own counselors as she grew up, her work with autistic children, and her year off between her freshman and sophomore years. She worked for a real estate title company and lived with her grandparents in Florida. She has also done an internship in the Eastern Greene County School Corporation where she counseled at-risk secondary students, worked with students taking standardized tests such as SAT’s, and provided career guidance.

Such a rich background of experience in counseling and in the business world has given Shannan just what she needed to jump right into advising for AHS. She hopes to empower students and help them make their own decisions as they set their paths through IU. And she says, “I have had great working experiences in the past, but I have never felt at home while working. Applied Health Science within the School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation has given me the feeling of home while I work, and I cherish that.”

When she is not in her office, Shannan enjoys cooking and especially baking, being outdoors, and traveling. She would like to garden sometime, too. We are very grateful for her advising expertise, and we look forward to her sunny smile, and her baked goods for many years.
Castrataro Retires

Harriet Castrataro, our dedicated and extraordinary undergraduate academic advisor, decided to retire in July, 2011. She has served as an exemplary advisor and has provided invaluable service to the students and faculty of Applied Health Science for over 16 years. Harriet has been described as pleasant, efficient and student-oriented. She often went out of her way to assist others. Students have also called Harriet “a mentor,” “confidant,” and “filled with positive energy.”

Reaching the decision to retire was not an easy one for Harriet. She said, “Advising Applied Health Science students has been a wonderful career, and I treasure my relationships with the students, the staff and the faculty.” The department is very fortunate that Harriet agreed to maintain her connection to Applied Health Science and continue her role in publishing the AHS Pulse. Harriet said that she enjoys the contact this provides with her colleagues.

In addition to working on the newsletter, she has been able to do some traveling, reading, cooking, and playing flute in the Brown County Community Band. And she even made some doll clothes for her granddaughter Megan (10) at Christmas time. Both Megan and grandson Nicolò (2) live in Plainfield, so she and her husband James can be a part of their lives. Harriet says, “This is pure joy!” We wish Harriet all the best in her new life.

by Paulene Hardy, Academic Advisor

How do you define dedication, competence, and grace under pressure? What do empathy, patience, and collegiality look like? For 16 years in the Department of Applied Health Science, the answer to those questions was found in Harriet Castrataro.

When she first arrived in 1995, Harriet advised all the AHS undergraduate majors. With increased student enrollments, another advisor was hired in 2008, and Harriet continued advising dietetics, nutrition science, public health, safety, and health secondary students. By the time she retired in the summer of 2011, Harriet had advised thousands of students and did so with insight, patience, and unfailing concern for their well-being.

As director of the dietetics program at IU, I found in Harriet a colleague of unfailing dedication to her job and commitment to students...and one who was not ruffled by last minute requests for information that I needed for accreditation reports! But what I will carry closest to my heart when I think of Harriet is her warmth and caring spirit that tended to crises of health and heart. Many a student was the recipient of a caring touch from Harriet through a difficult time physically, academically, or emotionally, as was I. She undoubtedly made a positive difference in the lives of those around her.

Another question: Who makes the best Halloween doughnuts? Once again the answer is Harriet, with her husband James. Thank you, Harriet! For everything, thank you.

by Victoria Getty, Senior Lecturer and Director, Didactic Program in Dietetics

Tree Near HPER Commemorates Dr. James Crowe

On Thursday, September 22, 2011, our Department held a tree-planting ceremony in memory of Dr. James Crowe. Dr. Crowe was the Chairperson of the Department of Applied Health Science from 1992 to 1999. During his tenure, AHS developed a number of undergraduate courses that appealed to a wide cross section of IU’s students. In addition, our AHS doctoral program was ranked number one in the nation, based on a variety of academic indicators.

The speakers at the ceremony were Dr. James Weigand, former Dean of the School of Continuing Studies; Dr. David Lohrmann, Interim Chair of our Department; Mary Rose, a friend of the Crowe family; and Dr. Mohammad Torabi, Interim Dean of the School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. They all praised Dr. Crowe as a master teacher, a loyal friend and colleague, and a leader with vision and a sense of humor.

In attendance at the ceremony were Dr. Crowe’s wife Barbara, his daughter Monica, and several of his grandchildren. The tree, a Red Oak, is doing well on the west side of the HPER building near the entrance to the Royer Lobby. It will be a fitting tribute to Dr. Crowe’s leadership and his high regard for young people as it shades them for many years.
At HPER, Dr. Loft was the driving force behind the establishment in 1966 of the Center for Safety and Traffic Education (now the Center for Health and Safety Studies). Through this center, he had a major impact on safety leaders and students alike. Dr. James Crowe and Dr. Donald Ludwig said upon Dr. Loft’s retirement, “The mark of a successful educator is measured, in part, by the products of his endeavors. Through the years Dr. Loft’s philosophy and creed of safety education has influenced the lives of hundreds of students. Dr. Loft has gained the respect and admiration of his pupils.” We salute his legacy of safety education in our department, and we will continue the legacy as we honor him.

Outreach...

To Our Professional Organizations

IU’s Applied Health Science at American School Health Association Fall Conference

To Our Community

Community members sampling snacks at our department’s Martin Luther King Day “Cook and Play the Healthy Way Family Festival”
Fall 2011 marked the opening of a wonderful new addition to the HPER building. The “Courtyard Project,” envisioned by so many leaders throughout the years, has become a reality. On Thursday, October 6, the HPER community and leaders of Indiana University gathered to dedicate this facility and to rename the new auditorium for Dr. Tony A. Mobley.

The ceremony began with IU President Michael McRobbie noting the strengths of our School which has grown from several hundred in 1946 to over 2,500 in 2012. In fact, HPER is the third largest school on campus, and we have some of the best public health researchers in the nation right here. President McRobbie then turned to Indiana’s health data, where we rank 40th in the nation for cancer deaths, 37th in obesity, 45th in smoking and 49th in air pollution. This new facility, he believes, with its state-of-the-art auditorium, its expanded spaces for labs and research, and its suite of offices for student services, will give us the opportunity to meet these challenges and mobilize our state’s expertise for the 21st century.

Dr. Thomas F. Gieryn, Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs at IUB, praised HPER as “one of the earliest experiments in interdisciplinary studies” since we combine sports, anatomy, physics, cultural anthropology, sociology and psychology. He said we offer a wide variety of disciplines from fitness to dietetics and we perform scholarship of all types.

Interim Dean Mohammad Torabi called the celebration, “truly a proud moment for all.” He highlighted “HPER’s excellent research, educating tomorrow’s leaders and expanding our state’s public health infrastructure.” Dean Torabi’s motto is “The sky is the limit.” He closed his presentation by thanking the Courtyard Project Campaign Chairs: Dick Enberg, Curt Simon, Tony Mobley, and David Gallahue.

The auditorium, which is now officially named the Tony A. Mobley Auditorium, gave everyone at the ceremony an immediate sense of pleasure and satisfaction. We were sitting in a space where there had been nothing but grass. The acoustics were excellent, the seating comfortable, and the technology impressive. Sarah Schuler, President of VPS Architecture, the architect of the project, called it a “jewel right in the middle of campus.” Perhaps Dean Emeritus Mobley said it best, “One of the joys of working in a university is the interaction with students. It gives me such pleasure that this room will influence thousands of students.”

Please do stop by to see the new Courtyard space next time you are in the HPER building. On the ground floor you will find the new Department of Environmental Health and other faculty offices, on the main floor are advising and career services and the Tony A. Mobley Auditorium, and on the top floor we have room for further development with laboratories and offices. You will be pleased to see how we are growing.

“Truly a proud moment for all.”
- Dr. Mohammad Torabi
Faculty and Staff News

Dr. JoAnne Bunnage received the 2011 Lloyd Olcott Community Service Volunteer Award given by the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Brian Dodge received the American Public Health Association HIV/AIDS Section’s Excellence in Abstract Submission among All Presenters Award for the article entitled, “Administering Sexual Health-Related Services to Bisexual Men: Privacy, Trust, and Appropriate Messaging,” (2011) by B. Dodge, P. Schnarrs, G. Goncalves, M. Reece, O. Martinez, D. J. Malebranche, R. Nix, B. Van Der Pol, and J. D. Fortenberry, at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Noy Kay was invited as a keynote speaker for the 2011 conference of the Taiwan Bureau of Health Promotion. The conference was held in Taipei, Taiwan, November 15-19, 2011. Dr. Kay’s topic was “Health Promoting Schools in Thailand.”

Dr. Kevin Slates, Director of the Industrial Hygiene lab received a technical equipment grant valued at $10,500 from Occupational Safety Dynamics, Inc. Dr. Slates would like to thank Mr. Andy Coats, President of Occupational Safety Dynamics, Inc. for this generous donation. The portacount, a quantitative instrument will be used to teach and train students to conduct respiratory protection fit testing, and to assess indoor air quality. Dr. Slates was also nominated for the American Society of Safety Engineers’ Outstanding Educator Award. The Outstanding Educator Award recognizes the achievements of those individuals who have chosen to devote their careers to educating the next generation of safety professionals. The award’s winner will be announced in Spring, 2012.

Student News

Andreia Alexander (Health Behavior) won a Pre-Doctoral fellowship from the National Cancer Institute.

Julie Bollinger (HDFS) received the National Founder’s Award at the Oct. 2011 American School Health Association/Eta Sigma Gamma National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Also, our Nu chapter of Eta Sigma Gamma received the National ESG 2011 Teaching Activity of the Year Award and the 2011 Service Activity of the Year Award. Congratulations to our chapter and its current and past officers as well as its faculty sponsor Dr. Trent Applegate!

Heather Gray (Nutrition Science MS) and Danica Misz (Dietetics) received $2,500 scholarships from the new scholarship program launched by the Bloomington Hospital Foundation.

Desma Jones did her MPH internship at the Michigan State Department of Health.

Caroline Kingori (Health Behavior) won a scholarship from the Society of Analysis of Public Health Issues.

Sandra Little (Nutrition Science) has been accepted into IU’s Optometry School.

Jamie McGinness (Dietetics) was one of five students nominated from IU for the Big Ten Live Big Scholarship.

Michael Menace did an MPH internship at the Marion County Health Department.

Mary Wampler (previously Winburn) has celebrated 20 years of service to IU. We are all grateful for her prompt and super friendly help over the years. Congratulations, Mary!

Dr. Kathleen Gilbert became the school’s Executive Associate Dean in July, 2011, replacing Dr. Jerry Wilkerson. Interim Dean Torabi comments, “As a valued professor and director of undergraduate education, Dr. Gilbert has the ability to work with faculty and students in a fair and decisive way. I look forward to working with Dr. Gilbert in the dean’s office and collaborating with her on the decisions that will affect the school’s progress and transition to a school of public health.” All our best wishes, Dr. Gilbert, in your new role!
Brittany Phillips (Public Health) will be interning with the United States Public Interest Research Group here in Bloomington this spring. She would like to continue on with them in a full time capacity after her internship is completed.

Pam Pikus, MPH student, was an intern during the fall at IU Health Bloomington.

Melissa Hunsberger (Dietetics) was the recipient of a Cox Honors Scholarship.

Congratulations to Safety majors Kirby Platek, Robert Tennyson, Neal Ward, Rhajaan Edwards and Chris Drew for being selected to attend the American Society of Safety Engineers ASSE Future Leaders in Safety Conference. This two-day conference November 3-4, 2011, was designed exclusively for American Society of Safety Engineers ASSE student members. The conference was created to prepare the future safety professional for the transition from student life to employment as a safety, health and environmental professional. The schedule included educational sessions ranging from real-life safety experiences to career development workshops, and plenty of opportunities for networking.

The Public Health Student Assembly has been awarded the Arthur R. Metz Scholar Grant. Emily Myers (MPH in Health Administration) spearheaded the application process with support from Drs. Bumann and Sherwood. This award provides for scheduled lectures throughout the next academic year.

Nicole Smith (Health Behavior) won the prestigious Study of Sexuality (SSSS)’s Outstanding Student Paper Award at the annual conference. Nicole’s presentation,"Is Arousal Cream Arousing? A Daily Diary Study Assessing the Impact of Arousal Cream Use on Sexual Pleasure" was professionally delivered, informative, interesting, and inspired diverse and thoughtful questions from the audience.

Beth Ann Walker (Health Behavior) was recognized in Boston, Massachusetts on November 18, 2011 as the second-place award recipient of a major contest sponsored by the Gerontological Society of America. Walker won second place for her design project aimed at transforming an android mobile phone device for use by adults aged 55 and over. The “Aging Means Business Student Design Contest” invited undergraduate and graduate students from across the nation to showcase their design ingenuities by proposing an original product for older adults, based on a transformation of an existing device or an entirely new creation. She was one of 42 applicants. Congratulations to Beth!
The Indiana Prevention Resource Center Leads Indiana in Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment

By Ruth Gassman and Jon Agley

What is SBIRT?

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is a process designed to identify potential substance use problems among a selected population (i.e., patients, students) using validated and reliable screening tools, and briefly to intervene with those individuals using a short motivational conversation designed to reduce ambivalence toward behavior change. Further, patients who display high or dependent levels of use are referred for further assessment and treatment. This protocol demonstrably has reduced negative alcohol and drug-related outcomes among participants in a variety of different settings.

Why SBIRT?

Traditional substance abuse treatment focuses on those who obviously are abusing substances (i.e., those with high or dependent levels of use). While SBIRT is an excellent way to identify these individuals and refer them to specialized treatment, it also targets the comparatively larger segment of the population that uses alcohol and other drugs at risky or harmful levels but whose use is less obvious. It also provides a brief and effective way to begin moving those individuals on a path towards behavior change.

What is the IPRC’s role?

The Indiana Prevention Resource Center is leading an ambitious initiative—funded recently by an $8.3 million federal grant—targeting the failure by primary care providers to routinely ask patients about their alcohol and drug use, an omission considered a weak link nationwide in efforts to address substance misuse. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration awarded the State of Indiana a five-year grant for the IPRC-led project which will work to integrate SBIRT services into the routine standard of care at community health centers and community mental health centers throughout Indiana.

The complex effort involves a coalition of health, research and educational groups, including Wishard Health Services, Midtown Mental Health Services, and the IU School of Medicine in Indianapolis; the IPRC and the Academic Edge, Inc. from Bloomington; and the family and Social Services Administration, Division of Mental Health and Addiction.

Studies have shown that although only a small percentage of individuals in the United States have been diagnosed with alcohol abuse and/or dependency, a far greater population, as high as 20 percent of individuals, are risky drinkers. These patients will not always identify their health problems with alcohol or other substance use, nor will such a connection always be obvious. The earlier a problem is detected, the more effective prevention efforts may be. Unfortunately, health care providers infrequently address substance use with their patients.
Alumni News

AHS Alum Amy Eisenstein, a Rising Star in Gerontology

This fall Dr. Amy Eisenstein received HPER’s 2011 Willard Patty Distinguished Alumni Awards. Amy found her calling as a professional in the field of aging while earning her BS in Human Development and Family Studies here at IU and studying under Dr. Lesa Huber. She went on to earn a masters degree in Gerontology from the University of Southern California and a doctoral degree in Public Health from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). Along the way she has always spent time working directly with older adults.

Amy’s grandparents have had a big influence in her life, with her great grandmother living to 104 and “always having a warm smile on her face and wonderful stories to tell.” Amy says, “As my career has progressed, my family continues to steer the direction that I go in. My grandmother, whom I was very close with, was diagnosed with dementia. Her experiences, the way she was treated, and the pressure put on my family as her care providers all lead me to want to ‘fix’ the system, and make those experiences better for others.”

And indeed Amy is helping to fix the system. She is supporting young professionals in the field by serving on the Board of Directors and chairing the Student Interest Group for the American Society on Aging. She teaches research methods, health behavior and health promotion at the UIC. And perhaps most importantly, she is doing research that will help determine whether lifestyle behaviors can influence the trajectory of dementia. Dr. Lesa Huber explains…

“In speaking of her research, Dr. Eisenstein says, “My findings are currently preliminary, but point to the idea that participation in cognitively stimulating activities is a significant predictor of lower odds of cognitive decline. Participation in cognitively stimulating activities stood out above the other activities, and was just as significant as some of the demographics that we expect to be predictive of cognitive decline (such as age).” So in addition to staying healthy and exercising, encourage your parents and grandparents to do crossword and sudoku puzzles; play cards with them; show them how to play challenging games on their computers; and help them to continue using their minds in any way they can.

We hope to hear more from Dr. Eisenstein and her research team in the future. We are very proud of her contributions to the field of aging, and we wish her all the best as she leads us into a brighter future.