Barbara Abrams, Dr.P.H., R.D., professor of epidemiology and public health nutrition, will serve as the School’s new associate dean for student affairs effective July 1.

Abrams recently received funding from the James B. Pendleton Charitable Trust for “Safety of Heat-treated Breast Milk to Prevent Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV.” The study aims to investigate the virological, nutritional, and antimicrobial safety of heat-treated breast milk as an infant feeding option for HIV-positive mothers in developing countries, where access to safe formula is limited. The study will compare the ability of two simple heat treatment methods to denature HIV while maintaining the nutritional and immunological properties that are critical in breast milk. This is a proof of concept study which will open the way to field trials and the full application of heat-treated breast milk as an option to reduce postnatal mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Patricia A. Buffler, Ph.D., M.P.H., professor of epidemiology and dean emerita, co-edited a book, _Mechanisms of Carcinogenesis: Contributions of Molecular Epidemiology_, published by the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The book reviews the use and potential of biomarkers in cancer epidemiology research. It originated from a workshop, “Mechanistic Considerations in the Molecular Epidemiology of Cancer,” held in Lyon, France, in November 2001 and organized by Buffler while on sabbatical as a visiting scientist at IARC.

Ralph A. Catalano, Ph.D., M.R.P., professor of health policy and management, authored “Sex ratios in the two Germanies: a test of the economic stress hypothesis,” which was published in the journal _Human Reproduction_. The study looked at the ratio of male to female births in East and West Germany from 1946 to 1999. Catalano found that in East Germany in 1991, a time when the region was reeling from the collapse of Communism and the transition to a free market economy, the ratio of male to female births dropped to its lowest levels since World War II.

The Center for Community Wellness and The California Endowment released the first statewide bilingual health and wellness guide for the more than one million Chinese-speaking people in California. The Chinese/English edition of _The Wellness Guide: Idea for Living and Staying Well in California_ links thousands of Chinese-speaking households to health and wellness information and services. Chinese families in California can use the 152-page guide to get important information on a range of topics, including legal issues for immigrants, traditional medicine, discipline, finding a school, teen issues and nutrition. _The Chinese/English Wellness Guide_ was developed with an advisory team of Chinese community leaders and health professionals.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has granted $200,000 to expand and enhance the Doctorate in Public Health Degree Program through a Dr.P.H. Leadership Program. By further developing the program’s structural ties and active partnerships with local public health communities, the grant will enable the Dr.P.H. program to substantially expand its efforts to complement scholarly education and research with hands-on experience and skill-building in solving real world problems.

S. Katharine Hammond, Ph.D., professor of environmental health sciences, traveled to the Republic of Ireland on a lecture tour at the invitation of the country’s Western Health Board and the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), to speak about passive smoking in anticipation of Ireland’s workplace smoking ban. Included in her tour was a presentation at the Western Health Board’s seminar, “Going Smoke Free: Preparing for the workplace smoking ban,” and a well-attended public lecture, “Who’s Blowing Smoke: The Health Benefits of Going Smoke Free,” delivered at the NUIG. While in Ireland, Hammond assisted in designing and implementing a study of secondhand smoke in the pubs before and after the ban.

Joyce C. Lashof, M.D., professor and dean emerita, chaired a group of scientific experts convened to devise approaches to establishing an environmental health surveillance system in California. Professors Thomas McKone, Ph.D., and William Satariano, Ph.D., were among the group’s members. The group formed as a result of the passage of California Senate Bill 702 (Escutia), which declared the legislature’s intent to establish a surveillance system and required state officials to form a working group. Overseen by the University’s California Policy Research Center, the group released a report in February urging state officials to set up a statewide surveillance system to track diseases and possible links with environmental hazards. The report recommends the diseases, environmental hazards, and exposures that should be tracked in California; discusses community needs with regard to tracking; and concludes with policy recommendations.

Lashof has been featured in an interactive, multimedia exhibition entitled _Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America’s Women Physicians_, which honors the lives and achievements of women in medicine, past and present. The physicians’ contributions are showcased in artifact, textile, and digital portrait galleries, as well as in
interactive installations. Located at the National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, the exhibition will be open until April 2005.

**Thomas McKone, Ph.D.,** adjunct professor of environmental health sciences, received the 2003 Constance L. Mehler Award from the International Society of Exposure Analysis. McCone was recognized for his contributions to exposure analysis research that have provided new approaches for the reduction or prevention of exposures and have helped shape national and state policies. McCone developed the CalTOX model, which assesses the risk of hazardous waste and air pollutants and is widely used by state and federal agencies in the United States and Europe.

**Meredith Minkler, Dr.P.H.,** professor of community health education and health and social behavior, received a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for her new national study documenting the impacts of Community-Based Participatory Research on health-promoting public policy. Doctoral candidate Victoria Breekwicz Vasquez, who serves as project director, will also use some of the findings from this study as the basis of her dissertation.

**Linda Neuhauser, Dr.P.H.,** clinical professor, epidemiology, and **S. Leonard Syme, Ph.D.,** professor emeritus of epidemiology, are principal investigators for the School’s new Center for Health Communication. The center opened this past fall with funding from regulatory agencies including the California Office of the Patient Advocate and the California Department of Managed Health Care, and from international groups including the Pratt Institute in Australia. This effort responds to requests from HMOs, other health organizations, and regulatory agencies who wish to improve the quality of their information for the public. The center trains these organizations in the development of communication to fit the literacy, cultural, language and other special needs of California’s diverse populations.

**David Ragland, Ph.D., M.P.H.,** adjunct professor and director of the Traffic Safety Center, is lead author of “Driving cessation and increased depressive symptom,” currently in press in the *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences*. He also coauthored “Oakland Chinatown Pedestrian Scramble: An Evaluation,” which was presented as a poster at the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board, and “Child Passenger Safety Initiative Evaluation: A Public Hospital-based Research Project,” presented at the American Public Health Association’s annual meeting.

**Zak Sabry, Ph.D.,** associate dean for student affairs and professor of public health nutrition, is retiring at the end of the spring ’04 semester. Sabry will remain with the School as professor emeritus. The School has established the Zak Sabry Mentorship Award for public health faculty to pay tribute to his eminent legacy of mentorship and his skill in fostering creative and productive faculty-student collaborations. A plaque in the School of Public Health lobby will list the name of each year’s faculty awardee who exemplifies Sabry’s qualities as teacher, guide, coach, and supporter.

If you would like to contribute to the Sabry Mentorship Award Fund, you may make your tax-deductible gift payable to the “Zak Sabry Mentorship Award Fund,” and mail it to Office of External Relations and Development, 140 Warren Hall #7360, Berkeley, CA 94720-7360.

**Richard M. Scheffler, Ph.D.,** Distinguished Professor of Health Economics and Public Policy and director of the Nicholas C. Petris Center on Health Care Markets and Consumer Welfare, is principal investigator for a $900,000 grant awarded to the Petris Center by the NIH. The award supports an economic and policy analysis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and use of psychostimulants. Of the 3.5 percent of school-age children in the U.S. who have an ADHD diagnosis, more than half take psychostimulant medication regularly. Use of these drugs varies considerably across and within states. The main goal of the research is to understand the sources of the variations. The researchers will test hypotheses regarding the effects of economic, demographic, state regulatory, school policy, health system, and other educational variables on the supply and demand for psychostimulants. The results have the potential to help policymakers, health professionals, educators, and other interested parties evaluate whether the current disparities are acceptable—and if not, how they can be changed. Other School faculty working on the study are Teh-wei Hu, Ph.D., professor of health economics, and Ying Qing Chen, Ph.D., assistant professor, biostatistics.

**Martyn T. Smith, Ph.D.,** professor of toxicology, received funding from the National Cancer Institute for “Genetic Susceptibility to Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma” (NHL), to study the role of genetics in the etiology of lymphoma, which should also yield important clues to important environmental factors. The project will evaluate the role of genetic polymorphisms in two large case-control studies that form part of the International Consortium of Investigators Working on NHL Epidemiologic Studies. Researchers will investigate the relationship between functional polymorphisms in key candidate genes/pathways and their effect on the
risk of developing NHL. The analyses will constitute one of the largest NHL molecular epidemiology studies to date.

The Sichuan provincial government of the People’s Republic of China has honored Robert C. Spear, Ph.D., professor of environmental health science, with its inaugural Jin Ding Award for his contributions over the past decade to controlling schistosomiasis—the second most common parasitic disease in the world. Spear received the prestigious honor at a conference in Chengdu.


Lawrence Wallack, Dr.P.H. ’82, professor emeritus, has been named dean of Portland State University’s College of Urban and Public Affairs, effective July 1. An alumnus of the UC Berkeley School of Public Health, Wallack served on the School’s faculty for 17 years. He has been at Portland state since 1999 as director of the School of Community Health.

Julia Walsh, M.D., D.T.P.H., adjunct professor of maternal and child health, received a grant from Population Services International to support a project by the Berkeley International Health Group (BIG) to assess priorities for the prevention of heterosexual transmission of HIV in the developing world. BIG, a campus research group directed by Walsh and Professor Malcolm Potts, focuses on assessing economics and finance of health systems in developing countries. Following an extensive review of the literature, the group will expand the resource allocation model for HIV prevention that they developed several years ago to test different combinations of interventions. They will use their findings to establish priorities that will likely have the greatest impact on curtailing the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa and other resource poor regions.

Harvey Weinstein, M.D., M.P.H., clinical professor in the Joint Medical Program and associate director of the Human Rights Center, and Professor Sarah Freedman of the School of Education have been awarded a grant from the United States Institute of Peace to work within local communities and with the Ministry of Education and the National University of Rwanda to develop a history curriculum based on human rights and tolerance. There has been a moratorium on the teaching of history in Rwanda since the genocide and war of 1994. The award is twice as large as any the United States Institute of Peace has made and reflects the importance of schools in the rebuilding of a society after mass violence.

Buffler Named to Kenneth & Marjorie Kaiser Endowed Chair

Buffler, who is world renowned for her work on childhood cancer, says the endowed chair is “intended to support, facilitate, and enrich the research environment” by providing flexible funding for activities that government grants cannot support. For example, the Kaiser endowment makes it possible for her to send graduate students to workshops and meetings to present their work, host visiting scientists, and travel to scientific meetings.

Buffler’s research examines the role of genetic and environmental factors in childhood leukemia and brain cancer. She and her colleagues have recently received a five-year grant renewal from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to continue studying the genetic and biologic factors associated with the risk of childhood leukemia. To date, their study of childhood leukemia has yielded more than 26 publications. Buffler and her colleagues are currently studying the role of parental smoking in childhood leukemia risk and will publish their results later this year.