Welcome to the second issue of our new PopFam Quarterly, a newsletter designed to keep students, faculty and alumni informed about the latest developments in our department.

This issue of our newsletter reflects a theme that has always been central to our department’s work: human rights. Our feature article focuses on Professor Bruce Armstrong’s involvement in Dean Linda Fried’s efforts to increase awareness of a serious public health and human rights issue in the United States—the mass incarceration of young men and particularly those from minority and low-income communities.

This issue also includes an interview with Professor Theresa McGovern, a pioneering human rights lawyer in the field of HIV/AIDS who joined our faculty full-time this year. Our practicum spotlight focuses on two students who worked in Uganda on a research project I am leading and which focuses on HIV/AIDS and youth. Finally, our alumni profile features a graduate from our MPH program who has been doing great work for the Clinton Health Access Initiative.

I am proud of our department’s contribution to the Mailman School’s challenging MPH curriculum; we have made a real difference in translating this ambitious new program into practice. I want to thank Dr. Alastair Ager for his efforts directing the first year of our new DrPH program. There is an update on that program in this newsletter.

It has been an exciting and highly productive year for students and faculty alike. I am immensely proud of the work that our department has accomplished.

I wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer. See you in the fall newsletter!

Sincerely,
John S. Santelli, MD MPH
Harriet and Robert H. Heilbrunn Professor
Chair, Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health

Mass Incarceration, Human Rights and Public Health:
An Interview with Dr. Bruce Armstrong

The United States leads the world in the number of incarcerated adult men, with low-income and minority males dramatically and disproportionately impacted. This mass incarceration is taking a devastating toll on the health and well-being of these men and their families.

Under the leadership of Dean Linda Fried, the Mailman School of Public Health has been working to bring the critical topic of mass incarceration to the forefront of the public health conversation. This spring, she launched a new initiative that includes the work of a diverse group of faculty scholars (the “Mass Incarceration and Public Health Working Group”) and a series of seminars focusing on incarceration, prevention and health. Our own Professor Bruce Armstrong is playing a key role in this effort.

A pioneer with more than 25 years’ of work in the field of men’s health, Professor Armstrong helped found the Heilbrunn Department’s Young Men’s Clinic (YMC), a
Armstrong (cont.)

New York-Presbyterian-run health center that has become a national model for providing sexual and reproductive health services for young men. Established in 1987, the YMC currently serves more than 3,200 men aged 14 to 35 annually; most come from low-income, Latino and African-American communities in upper Manhattan and the Bronx.

“Young men are more interested in health than most people think,” Professor Armstrong said. “They want to be connected to care, especially when programs and staff are nonjudgmental, welcoming and ready to meet them on their terms.” At the same time, Dr. Armstrong explained, some young men are deeply ambivalent about accessing care because of unpleasant experiences they have had in the past or because of their own negative perceptions about such care. “Our job is to earn their trust by reaching out to them where they are,” he said.

As a trained social worker, Professor Armstrong has ensured that his program does just that. Today, the YMC is part of a larger project known as the Young Men’s Health Initiative (YMHI), which works closely with dozens of community-based organizations in New York City to bring information and services to young men participating in GED and workforce development programs, attending community college and participating in post-prison reentry programs. As a result of these efforts, several community agencies have changed their intake forms to include questions about men’s health and many now provide education on health issues with the assistance of PopFam students, several of whom are serving as “men’s health ambassadors” at community colleges in New York City.

In addition, because young men of color have disproportionately high rates of incarceration and involvement in every phase of the juvenile justice pipeline, the YMHI has forged collaborations with Friends of Island Academy and Getting Out and Staying Out (GOSO), two of NYC’s premiere reentry programs for young men who have been recently released from Rikers Island. The YMHI now conducts a variety of health education programs for young men at these programs and several MSPH students are conducting their practicum in these agencies.

Professor Armstrong was quick to point out the collaborative nature of the work being done around men’s health at Mailman and the critical role of students. For example, Ms. Amelia Holstrom, a PopFam student who has been Dr. Armstrong’s research assistant for two years, has developed creative tools to engage men attending GED programs in conversations about health and frequently conducts trainings for community-based organizations in New York City.

The YMHI is currently seeking funding to assess the effectiveness of a new model of care that complements and reinforces services provided by reentry partners: a “jail to health services” pipeline that links recently incarcerated young men to services at the YMC by:

- embedding health education activities into educational programs on Rikers Island;
- helping incarcerated youth organize personal health information and other documentation before release from prison to expedite application for food stamps and Medicaid through “Single Stop,” a YMC service that is funded by the Robin Hood Foundation;
- providing on-site STI/HIV testing services at re-entry programs; and
- providing psychosocial assessments and co-case management services using text messaging, social media and information technology.

“The mass incarceration of men of color, including adolescent and young adult men, constitutes a major threat to population health in the United States,” Professor Armstrong said. “The adverse consequences of criminal and juvenile justice systems involvements are experienced not only by young men but by their families and entire communities, and noxious effects continue long after release from jail or prison.”

Professor Armstrong described the Dean’s Mass Incarceration and Public Health initiative as a prime example of how a university can work with students, hospitals, criminal and juvenile justice experts and community-based organizations to link marginalized people to services, a core function of public health work. The faculty working group and dean’s seminars, he noted, are highlighting critical and complex public
A Global Student Body

The Population and Family Health Department welcomes students from countries around the world. Check out the graphic at right to see where our students have come from over the past two school years.

Practicum Spotlight: Rakai, Uganda

Although Uganda demonstrated remarkable early success combating HIV/AIDS, this progress is now uncertain as HIV rates appear to be on the rise in this country. To learn more about these circumstances and improve prevention strategies among youth, Dr. John S. Santelli, professor and chair of the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health, applied for and received a $2.2 million multi-year grant from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Through this study Dr. Santelli is examining the contextual and behavioral risk factors associated with HIV incidence among youth in Rakai, Uganda, with an emphasis on settings where HIV prevalence is high and underlying contexts are changing rapidly.

During the summer of 2012, six PopFam MPH students traveled to Uganda to participate in the Rakai Health Sciences Program. We spoke with two students, Mariko Rasmussen and Ashley Schuyler, about their experience with this practicum.

For Mariko, participation in the study required applying the qualitative data analysis skills she had learned during her first year at the Mailman School. Specifically, Mariko analyzed information that had been collected during life history interviews conducted with sixty 18-24 year-old women and men, half of whom were newly HIV-positive and half of whom were HIV-negative. The goal of the analysis was to examine if there was an association between young people’s aspirations for work, love and marriage and their expectations for relationships and their HIV risk.

While Mariko did not find a link between life aspirations and HIV status, she did find connections between young people’s attitudes toward sexuality as

health challenges of mass incarceration while also stimulating interdisciplinary discussion about the public policy implications and programmatic responses that might reduce the incidence of incarceration and its harmful effects.

The next Mass Incarceration and Public Health seminar will be held on June 6, 2013. The speaker Dr. Chris Wildeman, will present on “The consequences of mass imprisonment on inequality: Population effects on families, health and children.” The lecture will be held from 12:00 to 1:30 pm in the Rosenfield Building, 532A conference room.

Rakai Practicum students, Ashley (left), Mariko (right) and another student, Jenny (middle) on a weekend trip to Sipi Falls.
Practicum Spotlight (cont.)

well as the levels of communication and trust within relationships and HIV risk. Since returning to the United States, she has continued to examine these findings as a research assistant to Dr. Santelli, while also completing her MPH.

For Ashley, the focus in Rakai also involved applying research and analysis skills acquired during her first year at the Mailman School. In Ashley’s case, however, her practicum research involved conducting quantitative analysis of data that had been collected in Rakai from young people (ages 15-24 years) as part of an annual census from 1999 to 2011. Ashley examined whether there were any connections between an individual’s occupation, educational attainment, travel, mobility and migration patterns. She found that migration and mobility have been increasing over time among youth in Rakai, a factor that has implications for the further examination of livelihoods and identity for rural African youth. Like Mariko, Ashley has remained on the project as a research assistant for Dr. Santelli.

In addition to their research efforts, both Ashley and Mariko had opportunities to tag along with field-based data collectors as they visited communities to collect survey information for the Rakai Community Cohort Study (RCCS). The RCCS has monitored incidence and prevalence of HIV for nearly two decades. They were also able to do some travel in East Africa, visiting Rwanda, Tanzania and Zanzibar.

For both students, the practicum had many benefits. “It was a great experience on both personal and professional levels,” said Ashley, for whom the trip represented her first time out of the United States. “The people who are working in Rakai are truly driven by the mission of the health center and they are great people to work with,” she said. Both students noted that they feel extremely lucky to remain involved in this research. “This entire experience has been and continues to be fantastic,” said Mariko.

PopFam in the News

Closeness in a Relationship: Is It Overrated?
February 14, 2013
A healthy relationship isn’t measured in just overall closeness. Dr. David Frost’s study suggests that it is how close we want to be compared to how close our partners want to be that matters most in a relationship.

When Tragedy Strikes, Come Together
October 30, 2012
How do we deal with tragedy as individuals and as a community? Through the lens of childhood tragedy, Dr. Jack Saul talks about the ways that communities can come together to deal with grief more effectively than can a collection of individuals.

The Boys Initiative
April 26, 2013
Ensuring Healthy Futures is a project of the Boys Initiative, a collaborative effort to engage partner organizations and actors in creating best practice clinical guidelines for young men’s health. Dr. David Bell sits on the steering committee and is featured in the project’s most recent newsletter.
Faculty Spotlight: An Interview with Terry McGovern

Professor Theresa McGovern, JD, has spent her career incorporating a human rights framework into sexual and reproductive health work in the United States and around the world. In 1989, when HIV/AIDS was just emerging as a major public health crisis, she founded the HIV Law Project. The organization provided urgently needed civil legal representation to a growing population of poor, HIV-positive women and men of color who were confronted by a variety of financial, social and legal barriers to accessing care.

During her tenure there, Professor McGovern successfully litigated numerous cases against federal, state and local governments, including S.P. v. Sullivan, which forced the U.S. Social Security Administration to expand the HIV-related disability criteria so that women and low-income people could qualify for Medicaid and Social Security, and T.N. v. FDA, which eliminated a Food and Drug Administration guideline that had restricted the participation of women of childbearing potential in the early phases of clinical trials.

In 1999, Professor McGovern was awarded an Open Society Institute Fellowship and an appointment at the Mailman School. In 2001, she established the Women’s Health and Human Rights Initiative, which worked to improve the reproductive and overall health care of low-income women and to challenge religious restrictions on women’s human rights. Professor McGovern also spent six years as a Senior Program Officer at the Ford Foundation focusing on HIV/AIDS, human rights and gender equality before re-joining the Mailman School last September as Clinical Professor of Population and Family Health. We spoke with her about her career and her work.

Q: Did you always want to be a lawyer, and how did you become interested in human rights law?

I was always very interested in social justice issues and I thought being a lawyer would be a good way to work on social justice. I was an English major in college and I probably wanted to be a playwright but I also had to figure out a way to support myself!

Q: How did you come to found the HIV Law Project?

I really wanted to do something with poverty and women and while attending law school I worked for a migrant legal services program. I was doing investigations at migrant camps in West Virginia and I could see that there were particular issues around women’s health and human rights.

[After law school] I took a job at Legal Services [in New York City] and it was the exact time that HIV was hitting the city. We would see a lot of people who were very sick but were unable to qualify for Medicaid and disability and it was clear that many of these people had HIV. It was really men and women walking in the door with problems that could not be fixed without solving bigger problems. There was tremendous stigma so there were not many poverty and social justice lawyers working on HIV at this time.

For women there was a whole range of gynecological issues that that were much more lethal if you were HIV-positive but that did not fall within the definition of AIDS. These women didn’t begin to receive care until they expanded the definition [of what conditions would be covered under HIV/AIDS care]...I ended up getting a grant to help cover the legal work that I was doing and the HIV Law Project was a spin-off of these efforts.

Q: While at the HIV Law Project, you developed a client training program that successfully prepares HIV-positive women to enter and impact the policy arena. Why did you do this?

I think generally in the AIDS epidemic it has been civil society that has driven progress, everywhere from the activists in Brazil, South Africa and Thailand who have taken on drug prices to the affected people with HIV in our own country. But it’s ridiculous to just say, empower someone to be an advocate. We had to teach HIV-positive women about the policies that were causing them to lose their housing and their children. People said no one would show up at these classes. But women did show up, HIV-positive women, and they showed tremendous leadership. We trained HIV-positive women in policy issues and we worked very hard to get them placed on advisory committees and funding committees, and it was a very successful program.

Q: During the course of your career, how much progress has there been in advancing the understanding that health care is a human right?

There has been some very interesting progress around the right to health care. There have been important gains around drug pricing and some advocacy gains
around the right to safe abortion and the right to information about reproductive health and sexuality. But at the bottom, where people are seeking health care, we have a long way to go.

If you look at the international development frameworks, they tend to talk about public health issues as if they are not entwined with religious issues, cultural issues, fundamentalism. Can you have a safe abortion policy in Pakistan if you still require a husband’s consent? I mean, more women die of gender-based violence in developing countries than from malaria and HIV. That’s huge. You can’t disconnect human rights from public health.

These are the kinds of challenges that are ahead of us. And there are people who are taking on the cultural context and taking on a rights-based approach and I think it’s often women teaching other women that they have rights and making links to the justice systems and negotiating these issues where they live. A lot of creative things are being done but it’s hard to get them scaled up.

Q: How do you feel about the health care reform law in the United States?

Health care reform is a huge victory. There will be implementation issues. Those with the least power are the ones that I always worry about. In this transition phase, the people who are not in the public discussion are the ones who are most vulnerable. So this program will have to be very carefully watched to make sure the most marginalized people have access.

Q: What led you to add academic work and teaching to your career? Why teach at Mailman?

Through my years of advocacy, I have seen the importance of documenting what goes on for folks facing the greatest structural barriers to living a life of dignity and health. Many times, policymakers, macro-economists, development folks, do not understand the realities of the people facing the greatest inequalities and poverty. Public health provided through a human rights lens can make great contributions to solving some of these problems, whether by creating evidence by studying problems or by proposing pragmatic solutions. I also have had the privilege of working in a great global philanthropic institution and I wanted to deconstruct and teach some of what I saw there.
Brief Mentions

Welcome
Helena Duch, PsyD, joined the faculty as an assistant professor in July 2012. Dr. Duch’s research focuses on early childhood determinants of long-term health and the evaluation of parent- and classroom-based interventions that address developmental health disparities, particularly in Latino children. She has worked extensively with Head Start, Early Head Start and Early Intervention Programs in clinical and research capacities.

Theresa M. McGovern, JD, joined the faculty as a professor in July 2012. Ms. McGovern, who was interviewed for this newsletter, founded the HIV Law Project in 1989 and has also worked for the Ford Foundation.

Publications


Michael G. Wessells, David F.M. Lamin, Dora King, Kathleen Kostelny, Lindsay Stark, Sarah Lilley (2012). The disconnect between community-based child protection mechanisms and the formal child protection system in rural Sierra Leone: Challenges to building an effective national child protection system. Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies An International Interdisciplinary Journal for Research, Policy and Care, 7(3).


If you would like to submit an item to Brief Mentions for the next issue of the PopFam Quarterly please email Courtney Hooper at clh2155@columbia.edu

Introduction to the PopFam DrPH

The DrPH in Leadership in Global Health and Humanitarian Systems is a new degree program offered by the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health. The program aims to develop skills and knowledge through a combination of coursework, practice-based learning and an applied research dissertation. The program is directed by Professor Alastair K. Ager, PhD, who also serves as Director of Academic Programs for the department.

The DrPH is meant for public health professionals who want to increase their breadth of knowledge about systems approaches to research, program management and policy development in developing countries and crisis-affected contexts. Students benefit from on-site formal classes, remote learning and field-based research to prepare them for leadership roles in the field of global health and humanitarian response. Drawing extensively on the expertise and direct engagement of professors from the department in the field of global health and humanitarian systems, the curriculum focuses on themes of policy, evidence and leadership.

The first students to embark on this doctorate program began work in September 2012. These three students came to the program with backgrounds in health systems research, strategic health analysis and demography. They took classes at Mailman and across other schools at Columbia; this education included a doctoral seminar focusing on the themes of global health and humanitarian practice and policy development.
Lately, Kalee has been working closely with PopFam Professor Jim Phillips on planning potential dissertation work in Tanzania or Ghana. "I hope to compare the birth history, which the DHS reports, with information derived from demographic surveillance. I would like to examine the different estimations from those two methods of data collection and look at how reliable they are."

Finally, Kalee has found the academic advising provided by the DrPH program and its focus on the development of a Personal Learning Plan to be helpful. "It tracks your thinking throughout the year and helps you map out your education. There’s support from both your advisor and the DrPH Academic Director and you can check in with both on your progress."

Four to six students will enroll in the DrPH program in September 2013. This group will include Sara Casey, a graduate of the Mailman School who has been working with the department’s RAISE program and who has been awarded an Allan Rosenfield Scholarship for doctoral studies in the field of Sexual and Reproductive
Where Are They Now?
Alumni Update from: Caitlin Glover
Clinton Health Access Initiative
MPH: 2010

Three years ago, Caitlin Glover graduated from PopFam with an MPH in public health. On graduation day she received an email offering her a job at the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) helping CHAI eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV. “Bill Clinton had just spoken at our commencement and then I got this offer,” she recalls. “It was a great moment.”

It also proved that the Mailman School’s reputation is one of excellence. “I had actually just applied through the portal at CHAI and they reached out to me right away,” Caitlin recalls.

Caitlin spent her first two years at CHAI supporting the in-country teams that were helping government-led efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

After two years, Caitlin joined a new family planning initiative launched by CHAI with the goal of increasing access to long-acting contraceptives in countries where unmet demand is high. With a consortium of partners, CHAI had helped persuade a drug manufacturer to reduce the price of a contraceptive implant to expand access to more than 27 million women over the next six years. The project is underway in Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia. CHAI was eager to help increase access to contraceptive implants, Caitlin explained, because women in the targeted countries report strong levels of interest in this method. They like the fact that implants are long acting, do not require a pelvic exam and are more discreet than many other methods. This latter issue is especially important because of cultural and gender norms that continue to make it hard for many women to access and use contraception.

“For me, it’s all about giving women access to the variety of methods available and about helping women have more control over their lives,” Caitlin said.

As the global program manager for family planning, Caitlin has been responsible for helping national governments implement this project. To illustrate the nuts and bolts of her job, Caitlin described her work in Nigeria. In this country, she explained, “the government requested support to create a national plan to meet their family planning goals and to figure out how to distribute and use new funding for contraceptives in an efficient way.”

To meet this goal, Caitlin and the CHAI team worked with the government of Nigeria to draft a national strategy for scaling up access to long-acting methods. First, CHAI helped the government determine its own access targets and what existing organizations were currently providing relating to contraceptive services.

“This was essential data for determining where the gaps in services were,” Caitlin explained. Next, CHAI helped develop a costed national plan for providing the training, logistical and educational outreach that would be needed to carry out the proposed work.

Asked about the most important part of her Mailman School training, Caitlin cites her project management, design and evaluation skills and her training in research ethics as well as something less concrete—the benefits that come from being around a truly extraordinary constellation of faculty and students.

“The professors cared so much about us and I had a lot of great classes,” Caitlin recalled. She also developed long-lasting friendships at the Mailman School.

“There are a core group of us PopFam grads who have stayed really close. We all have very different jobs but we remain connected and we love to talk to each other about our fields.”
**Announcement: Farewell Robin Mangini; Welcome Courtney Hooper**

Robin Mangini, Assistant Director for Academic Programs for the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health, will be returning to the West Coast this summer to resume her career in the field of public health programming. An alumnus herself of the PopFam program, we look forward to hearing news of Robin's developing career in the coming years. It is with much gratitude that we say goodbye; over the last three years Robin has made significant contributions to the department. She assumed the formidable task of orienting and supporting the first cohort of PopFam students in the new Mailman curriculum, took the lead on department admissions and provided practicum support to our students, among many other tasks. The entire department is also deeply grateful for the sensitivity with which Robin supported the work of Lynne Loomis-Price in her last months with us.

The Heilbrunn Department welcomes Courtney Hooper, clh2155@columbia.edu, as Robin's successor. Courtney comes to PopFam from the Columbia Business School. We are very excited to have her join the PopFam family.

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**Upcoming Department Events**

- **Monday, July 15th - Friday, July 19th**
  - Pre-registration for continuing students for fall 2013

- **Monday, August 26th - Friday, August 30th**
  - Orientation programming
  - Mailman School Campus

- **Tuesday, August 27th - Thursday, August 29th**
  - Registration for new and continuing students

- **Tuesday, September 3rd**
  - First day of classes

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**We’d love your feedback!**

Please send your stories, publications, announcements, and photos to Courtney Hooper at clh2155@columbia.edu

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