PROGRESS REPORT
Milken Institute School of Public Health
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

2015
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

In 2010, when I accepted the position of dean of Milken Institute School of Public Health (known then as the School of Public Health and Health Services) my mother asked me one question, “Lynn, what does a dean do?” The answer was simple: “All the things you taught me...above all compassion and responsibility toward others.” And when I was formally installed as the Michael and Lori Milken Dean in January of 2015 I recollected that bittersweet exchange. Both of my parents were involved in the medical profession. My father, now retired, was a pediatrician and researcher and my mother worked for many years as a nurse. They both taught me about human health and wellness and the lessons I learned as a child have served me well in my career. Our goal as a leading public health school is to make the world a healthier and happier place. It’s an ongoing challenge for sure, but one in which we are committed to and now, as the Milken Institute School of Public Health, have a healthy chance at achieving.

Since the announcement of the $80 million dollar transformative gift from the Milken Institute, the Sumner M. Redstone Charitable Foundation and the Milken Family Foundation, we have been reinvigorating our curriculum and academic structure; awarding scholarships to attract top students; convening global leaders, faculty, policy experts and others to discuss critical public health issues; and adding more superstars to our core faculty.

As a result, in March 2015, the Milken Institute SPH ranked #14 on U.S. News and World Report’s list of Best Public Health Graduate schools, up two spots from the publication’s last ranking four years ago. The school’s Master of Health Administration (MHA) program jumped from #22 to #16 in the same rankings, putting the program in the top 20 MHA programs nationwide. The recent college rankings published in USA Today placed our undergraduate
public health program #6 in the nation. All of this affirms our commitment to push ourselves further upward, to leverage the electrifying momentum kick-started by the Milken and Redstone gifts and to continue the drive to be the best.

Our LEED-Platinum building has served us very well over the year since its opening, as we have held hundreds of conferences, seminars, expert panels and meetings. I was especially gratified in March when Mike Milken and I were fortunate enough to host a seated dinner in our convening center for many of the deans of public health schools who were in Washington, D.C. for the ASPPH annual meeting.

In 2016 we will move into our first public health laboratory, a state-of-the-art 30,000 square foot research complex that will house groundbreaking prevention research in antibiotic resistance, infectious diseases, nutrition and environmental health. For the first time in the school’s history we will have the resources to attract top laboratory scientists who are leaders in their fields.

At the January 2015 Dean’s Council meeting, I proposed a reorganization in order to better leverage our current momentum ignited by the announcement of the gift and renaming of the school. The new structure was welcomed by the current council members and will now consist of a Board of Advisors and a Dean’s Alumni Council.

To further provide the best public health educational experience through scholarship, leadership and education we unified the Departments of Health Policy and Health Services Management and Leadership—as of January 2015—to create a new singular department called Health Policy and Management. This positive evolution creates new and dynamic synergies for faculty, staff, students and alumni and maximizes our education and research potential. I believe with our location in Washington DC we are supremely poised to deliver the best Health Policy and Management education in the country.

Finally, I am thrilled to announce that the first annual Milken Institute Summit on Public Health will be held March 1-2, 2016. The opening day will be held on the GW campus and will bring leaders from around the world to Washington, DC.

These are just a few of our accomplishments over the past year as well as a taste of things to come. You will read about more events, research, grants and awards and other academic advancements in this report. I could not be more pleased with the progress we have made since our school was renamed the Milken Institute School of Public Health. And I could not be more proud of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors and friends who are leading the way.

I was fortunate to grow up in a family committed to the idea that everyone deserves to live a healthy and happy life. I am now equally fortunate to be part of the worldwide public health community.

Lynn R. Goldman
Michael and Lori Milken Dean

S\ym\k\n\nLynn R. Goldman
Michael and Lori Milken Dean
STARTING IN 2013, THE WEST AFRICAN REGION EXPERIENCED THE LARGEST OUTBREAK OF THE EBOLA VIRUS IN HISTORY. Our faculty were at the forefront of this tragic epidemic and continue to work hard in the hope that such a devastating outbreak never happens again.

HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR REBECCA KATZ, and a team of researchers—six from Milken Institute SPH—are working on a project to help local health systems better detect, assess and respond to emerging outbreaks. The project is focused on Guinea, but may become a model that can be used in other countries to contain emerging disease threats before they become international public health emergencies. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded the project, Building Capacity to Strengthen Emergency Operations, for $1.3 million the first year and up to an estimated $7 million for the entire project.

GLOBAL HEALTH FACULTY MEMBERS AMIRA ROESS AND SALLY LAHM are lead researchers on a study, funded by a $100,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, that examines the ethnic, cultural and spiritual beliefs about Ebola among villagers and healthcare workers in Guinea. “With this study, we hope to identify cultural traditions and other factors that might affect the public health effort to get to zero new cases in the affected West African countries,” Lahm says.

FOR A STUDY PUBLISHED OCTOBER 14, 2014 in the journal Eurosurveillance, Global Health Research Professor Lone Simonsen and a team of researchers analyzed up-to-date epidemiological data of Ebola cases in Nigeria as of October 1, 2014, to estimate the transmission progression and impact of control interventions on the magnitude of the epidemic. They found that swift implementation of control interventions helped to stop the disease from spreading, and on October 20 Nigeria was declared Ebola-free by the World Health Organization.
GLOBAL HEALTH PROFESSOR RON WALDMAN served as an advisor to Save the Children’s Ebola response in West Africa, including reviewing and developing policies and strategies, giving day-to-day advice to field staff, coordinating activities with other organizations, and helping communicate Save the Children’s work to donors and the public. The organization developed an innovative community care model to both relieve the burden on hospital-level Ebola Treatment Units and to provide treatment and supportive care close to where people lived. In addition, Save the Children had major involvement with health risk communications and in providing education and protection services to children affected by the outbreak. Waldman traveled to Liberia and Sierra Leone to review how programs were being implemented and to contribute to their evaluation.

ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2014, just two days after the CDC released a new report predicting that infections from Ebola could reach 1.4 million by January 2015, we convened experts from our school, the National Security Council, World Health Organization and Center for Strategic and International Studies to discuss the core objectives of the Global Health Security Agenda. Twenty-nine nations launched the GHSA in February 2014 with a goal of accelerating progress toward a world safe and secure from infectious disease threats. Faculty members Rebecca Katz and Julie Fischer have played key roles in developing the agenda.

AT THE OCTOBER 2, 2014 PANEL DISCUSSION “Ebola: GW Responds to the Epidemic,” faculty experts from the departments of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Global Health and Health Policy and Management addressed questions from the audience and discussed the research being conducted by GW faculty to develop and implement solutions in response to the outbreak. The discussion was moderated by Epidemiology and Biostatistics Department Chair Alan Greenberg.

ON APRIL 24, 2015, guests of a panel hosted by the School heard moving first-hand accounts of the devastating impact of Ebola from medical and health officials of the Republics of Sierra Leone and Liberia. The officials, who represented the ministries of health and sanitation and social welfare, discussed lessons learned and how the countries will move forward in the wake of the crisis.
“Someday, our children, and our children’s children, will look at us in the eye and they’ll ask us, did we do all that we could when we had the chance to deal with this problem and leave them a cleaner, safe, more stable world?”

– President Barack Obama, June 25, 2013
IN JUNE 2013 President Barack Obama outlined a plan to combat global climate change. Many faculty at our school are involved in climate change scientific research and public policy. The government has reinvigorated its efforts this year to address the health impacts of climate change.

APRIL 9, 2015

Dean Goldman and Environmental and Occupational Health Professor and Chair Melissa Perry attend one of the Obama Administration’s first meetings about the health impacts of climate change. Deans and leaders from 30 medical, public health and nursing schools across the country participate in roundtable working session on education and climate change held at the White House.

As part of the event, the deans pledge in a commitment statement to train the next generation of students for the challenges related to climate change. “As leaders responsible for educating the Nation’s health professionals of tomorrow, we are keenly aware of our obligation to ensure that they are fully prepared to address all health risks, including those resulting from the impacts of climate change,” the statement says.

APRIL 24, 2015

Dean Goldman welcomes to Milken Institute SPH authors of the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) report, “Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment,” during a symposium to discuss the report findings. In her opening remarks, EOH Department Chair Melissa Perry tells attendees that “global climate change is the single most important occupational and environmental health threat that we face.” The event provides an opportunity for public comment on the report before it’s finalized in 2016. Speakers at the event include representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, NIH, EPA, and CDC.

MAY 13, 2015

EOH Associate Professor Peter LaPuma, along with MPH Alumna Marilyn Diaz, co-author the presentation, “Lifecycle Analysis for Estimating the Human Health Impact of Electricity-Generating Sources,” for the Env-Vision Conference in Arlington, Virginia, which addresses the most critical environmental and sustainability challenges. LaPuma and Diaz’s research measured the amount of human health damage caused by the power grid in disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). DALYs measure overall disease burden, based on the number of years lost as a result of ill-health, disability or premature death. “It’s a way of measuring the human health advantages of going green,” says LaPuma, who adds that their research can be used by city planners to improve the health of citizens and reduce healthcare costs. Diaz completed the research as part of her culminating experience. LaPuma served as her research advisor and a collaborator on the study.

JUNE 23, 2015

Dean Goldman participates in a White House Summit on Public Health and Climate Change. The summit brings together health and medical professionals, academics, students and other stakeholders with the goal of empowering people and communities with the information and tools needed to protect public health in a world affected by climate change. Dean Goldman presents at one of the break-out sessions during the all-day conference.

JUNE 24, 2015

Dean Goldman hosts a workshop at Milken Institute SPH with public health, medicine and nursing school deans and other faculty. The meeting, titled “Workshop on Health and Climate Change: Preparing the Next Generation of Health Professionals,” includes panel discussions on best practices for teaching students on health and climate; top research priorities; and opportunities in climate and health. A closing panel looks at next steps for health professional schools, where and how they should focus their efforts.

Each MPH student at Milken Institute SPH completes the course Environmental and Occupational Health in a Sustainable World to ensure each graduate is prepared to combat the public health effects wrought by climate change.
LYNN R. GOLDMAN INSTALLED AS MICHAEL AND LORI MILKEN DEAN

On Tuesday, January 27, 2015, Dean Goldman was formally installed as the Michael and Lori Milken Dean at a ceremony held at Milken Institute SPH. Dean Goldman—an epidemiologist, pediatrician, educator, and former Environmental Protection Agency regulator—is only the second dean to ever be endowed at the George Washington University (GW). The event was attended by many family and friends and included remarks by Chairman of the Milken Institute, Mike Milken; GW President Steven Knapp; Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Steven Lerman; and President of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies Victor Dzau.

Describing the installation as “a true honor,” Dean Goldman gave special thanks to Michael and Lori Milken and Sumner M. Redstone for their “vision and generosity.”

“I especially thank the Milkens for understanding the critical importance of leadership as shown through the establishment of the Michael and Lori Milken Dean,” she said. “And together with the vision, values and commitment of the leadership at the George Washington University, this incredible institution is fully and visibly committed to public health.”

“Under [Dean Goldman’s] tenure, the school has truly come into its own,” Dr. Knapp said. “Now in its 18th year, it’s recognized as one of the nation’s premier schools of public health. Dr. Goldman’s leadership last year led to the historic announcement of a combined $80 million gift from the Milken Institute, the Milken Family Foundation and the Sumner M. Redstone Foundation. That generous gift will ensure that the school will continue to rise in stature and fully realize its mission of advancing public health both nationally and globally.”

– GW President Steven Knapp

A PIONEERING PUBLIC HEALTH DEAN

Throughout her career, Dean Goldman’s tremendous impact on public health and medicine has been both expansive and personal. From passing pivotal legislation and regulations protecting the American public from harmful chemicals while assistant administrator at the Environmental Protection Agency, to caring for infants and children as a practicing pediatrician, she has always put the health and well being of others—especially vulnerable populations—first. And now she is inspiring and leading the next generation of public health practitioners and leaders as dean of Milken Institute SPH.

It is for accomplishments such as these that Dean Goldman was one of 150 University of California, San Francisco’s (UCSF) alumni selected to receive an Alumni Excellence Award in honor of the university’s 150th anniversary in 2015. The award is granted for distinction in research, clinical care, education, business and/or public service. Dean Goldman received her medical degree from UCSF.
#RaiseHigh IN RANKINGS

Milken Institute SPH has experienced tremendous growth during the past four years, from the hiring of Dean Goldman to creating online degree programs, adding twelve-month MPH degree options, moving into a LEED Platinum building and of course the transformative $80 million gift from Mike Milken and Sumner Redstone. So it is no surprise that in March 2015 Milken Institute SPH moved up two spots on U.S. News and World Report’s list of Best Public Health Graduate Schools, from #16 to #14 from the publication’s last ranking in 2011. The school’s Master of Health Administration (MHA) program jumped from #22 to #16 in the same rankings, putting the program in the top 20 MHA programs nationwide. Finally, the recent college rankings published in USA Today placed our undergraduate public health program #6 in the nation.

A NEW DEPARTMENT: HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Over the last year the school has continued to redefine itself under the leadership of Dean Goldman. In a significant step, the school announced the merger of the Department of Health Policy with the Department of Health Services Management and Leadership to create a new Department of Health Policy and Management (HPM). The unified department will maximize the faculty’s ability to conduct interdisciplinary research as well as provide a cutting-edge training ground for students, who will become the next generation of leaders in public and private-sector health organizations.

“Policy issues are increasingly important to healthcare managers and management theory and practice plays an equally important role for policymakers, especially now in the era of health reform,” says Dean Goldman “The unified department will accelerate the school’s ability to compete for research funding and create dynamic synergies for faculty and students.”

With the merger, the new department is now well-positioned to create leaders of tomorrow who understand the meaning and significance of national health policies, possess the skills to translate policies into real world applications, and are prepared to make meaningful contributions to public health and health services research. The combined faculty in the new department consists of experts in health law, health economics, public health, social epidemiology and services financing and management.

The department offers students accredited Master of Health Administration (MHA) degree programs as well as accredited master’s and doctoral degree programs in health policy, including a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH). The department also includes a field concentration in health policy for the public policy Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program, and recruits students who are pursuing a Master of Public Health (MPH) as a joint degree in combination with other professional degrees such as law, medicine or nursing.
INVESTING IN STUDENT SUCCESS

A NEW STUDENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Student affairs has long played a critical role in the delivery of a first-class graduate education at Milken Institute SPH. With the continued growth of our school and the subsequent demands that require us to serve our students and faculty in ever-increasing ways, the Office of Student Affairs has been reorganized with additional staffing.

Tracie Seward, Director of Admissions, Office of Admissions
The Office of Admissions has experienced tremendous growth over the past year. The department reorganized, including the addition of a Director of Admissions. The team now includes four full-time staff as well as six student workers. This staffing model will allow the department to be strategic and proactive in the recruitment of new students.

Helen Klepac, Assistant Dean for Student Services
Assistant Dean Klepac provides leadership to a team of student services professionals; manages recruitment, retention, and degree completion; and works with GW financial aid, student accounts and the Registrar’s Office office to streamline admissions and enrollment processes.

Catherine Goetz, Career Consultant, Career Services Center
The Milken Institute SPH Career Services Center has expanded, providing a continued commitment to the professional life cycle for students and alumni. A new interactive jobs database platform (GWork for Public Health) has been implemented to engage and serve our committed students and alumni. In addition, all services are accessible remotely, providing consistency between our residential and online populations. The Career Services Center continues to partner with industry stakeholders, faculty and the GW community to provide students and alumni with the access and skill sets needed for long-term success within the public health arena.

Mark Justice, Associate Director of Graduate Assistantships, Scholarships, and Financial Aid
Another example of the investment in student services at our school is the addition of a dedicated staff member to manage student financial services. Mark Justice joined Milken Institute SPH in March 2015 and is focused on assisting students in creating financial plans to help them achieve their educational goals as well as resolving emergent issues pertaining to Federal Student Aid. In addition, Justice manages institutional resources such as scholarships and assistantships, and student accounts. Moving forward, he will also be responsible for auditing current funds management practices for scholarships and other student financial resources, and developing robust strategies that marshal these resources to their fullest benefit for students and the school.

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Our school continues to adjust to the demands of today’s professional students. Over the last year, we achieved our goal of creating one-year MPH programs to meet the changing needs of our students and current public health challenges. Milken Institute SPH now offers two different one-year MPH residential programs. Additionally, we created a new two-year MPH in public health nutrition to help educate and train students in a world where the global obesity crisis is contributing to the proliferation of chronic diseases and premature deaths.

The on-campus one-year programs in epidemiology and maternal and child health follow the same curriculum and credit-hour requirements as the two-year MPH programs, but are structured in an intensive, accelerated format.

“The accelerated (MPH in epidemiology) program is designed for mid-career professionals who already have advanced degrees or considerable public health work experience, and for students who need to complete their degree in one year due to the competing demands of other graduate-level programs,” explains Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics Chair Alan Greenberg.

This accelerated format opens the door for individuals, who because of personal and professional demands may have been unable to pursue a two-year program, to complete their MPH experience with us. “The one-year maternal and child health program is an incredible opportunity for early and mid-career professionals who wish to commit to an all-day program that allows them to finish the program in less time,” says Amita Vyas, program director for the MPH in maternal and child health.

In addition to the one-year programs, the new MPH in public health nutrition is designed to provide students with a deeper understanding of the food system and nutritional health. Our MPH in public health nutrition provides students with the necessary training to work on a variety of food and nutrition-related issues and initiatives with the goal of improving the safety, quality and sustainability of our food supply for all citizens, says Associate Professor and MPH in Public Health Nutrition Program Director Kim Robien.

MPH in Public Health Nutrition Program Director Kim Robien was named on the Fifty+ Under 50: Innovative Leaders and Ideas Transforming Metro DC’s Food System list published in the August 4, 2015 edition of Elevation DC.
NEW FACULTY

LORENS HELMCHEN, PhD
Associate Professor of Health Policy and Management

TAMARA HENRY, EdD
Visiting Assistant Professor of Prevention and Community Health

MONICA HUBAL, PhD
Visiting Assistant Professor of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences

SHAWNIKA HULL, PhD
Visiting Assistant Professor of Prevention and Community Health

CINDY M. LIU, MD, MPH, PhD
Assistant Research Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health

MICHAEL LONG, SD, MPH
Assistant Professor of Prevention and Community Health

GLENN PAULSON, PhD
Senior Associate Dean, Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health

MELINDA POWER, ScD
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

WAYNE PSEK, MBChB, MBA, PhD
Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management

CARLOS SANTOS-BURGOA, MD, MPH, PhD
Professor of Global Health

SAMEERA TALEGAWKAR, PhD
Associate Professor of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences

NEW EMERITI

BRIAN BILES
Department of Health Policy and Management

KURT DARR
Department of Health Policy and Management

DANIEL HOFFMAN
Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

JOSEF REUM
Department of Health Policy and Management

PROFESSOR EMERITUS

KURT J. DARR HONORED

Dr. Kurt John Darr received special recognition in the form of a ceremonal proclamation known as the “Kurt John Darr Recognition Resolution of 2014” during the Milken Institute SPH graduation celebration on May 17, 2015 at Lisner auditorium. The resolution was official recognition by the District of Columbia to honor Darr’s contributions to the Washington metropolitan area’s health community, upon his retirement from GW after 41 years as a full-time faculty member. The proclamation was presented enthusiastically by the Honorable Vincent B. Orange.

After earning a Juris Doctor and a Master of Hospital Administration, Dr. Darr gained hands-on experience as an administrator at the Mayo Clinic and in the U.S. Navy Medical Service Corps before turning to a career in academics. As a faculty member at GW, Darr has been steadfast in his devotion to the university and has served on the University Faculty Senate, the Medical Center Faculty Senate, the Department Curriculum Committee, and the Department Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee, as well as Parliamentarian for the Milken Institute SPH. He has been honored by the GW Student Association with the Excellence in Teaching award 10 times and received the Trachtenberg Award for University service in 2009.
LEADING THE WAY IN HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIOLOGY PREVENTION

In January 2015, the American College of Physicians—the national organization of internists—awarded Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics Chair Alan Greenberg the Alvan R. Feinstein Award for Patient Care in the Field of Clinical Epidemiology. This prestigious award is given to an American physician who has made a major contribution to the science of patient care in activities that Dr. Feinstein, who is recognized as the father of clinical epidemiology, broadly defined as clinical epidemiology.

Over his more than 30-year career, Greenberg has served in roles at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of HIV/AIDS prevention, and has published extensive research on HIV epidemiology in the US and Africa. He currently leads the District of Columbia Center for AIDS Research (DC CFAR), established in 2015 with a grant from the National Institutes of Health, after previously serving as the director of the developmental DC CFAR. In addition to his role at Milken Institute SPH, Greenberg is a professor of medicine at GW’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

AWARD-WINNING SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Our building, which earned LEED Platinum status in 2014, continues to be recognized by leading architecture organizations for its unique, sustainable design that demonstrates how an academic building can truly embody public health values.

In October 2014, we received the 2014 Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture (AIA/DC) Award for Architecture.

In December 2014, Architecture DC featured the building on the magazine’s cover along with a two-page spread as a recipient of its Award in Architecture.

In April 2015, we received The Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)/AIA-CAE award for excellence in architecture for a new building.

In July 2015, we received the Project of the Year: New Construction Award from the US Green Building Council National Capital Region.
Milken Institute SPH is a leader in the world of online education. Our online programs continue to grow and flourish under the leadership of Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Julie DeLoia, as well as the support and guidance from faculty members across all six departments. The MPH@GW program has more than 600 active, registered students. Last May, we graduated our first MPH@GW cohort—29 students from 16 states—many of whom participated in the commencement celebration on our Foggy Bottom campus. The MHA@GW program has grown steadily as well and now has more than 120 registered students.

We continue to look forward and seek to position the school for further achievement in our online and residential programs. Students in the on-campus program are now able to take up to 15 credits online in the MPH@GW program and, conversely, online students have the opportunity to take courses on campus. Thus, our two MPH programs, residential and online, are becoming more integrated and leading the way in education innovation. We have also created and launched one-year options for both MPH@GW and some of our residential MPH tracks.

“We are very excited about all these new options for students, as they will allow us to continue to recruit excellent students in all of our programs,” said Dean DeLoia.

In our MHA@GW program we have held five immersions where approximately 118 students have participated. These in-depth in-person immersions have been held on campus as well as externally. In July 2015 MHA@GW students traveled to London and learned about Britain’s healthcare system firsthand.

“The (London) immersion has been an eye-opening experience for me, not only because I have absorbed and analyzed a great deal of information, but also due to the vast amount of experience and natural knowledge that resides within the student body.”

– Benjamin Tesfaye, MHA@GW Student

GOING THE DISTANCE: REVOLUTIONIZING THE ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE
“GW Disability Support Services has been proud to work in partnership with Milken Institute School of Public Health, a school that has quickly become a leader in the GW community’s efforts to deliver meaningful online learning experiences to students of all abilities.”

– Susan McMenamin, director, GW DSS, and Seth Bravin, associate director of technology access, GW DSS

Due to the enormous growth and the need for strategic management across all MPH efforts, Milken Institute SPH announced the creation of a new MPH Program Office earlier this year. Taylor Burke, JD, associate professor of health policy and management, is serving as interim assistant dean and MPH program director.

**MPH@GW CLASS PROFILE**

- ~800 Total enrolled students
- 32 Average Age
- 41% Students with advanced degrees
- 10.4% Students in the Military
- 52.05% Minority

**MHA@GW CLASS PROFILE**

- ~155 Total enrolled students
- 36 Average Age
- 24% Students with advanced degrees
- 25% Students in the Military
- 60% Minority
The Milken Institute SPH Office of Research Excellence mission is to facilitate the increase of externally funded research, enhance scholarly output with high public health impact and cultivate unique doctoral training platforms. Up against an increasingly competitive funding arena, Milken Institute SPH had a banner year of research productivity. Our faculty submitted a record number of research proposals resulting in a significant increase in grants awarded. The school had the highest level of research funding in its history, at $43.1 million. Although we strive to maintain a diverse funding portfolio, it is notable that the school’s federal funding levels have steadily increased, including NIH, representing almost half of the total funding.

Additionally over the past year the Office of Research Excellence has concentrated on helping the growth of thematic research centers and institutes. The school now has more than 16 organized research centers and institutes. New centers include The Antibiotic Resistance Action Center (ARAC), Center for Social Well-Being and Development (CSWD) and The DC Metro Tobacco Research and Instruction Consortium (MeTRIC).
DIR ECTOR OF REDSTON E CENT ER ADVANCES PIVOTAL OBESITY RESEARCH

As a former Centers for Disease Control and Prevention official and member of the Institute of Medicine, William Dietz was well positioned to take the helm as director of the school’s Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness in 2014. Since that time Dietz has been establishing strategic plans and partnerships for the Redstone Center, as well as continuing his own primary obesity research. Most recently he examined the possible factors contributing to the obesity crisis in children and teens and what possible preventive measures can be taken by healthcare providers to curb its spread.

The combination of dough, sauce, gooey cheese and hearty toppings has made pizza a long-time favorite food of old and young alike, but Dietz and co-author Lisa Powell from the University of Illinois at Chicago decided to closely examine the health impacts of pizza consumption among youth. The study, published in the journal Pediatrics, found that on the days that kids and teens eat pizza, they intake significantly more calories, fat and sodium compared to days when they don’t consume the cheesy pie. This can lead to unhealthy weight gain.

“Moderating pizza consumption should become another goal in our efforts to reduce obesity in U.S. youth,” Deitz says. He also notes some ways to improve pizza’s nutritional content like substituting white flour crust with whole-wheat crust, skipping the heavy meat toppings and opting for veggies, and using reduced-fat cheeses.

So what is being done to manage the obesity crisis? That’s exactly what Dietz and his colleagues explored in a series of papers recently published in The Lancet. The researchers conducted a comprehensive review of obesity management literature between 2000 and 2013 and found that the current clinical delivery systems are poorly suited for the prevention and management of obesity.

“Our findings suggest that we must take steps now to transform the way obesity is treated, with more emphasis on partnerships, better training for health professionals, and initiatives aimed at erasing the stigma surrounding this serious health condition,” Dietz says. This includes an emphasis on the complex biological factors that contribute to the development of obesity, factors that have nothing to do with willpower, as well as remaining informed about new treatment options.
WHY WAIT? A GUIDE TO DISCUSSING OBESITY & HEALTH WITH YOUR PATIENTS

In June 2015, the Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance, led by William Dietz, released a series of educational videos and a new and engaging website to help healthcare providers have productive conversations about obesity with their patients. Visit WhyWaitGuide.org for more information.

A significant step was taken in the fight against HIV/AIDS in DC this year with the establishment of the District of Columbia Center for AIDS Research (DC CFAR). The interdisciplinary, city-wide consortium includes nearly 200 HIV researchers from three GW schools—Milken Institute SPH, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, and the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences—and five major DC research institutions—Georgetown University, Howard University, American University, the Children’s National Medical Center and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The creation of the DC CFAR, led by Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics Chair Alan Greenberg, was made possible by a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant that will pay out an expected $7.5 million over five years.

“This city-wide collaboration began with the creation of the DC HIV/AIDS Institute in 2005 and continued with initial funding from the NIH in 2010 to establish the DC Developmental CFAR,” says Greenberg. “This represents a milestone moment in the history of our collective efforts to build HIV research capacity and infrastructure in our nation’s capital.”

“The creation of DC CFAR brings us one step closer to curing HIV,” said DC Mayor Muriel Bowser. “I congratulate the leadership and vision of the George Washington University and the exceptional consortium of academic institutions and researchers in our city. This opportunity will attract and support scientists for new and exciting research breakthroughs to end the HIV epidemic.”

The DC CFAR joins 17 other full CFARs around the country who are leading the way in finding a cure for HIV.

NIH GRANT BRINGS US ONE STEP CLOSER TO CURING HIV
NEW CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

THE ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE ACTION CENTER (ARAC)

Led by internationally recognized microbiologist and Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Professor Dr. Lance Price, ARAC aims to reduce antibiotic resistance worldwide. Price is a pioneer in the field of genomic epidemiology, using it to understand how the misuse of antibiotics in food animals affects public health. The emergence of drug-resistant bacteria has raised alarm bells in the public health community, and has started the movement to reduce antibiotic use by humans, in food animal production and agriculture. ARAC is at the forefront of that movement.

Price’s research generally focuses on bacteria—both good and bad—found on our body or in our food. In one recent study, Price looked at the presence of the bacteria Staphylococcus aureus, aka staph, and found that certain “good” bacteria, in this case non-pathogenic Dolosigranulum, may be able to knock out the bad staph bacteria. To test this theory further Price explained, “We’re going to create a model human nose and introduce bacteria. Then we’ll have little fights to pit staph against Dolosigranulum, let them duke it out and see what happens.” If successful this could provide a weapon to prevent drug-resistant infections caused by staph.

A second recent study looked at bacteria on grocery-store meat—particularly chicken, turkey and pork—and found that 47 percent of 508 meat products tested were contaminated with the disease-causing bacteria Klebsiella pneumonia, and most were drug-resistant strains. The researchers then used whole-genome DNA sequencing and were able to link Klebsiella-contaminated food to urinary and blood infections in patients. This research helps quantify the relationship between antibiotic use in food animal production and antibiotic-resistant infections in humans, said Price.

CENTER FOR SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT (CSWD)

CSWD, a center within the school’s Department of Prevention and Community Health, focuses on a wide range of health, education, gender, age, social and family factors, and relies on a social-ecological approach to understanding and addressing global health and development issues. This approach looks at the many factors that affect health and well-being, including social determinants of health that heavily impact opportunities and life chances. CSWD has worked with UNICEF in the Latin American-Caribbean region, but is expanding to work in Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

The CSWD was recently awarded a long-term arrangement (LTA) contract by UNICEF South Africa to develop a country-wide communications strategy to address violence against children and women. The center was one of only four universities to receive an LTA. The contract is valid for a minimum of four years and started in 2014. As part of the contract, CSWD will focus on three communications for development categories, called C4D by UNICEF: Research and analysis; planning and strategy development; and information and knowledge management. This contract helps CSWD build awareness of its work among UNICEF offices worldwide, and may lead to future work with the organization in other countries.
MeTRIC is a partnership of DC-based experts in tobacco control. Researchers from three founding institutions—Milken Institute SPH, the Schroeder Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies at Legacy, and Georgetown University—are at the core of the consortium. These institutions are joined by a variety of organizational and community partners. Their common mission is to tackle the tobacco problem in the DC metro area through innovative interdisciplinary research. The consortium is led by Milken Institute SPH Associate Dean for Research Kimberly Horn.

One of the primary focus areas of MeTRIC is smoking prevention among youth, and essential to that is understanding why they smoke and how they get access to cigarettes. A recent MeTRIC study by Kimberly Horn and colleagues looked at retail stores that sell tobacco products and their proximity to middle and high schools in six West Virginia counties. The study found a relationship between a high density of such stores and locations of schools, suggesting that students may frequent such establishments to buy or get others to buy tobacco products for them.

Another project by MeTRIC student member Vinu Ilakkuvan and her colleagues at the Schroeder Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies at Legacy studied whether youth watching shows and videos online, instead of traditional live or recorded television, were exposed to more advertisements for tobacco products. Ilakkuvan and her colleagues at Legacy surveyed 15 to 21 year-olds and found that young people who watched videos and shows online were 1.24 times more likely to see such ads compared to TV watchers.

Please turn to page 39 to read more about student and faculty tobacco-related research.

MENTORING TOMORROW’S PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS

The Office of Research Excellence at Milken Institute SPH is continuously working to advance faculty research at the school. Its latest initiative, the Mentor Match program launched in 2015, partners investigators with experts in his or her field of study to perform a critical scientific review for research proposals. The mentors work with the investigator 2-3 months prior to the grant deadline to help draft proposal ideas, provide feedback, and contribute insight for the final research proposal. The recipients benefit from more competitive proposals and ideally ongoing collaboration with mentors who are well-established public health scholars.
Human exposure to the metal cadmium may increase our risk of developing cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other diseases associated with old age, according to a December 2014 study led by Environmental and Occupational Health Assistant Professor Ami Zota. Zota and her colleagues found that exposure to the metal can lead to significantly shorter telomeres, pieces of DNA that cap the end of chromosomes to protect them from deterioration. Telomere shortening happens normally as people get older, but this study shows that cadmium may accelerate that process. The study, published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, is the largest-ever to look at cadmium exposure and telomeres.

People are typically exposed to small amounts of this toxic metal by inhaling tobacco smoke, eating fruits and vegetables grown in contaminated soil or living near an industrial site, Zota says. However, the study’s findings suggest that cadmium can elicit harmful effects on the human body at levels well below the current safety standards.

To conduct the study, the researchers looked at blood and urine samples taken from more than 6,700 adults who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) from 1999 to 2002, a nationally representative health survey of the U.S. population. The researchers obtained purified DNA from blood cells and then used a genetic technique known as polymerase chain reaction to measure the telomeres. They then measured the concentration of cadmium in the samples.

“People with the highest cadmium exposure had cells that looked on average 11 years older than their chronological age,” Zota said, adding that even people in the highest group of exposure still had very tiny amounts of metal in their bloodstream. “This study adds to evidence suggesting that no level of exposure to this metal is safe.”

Ami Zota (center), with Francesca Branch (left), doctoral candidate and research assistant, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health; and Tyiesha Johnson (right), research assistant, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health.
Although they're no longer playing on the field, former NFL players still have something to tackle—weight control and personal health in retirement. Research shows that a majority of retired professional football players are at a higher risk for becoming obese, which can lead to diabetes and other health complications. On top of that, their bodies continue to suffer from injuries incurred while playing the game, often making it difficult to exercise. To study the effects of intervention strategies, Exercise and Nutrition Sciences Chair Loretta DiPietro and Associate Professor Melissa Napolitano teamed up to run a Heart Obesity Prevention and Education (HOPE) program with former players in the Washington area.

The HOPE program, first developed by Napolitano while still at Temple University in 2012, aims to tackle obesity among NFL alumni through assessment and therapy. With support from the NFL Players Association (NFLPA) and the Living Heart Foundation, DiPietro and Napolitano enrolled seven players from the local DC NFLPA chapter in their initial six-month program in 2014. Through an in-kind donation from FitBit, each player was given a FitBit tracker and WiFi scale. These tools, along with group meetings and family support, enabled each player to meet the challenges that come with balancing a lifestyle change program with other demands.

After the program, the researchers saw a significant reduction in body weight with an average weight loss around 18 pounds, which was more than six percent of initial body weight, Napolitano says. “Tailored weight control programs, like the HOPE Program, are one step toward reaching players and the support teams in their lives,” she says, adding that players who successfully complete the program can serve as peer leaders to help other players lead healthy lives after they’ve stopped playing the game.
FUNDING DISRUPTIONS COULD MAKE PRIMARY CARE SHORTAGE WORSE

An estimated 50 million people in the United States have trouble getting medical care because they live in rural, urban or suburban areas without enough primary care doctors. That doctor shortage could get worse in those underserved areas if funding for an innovative program is cut, according to a report issued in March 2015 by the Geiger Gibson/RCHN Community Health Foundation Research Collaborative at Milken Institute SPH.

The Teaching Health Centers program was established to train young doctors in underserved parts of the country in the hopes that they will ultimately stay and practice primary care medicine in the same communities. Leighton Ku, a professor and interim chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management at Milken Institute SPH, led a team that analyzed the impact of funding cuts on the THC program. They found that a funding loss could lead to a disruption for 550 medical residents who are currently in training and it could cut off the pipeline of medical students who apply to the THC program in the coming years.

The report predicts that if Congress were to eliminate funding for the Teaching Health Centers an estimated one million people living in these underserved areas could lose primary care every year—simply because there are not enough doctors being trained to serve in such areas. According to the report, about 76 percent of the THC residents go on to practice in such isolated rural or urban core neighborhoods. With continued funding and support, the THC program could go a long way toward providing a solution for the primary care shortage in such areas, the report says.


The Teaching Health Centers program was established to train young doctors in underserved parts of the country in the hopes that they will ultimately stay and practice primary care medicine in the same communities.
HIGH COURT RULING ON KING V. BURWELL: A VICTORY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

The Supreme Court ruled in June 2015 that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) allows the federal government to offer tax subsidies that help many low- and moderate-income people purchase health insurance. That victory for the Obama Administration in this landmark case known as King v. Burwell, was supported by many friend-of-the-court briefs filed with the High Court, including a public health brief submitted by Dean Goldman and many other public health deans, faculty members and public health leaders from across the country.

The brief predicted that if the Supreme Court ruled against the Administration, millions of Americans in 34 states that rely on the Federal healthcare exchange would have lost health coverage. Such a loss would lead to worsening health conditions, lack of medical care and an estimated 10,000 preventable deaths per year, according to the brief.

In the end, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Obama Administration, a win that preserved the health coverage that an estimated 7 million Americans rely on to get medical care, said Sara Rosenbaum, the Harold and Jane Hirsh Professor of Health Law and Policy and a key author of the brief. Rosenbaum, a highly sought after legal expert, was interviewed by numerous top-tier media outlets about the ACA and the implications of the case, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Dallas Morning News, Stateline and many others.

HOSPITAL QUALITY REPORTING KEEPS PRICES DOWN

A website that allows consumers to check out quality scores for their local hospitals may also be injecting a dose of competition into the healthcare marketplace, according to a study by researchers at Milken Institute SPH. Hospital Compare was launched by Medicare in 2005 to allow consumers to comparison shop for the best place to get surgery and other types of hospital care. Health Policy and Management Professor Avi Dor wondered if the public reporting website also had an impact on the prices paid for certain kinds of inpatient procedures.

To find out, Dor and his colleagues looked at the prices paid to hospitals both before Hospital Compare’s quality rating system went live and after it had been in place for a while. The study, published in the January 2015 issue of the prestigious journal Health Affairs, found that the rating system held down the price increases for two kinds of heart procedures, including bypass surgery. Insurance companies apparently used the website’s data on quality as leverage to negotiate better prices for these common procedures, Dor says.

“Hospital Compare appears to give insurance companies an edge at the bargaining table,” Dor says. “This study suggests the injection of quality information into the marketplace has helped hold down hospital prices.”

Right now, Hospital Compare has only a limited number of quality measures on its website. But as more sophisticated measures of the quality get added to this public website, more insurance companies and consumers may be able to shop for both a reasonable price and quality of care, Dor said.

This research was featured in a number of influential media outlets including U.S. News & World Report, Modern Healthcare, Kaiser Health News and California Healthline among others.
Physicians who graduate from a residency training program in parts of the country where higher healthcare spending is the norm continue to practice expensive medicine for years to come, according to a study published in the December 9, 2014 *Journal of the American Medical Association* by researchers at Milken Institute SPH. The findings of the study suggest that such physicians may continue to practice in a higher-cost manner even when they move to a region of the country where medical spending patterns are on the thrifty side.

Fitzhugh Mullan, the Murdock Head Professor of Medicine and Health Policy, in collaboration with colleagues at the Robert Graham Center and the American Board of Family Medicine, did the study by zeroing in on physicians who had completed residencies between 1992 and 2010 and then tracking their spending patterns using Medicare claims data.

The team found that physicians trained in higher-cost regions spent 29 percent more on medical tests and other services than their peers. A higher price tag does not necessarily translate to better medicine for patients, Mullan says. In fact, doctors trained to provide medical services judiciously might be offering patients better care, including less exposure to unnecessary treatment.

The findings of the study have already contributed to a national debate about Medicare’s contributions to graduate medical education (GME) and the training of young doctors. Medicare spends $10 billion a year on GME and Mullan says that preference should be given to residency programs that train doctors to spend in a more judicious manner—thus potentially reducing healthcare costs.

The study was covered by a number of media outlets, including *Vox, HealthDay, U.S. News & World Report, Kaiser Health News, Health Leaders Media, MedPage Today* and others.
The value of the tax breaks given to nonprofit hospitals in the United States has nearly doubled over about a decade, says a study by Milken Institute SPH researchers. The study, which was published in the prestigious journal Health Affairs, has added to a debate about whether nonprofit hospitals are giving enough back to the community.

In 2002, these hospitals received $12.6 billion in tax breaks according to the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation. Sara Rosenbaum, the Harold and Jane Hirsh Professor of Health Law and Policy, and her colleagues used the same methods to determine the value of the tax break these nonprofits received in 2011, finding it had grown to $24.6 billion.

To take advantage of the tax breaks, hospitals must operate under nonprofit status and provide “charity care and community benefit services,” a broad category that includes care for indigent patients, health professional training, research and activities aimed at improving the community health.

Rosenbaum and her colleagues found that the vast majority of hospital spending in this category went for charity care and activities other than community health. While nonprofit hospitals spent $15 billion on charity care in 2011 they put only a small fraction of their resources toward activities aimed at supporting a healthier community.

Hospitals might start to re-think that spending pattern now that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is in place. Under this health reform law, nonprofit hospitals must conduct a needs assessment every three years to identify community health problems and develop solutions. For example, a solution for high rates of obesity might include partnering with others to build more parks and bring in farm markets so that people in the community can find healthier foods and safe places to get regular exercise.

The study, which was first published online in June 2015 Health Affairs, was covered by a number of media outlets including The Washington Post, Kaiser Health News, Modern Healthcare and regional papers across the United States.
EVENTS
Couric was joined on the Milken Institute SPH auditorium stage by documentary film-maker Ken Burns, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Siddhartha Mukherjee, and Sharon Percy Rockefeller, president and CEO of Washington, DC’s public broadcasting flagship station WETA. Couric moderated a discussion with the guests which was filmed as a preview for the PBS special documentary, “Cancer: The Emperor of All Maladies,” based on Dr. Mukherjee’s book by the same name. Nearly 100 GW students, faculty and staff were able to partake in the behind-the-scenes experience, including Dean Lynn Goldman who was also interviewed on camera by Couric about the difficulty in linking environmental factors to cancer.

While the documentary covers the history of cancer, it also gives viewers a glimpse into the progress scientists and doctors have made in developing new treatments and a potential cure for the disease. The film follows a dozen cancer patients and their families through their emotional and physical journeys as they battle with the disease. The six-hour documentary, produced by Burns, aired in three parts and premiered March 30, 2015 on PBS.
GLOBAL HEALTH MINI UNIVERSITY

Continuing the tradition of collaboration in support of global health education, Milken Institute SPH sponsored the annual Global Health Mini University conference held in March 2015 at GW. The conference, now in its fourteenth year, was also sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development and Global Health Professional and Organizational Development. Dean Goldman kicked off the conference with a warm welcome to all attendees. The day-long forum for global health professionals and students provided over 60 sessions on various global health topics in addition to excellent networking opportunities.

SUMNER M. REDSTONE GLOBAL CENTER FOR PREVENTION AND WELLNESS HOLDS INAUGURAL EVENT

How do we nurture healthy communities? How do we frame an effective narrative about health and obesity prevention? How can newer science help in identifying to whom and where we target obesity-prevention strategies? These were some of the questions addressed at the inaugural Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness event held at Milken Institute SPH on February 24-25, 2015. Representatives from 30 foundations and groups joined together for a candid conversation about the current investments in obesity prevention, and how they can build on past achievements and overcome obstacles moving forward.

This meeting followed a January event, which the Redstone Center helped organize, that convened evaluators of place-based childhood obesity interventions conducted by major national foundations: Kaiser Permanente, the California Endowment, the WK Kellogg Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Nemours. The evaluators identified successful interventions in early care and education facilities, schools, and communities that were summarized in a white paper which was shared at the February meeting.

“Together, these meetings provided a roadmap of interventions in childhood obesity that can be used by a variety of funders to address childhood obesity, and to renew the commitment of foundations funding this work,” Redstone Center Director William Dietz said. It’s the first time these foundations engaged with one another in a formal way, and the meeting served as a catalyst for ongoing working groups to continue this important work, he added.

The Redstone Center was founded in 2014 after a $30 million transformative gift from the Sumner M. Redstone Charitable Foundation. This event was one of many activities in which Dietz has participated in an effort to engage local and national stakeholders in the fight against obesity.

“The Mini-University is an amazing opportunity for global health professionals and students to get together to share knowledge and learn from one another. Social Impact could not organize it without the technical and logistical partnership with USAID and George Washington University. Their contribution is invaluable to the success of the Mini-U each and every year, and we could not and would not want to do it without them.”

– Carrie Hemminger, Social Impact & GHPOD, Global Health Mini-University Coordinator
DEAN GOLDMAN AND MIKE MILKEN HOST UNPRECEDENTED PUBLIC HEALTH DINNER

On March 23, 2015 Dean Goldman and Milken Institute Chairman Mike Milken welcomed public health deans and directors of schools and programs of public health to Milken Institute SPH for an extraordinary evening focused on the future public health challenges and opportunities facing the world. The evening was a collaboration with the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health which was holding its annual meeting of deans, program directors, department chairs, faculty, staff and students from Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH)-accredited schools and programs of public health in Washington, DC. Mike Milken shared preliminary plans for the upcoming Milken Institute Summit on Public Health, some of which will be held at GW on March 1 ~ 2, 2016. The dinner served as a highly collaborative session to begin shaping an agenda that will address the need to invest in prevention and public health and determine how the summit can serve as a catalyst for increased private sector and philanthropic support for these efforts.

It was the first time more than 50 public health deans and program directors from around the world gathered together under one roof—along with government officials and members of the house and senate—for a lively discussion about the future of public health. In addition to Mike Milken, Dean Goldman spoke at the evening event, as well as many of the attendees who had the opportunity to describe what they thought were the top two or three public health challenges facing the world. “The evening proved to be an important opportunity to hear from the leading thinkers on public health issues and challenges,” Mike Milken said. “I look forward to the upcoming Milken Institute Summit on Public Health.”
With e-juice flavors like “Tutti Frutti Gumballs,” “Peanut Butter Cup,” and “Sour Green Apple,” it’s easy to see why battery-powered electronic cigarettes have become the latest trend among middle and high school students. According to a recent report issued by the CDC, use of the devices among high school students tripled from 2013 to 2014. These trends as well as the challenges of regulating and measuring e-cigarette use were the focus of a May 6, 2015 discussion hosted by Milken Institute SPH, GW’s Office of Industry and Corporate Research, and ICF International.

Some health professionals say these products can help smokers quit, and may not be as toxic as regular cigarettes because they don’t contain tobacco. “On the other side of that, the e-juices or e-liquids contain a variety of harmful constituents, which includes nicotine, a poisonous and addictive substance,” said Kimberly Horn, associate dean of research and director of the DC Metro Tobacco Research and Instruction Consortium at the school. Horn and other public health officials have also raised concerns that e-cigarette use could act as a gateway to tobacco products or drugs.

One of the primary issues is that there is little research into how people are using these products and with what frequency, so researchers don’t have a sense of the long-term impact. To address this, there needs to be more longitudinal, evidence-based research, said Dr. Ray Niaura, associate director of the Schroder Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies.

In addition to Horn and Niaura, panelists included Brian King of the CDC; Jennifer Pearson, MPH ’07, and Andrea Villanti of the Schroder Institute; Carolyn Dresler of the FDA; Naomi Freedner-Maguire of ICF International; and Darren Mays of the Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.
The Milken Institute SPH educational experience takes place inside and outside of the classroom by extending into real-world public health settings. For students this is an invaluable part of the curriculum. Just ask Stuart Portman, MPH in health policy alumnus ’15, who received the 2015 Hirsh Award in the American College of Legal Medicine’s (ACLM) student writing competition in law, medicine and bioethics in February 2015. Portman received first place in the competition, winning a $1,000 prize for his paper, “In-Home Health Coverage by Illinois’ Medicaid Program,” which explores the issue of in-home healthcare coverage for Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries in Illinois’ Medicaid program. In March 2015, Portman presented his paper during a general session at the ACLM 2015 Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The ACLM is a professional society focused on addressing issues that arise at the intersection of law and medicine. Meeting and networking with members of the society and conference attendees was a highlight of the experience for Portman, who wrote the winning paper as part of his Law, Medicine and Ethics course taught by Health Policy and Management Associate Professor Melissa Goldstein. In the course, students focus on writing one large journal-ready bioethics paper that they can submit for consideration to a publication if they so choose.

“It is incredible that a single course—Law, Medicine and Ethics—has had such a profound impact on my ability to analyze complex health issues,” Portman says.
Clinton Global Initiative University

Each year, the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U) hosts a three-day meeting to bring together students, university representatives, subject experts and celebrities to discuss and develop innovative solutions to pressing global challenges. With innovation and public service woven into the GW culture and curriculum, it’s not surprising that GW continues to have a strong student presence at the annual meetings. In 2012, GW hosted the CGI U meeting on its Foggy Bottom campus. This year, 36 GW students—10 from the Milken Institute SPH—were selected to attend the conference in Miami on March 6–8, 2015.

The undergraduate and graduate students from our school who participated in the 2015 meeting had to develop a “Commitment to Action,” a new and measurable initiative that addresses social challenges locally or globally. Their commitments covered a range of public health challenges from access to healthcare to poverty alleviation to health education. GWupstart Social Innovation Lab, GW’s hub for social entrepreneurship training, mentoring and funding, helped the students prepare for the CGI U meeting which can often lead to securing financial support and developing potential partnerships.

Business Plan Competition

Milken Institute SPH students’ entrepreneurial spirit didn’t stop at CGI U. A number of our students competed in GW’s annual Business Plan competition, which awards tens of thousands of dollars in cash and prizes to promising startup ventures. Two teams of our students participated in the finals in April 2015, and both earned cash-prize awards. MHA graduate students Laira Roth and Amy Rutkowske won the GW Business Plan Audience Choice award and were the recipients of the inaugural Veterans Prize, taking home a total of $10,000 for their company MedConnect. MedConnect is telemedicine smartphone technology that allows patients to connect with medical services via a digital application. Your Health Concierge, Inc, which looks to provide wellness services to people 55 and older in the Washington, DC metro area, won honorable mention and $1,200. The team included Christian Brewer, MPH in global health; Doris Bryant, RN; Shakita Jenkins, MPH alumna in community oriented primary care; and Caroline Sparks, director of the MPH in health promotion program.
Twenty one lower elementary students between the ages of five and eight had the opportunity to be scientists for a day in November 2014, donning lab coats as they explored the laboratories at Milken Institute SPH. Our students from the departments of environmental and occupational health (EOH), exercise and nutrition sciences, and epidemiology and biostatistics developed activities to engage the would-be scientists during their visit.

The young, aspiring researchers, from the Aidan Montessori School in Washington, DC, began their field trip in Professor and Chair of the EOH Department Melissa Perry’s lab. Master of Public Health (MPH) in environmental health science and policy student Nicholas Porter showed the students a moving microbe in a sample of Potomac River water through a microscope. As the students looked on in awe, MPH in global environmental health student Linda Nguyen told the students, “This is why we don’t drink water right out of the river.”

The young visitors were treated to a wide range of other cool science projects. For instance, how to clean water through a filter made from a recycled soda bottle filled with small rocks and sand by EOH Doctor of Public Health student Fran Branch; how to create safer alternatives to the dangerous smoke-producing cooking stoves demonstrated by MPH in biostatistics student Matt Shupler; a lesson in human anatomy from Master of Science in exercise science students Saee Khandagale, Brandie Huffman and Rebecca Switzer; and state-of-the-art fitness testing demonstrated by graduate assistants Paul Moquin and Lauren Beckley.

“I’m really proud of how the EOH and Exercise and Nutrition Sciences’ students took on the opportunity to find a way to make science fun for our young lab visitors,” Dr. Perry said. “Their passion for what they do showed in the activities they set up for the children.”
According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cigarette smoking is still the leading preventable cause of disease and death in the United States, killing nearly 500,000 Americans every year,” says Associate Dean of Research and Professor of Prevention and Community Health Kimberly Horn. That’s why our faculty and students are conducting cutting-edge tobacco research to understand tobacco use and develop prevention and cessation strategies that work.

Nine students and two faculty members presented a total of 15 abstracts at this year’s 21st annual meeting of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT). Studies presented at the meeting included projects conducted under the DC Metro Tobacco Research and Instruction Consortium (MeTRIC), which is a partnership of tobacco-control experts from our school, Georgetown University and the Schroeder Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies at Legacy, led by Horn.

Horn and MeTRIC Co-Director and Associate Professor of Prevention and Community Health Lorien Abroms presented research at the meeting. The following students presented or contributed to research that was included at this year’s SRNT meeting: Maliha Ali, Laurel Curry, Ollie Ganz, Tiffany R. Gray, Christina Heminger, Vinu Ilakkuvan, Leah E. Leavitt, Diane J. Martinez and Jennifer Schindler Ruwisch.

Milken Institute SPH research presented at the SRNT meeting includes studies showing or suggesting that:

• Young people who watch videos and shows online are more likely to see tobacco products advertised compared to TV watchers.

• Factors that predict teenage use of both cigarettes and marijuana include peer influence, depression and stressful life-events.

• Social media can amplify public health messages aimed at getting youth and young adults to never start or quit using tobacco products.

• For a small number of teen smokers, smoking has become almost a full-time job—with use averaging a cigarette almost every 30 waking minutes.
## DEVELOPMENT SUCCESSES

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We are pleased to recognize the following donors who have made gifts to the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University. The following list acknowledges gifts received from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.
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Michael J. Nau MA ’12 and Roulla D. Nau MHA ’08
Elizabeth W. Nelson MS ’08
Kelly Nelson MPH ‘13
Lisa S. Nichols MPH ’02
Joshua L. Niehaus MS ’11
Alexander Andrews Nikas MPH ’97
Novo Nordisk
Obesity Action Coalition
Nsedu O. Obot Witherspoon MPH ’00
Ohio State University
Keri W. Ohlheiser BS ’15
Pilar R. Oishi MHSA ’84 and Tokuo Oishi PhD ’88
Gerald and Lisa Olivo
Erin A. Olson MS ’09
Open Society Foundations
Madeleine Oranges BS ’04
Brian Orgen BS ’01, MHSA ’08 and Erica Orgen BA ’01
Dorothy I. O’Very CERT ’12
Aimee J. Palumbo MPH ’09
Danielle L. Pambianco MPH ’07
Briana M. Parish MPH ’12
Estella Catherine Parrott MPH ’91
Sona Patel-Grimm Partsch MA ’99
Karen A. Segal BA ’79 and David Green
Seattle Institute for Biomedical and Clinical Research
Karen A. Segal BA ’79 and David Green
Ronald Sellers
Howard D. Sesso MPH ’95
Karla Pollick MS ’81, CERT ’13 and Marc Pollick
Ricci T. Poormon BS ’13
Karen M. Poulos MPH ’12
Olga Acosta Price
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Marsha Joan Regenstein PhD ’99
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