

The Link

 COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Better Health Systems Initiative

A new MSPH research initiative addresses the need for global health coverage and quality

An estimated 100 million people around the world fall below the poverty line each year in an effort to pay healthcare expenses. In the past twenty years, there has been an ongoing conversation among healthcare policy experts and researchers about the best way to establish Universal Health Coverage (UHC). According to Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, UHC is “the single most powerful concept that public health has to offer. It is inclusive. It unifies services and delivers them in a comprehensive and integrated way, based on primary healthcare.” The path to establishing UHC will be different for each country, as will the benefit packages and the financing strategies, but the goal of UHC will be the same: to create affordable, accessible, high-quality healthcare.

In an effort to address this growing crisis, the Mailman School of Public Health launched the Better Health Systems Initiative this spring. This initiative, housed in the Department of Health Policy & Management, will develop research focused on global health systems, coverage, and quality Universal Health Coverage. Margaret E. Kruk, MD, MPH, a professor of Health Policy and Management, is the director of the program, and she will work closely with colleagues in Health Policy and Management, Drs. Michael Sparer, Larry Brown, Bhaven Sampat, and Peter Muennig as well as Lynn P. Freedman, MPH, JD, professor of Population and Family Health and Abdulrahman M. El-Sayed, MD, DPhil, assistant professor of Epidemiology (see bios, page 2). The faculty will conduct research on issues of coverage and quality and pursue implementation research on real-world models to improve health systems performance. One model close to home is the Affordable Care Act, which aims to bring the United States closer to the goal of Universal Health Coverage. The Better Health Systems Initiative will benefit from

HPM’s expertise in analyzing US health policy in studying other countries’ health systems while promoting cross-national learning. The initiative will present research to policymakers and organizations to facilitate an understanding of the specific issues surrounding global health and examine key processes and mechanisms in global health policymaking.

On Tuesday, May 6, the Better Health Systems Initiative hosted the first of three seminars to stimulate informed dialogue about global health priorities. The seminar, “Universal Health Care: Only for Rich Countries?” was hosted by the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations at their offices in midtown. Representatives from several non-governmental organizations and non-profits attended the event, including World Vision, the Rockefeller Foundation, and UNICEF, as well as representatives from a number of missions including the Mission of Congo, Japan, and Argentina. Presentations by Drs. Margaret Kruk and Daniel Cotlear, Lead Economist at the World Bank, addressed the impact of health expenditures on the rising poverty levels, and highlighted the benefits of universal healthcare coverage systems in an effort to reverse this trend. Using the momentum gained by the international effort to address the Millennium Development Goals, Drs. Kruk and Cotlear stressed that now is the time to work toward universal health coverage. The seminar concluded with Dr. Kruk and Dr. Cotlear fielding questions from participants about the difficult financial and political reality of implementing Universal Health Coverage.

The next seminar, hosted by the Swiss Mission on Tuesday, June 17, will focus on using the Millennium Development Goals to inform renewed efforts on the prevention of non-communicable diseases and chronic conditions and injuries.

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ABBREVIATION KEY:

EMPH	EXECUTIVE MPH PROGRAM
CEOR	COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS & OUTCOMES RESEARCH
FTM	FULL-TIME MANAGEMENT
CMPH	COLUMBIA MPH
GLOBAL	GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY & MANAGEMENT
HPM	DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY & MANAGEMENT
MSPH	MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PTM	PART-TIME MANAGEMENT
GPH	GENERAL PUBLIC HEALTH

Better Health Systems Initiative Faculty & Staff

Margaret E. Kruk, MD, MPH, is an assistant professor of Health Policy & Management at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health where she directs Better Health Systems, a research initiative on global healthcare coverage and quality. Dr. Kruk's research emphasizes healthcare utilization and quality, health financing, and population preferences for health services in low-income countries. She has published over 50 papers in peer-reviewed journals, was a Commissioner on the Lancet Global Health 2035 Commission, and serves on the Institute of Medicine Committee on Health System Strengthening. She holds an MD degree from McMaster University and an MPH from Harvard University. (See her profile, page 6)

Michael Sparer, PhD, JD, is a professor and the Chair of the Department of Health Policy & Management. He studies and writes about the politics of healthcare, with a particular emphasis on the health insurance and health delivery systems for low-income populations, and the ways in which inter-governmental relations influence policy, both in the US and abroad.

Larry Brown, PhD, is a professor and former chair of the Department of Health Policy & Management. His work focuses on the political dimensions of community cost containment, expansion of coverage for the uninsured, national health reform, the role of analysis in the formation of health policy, and cross-national health policy.

Bhaven Sampat, PhD, is an associate professor of Health Policy & Management. He is an economist by training, centrally interested in issues at the intersection of health policy and innovation policy. His current projects examine the political economy of the National Institutes of Health, the effects of patents on access to medicines in India, the interactions between patent laws and FDA regulation in the pharmaceutical industry, the determinants of patent quality in the U.S. patent system, and challenges to evidence-based medicine in contexts of rapid technological change.

Peter Muennig, MD, MPH, is an associate professor of Health Policy & Management. His work primarily focuses on the cost-effectiveness of competing medical and non-medical social policies in improving population health. He uses randomized trials and cost-effectiveness analyses together to develop causal models to study the most efficient mix of medical and non-medical policies for maximizing health in the US and elsewhere.

Lynn P. Freedman, JD, MPH, currently directs the Mailman School's Averting Maternal Death and Disability (AMDD) Program, a global program of research, policy analysis, and technical support that, since 1999, has worked with UN agencies, NGOs, and governments in more than 50 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to reduce maternal mortality. Professor Freedman has published widely on issues of maternal mortality and on health and human rights, with a particular focus on gender and women's health.

Abdulrahman M El-Sayed, MD, DPhil, is an assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology at Columbia University, where his research considers how our social realities make us sick. Dr El-Sayed earned a DPhil in Population Health from Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, and an MD from Columbia University as a Soros Fellow and Medical Scientist Training Program Fellow.

Beth Silvestrini, MA, joined the Department of Health Policy & Management in April as Administrative Manager. She will be working with Margaret Kruk to launch the Better Health Systems Initiative and with the HPM team on Alumni Affairs and other projects. In May 2013 she received a Master's Degree in Higher and Postsecondary Education (HPSE) from Teachers College, Columbia University, with a concentration in Student Affairs.

Daniel Vail, BA, is a research analyst with the Better Health Systems Initiative. He brings experience in quantitative work, evaluation, and data collection in India, Zambia, and Uganda.

Message from the Chair



“There are many reasons to be proud of HPM, but right at the top of the list are our extraordinary students and alumni.”

Welcome to the Spring 2014 issue of *The Link*, the newsletter for and about the Department of Health Policy & Management (HPM). As I write this note, the Spring semester has ended, we said goodbye at graduation to the class of 2014, and I am thinking about our graduates, many of whom have chatted with me about the jobs they are about to begin, the fellowships they are about to start, and the doctoral studies they are planning to enter. There are many reasons to be proud of HPM, but right at the top of the list are our extraordinary students and alumni.

In this context, I am especially glad to see the story on Elaine Duran (CMPH’ 15) who is about to begin an internship with the National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA), and who, during her first year here, balanced her coursework, internships at the NYC Health Department and the US Department of Health and Human Services, and somehow also found time to be co-president of Students for a National Health Plan. Similarly, how could we not be proud of Rami Rafeh (EMPH’ 12), who developed the idea for a healthcare start-up in his entrepreneurship class here in HPM, and who has now taken that idea and turned it into Spott3r, which helps process gym reimbursement credits to pay individuals for their workouts. Be sure to check out the “HPM Highlights” page that lists the activities of just a small sample of other students and alumni. And let us know if you’ve recently published an article or received an award; we’ll add you to the list in our next issue.

This issue of *The Link* also provides a window into some of the ways our superb faculty are able to translate research so that it can be absorbed and utilized by policymakers. One clear example is the Better Health Systems Initiative, led by Dr. Margaret Kruk, which will develop research focused on global health systems, coverage and quality, and which then will present that research to policymakers in order to facilitate an improved policy dialogue, and hopefully an improved policy process. This spring, for example, the Initiative is hosting a seminar series with diplomats and other global policy leaders, looking at issues ranging from universal coverage to global health governance to the prevention of non-communicable diseases. And who better to lead this initiative than Margaret, who in addition to her superb research skills, was just awarded the Mailman School of Public Health Junior Faculty Teaching Award! Read more about Margaret in the Faculty Corner.

This spring HPM hosted three events focusing on innovations in a transforming healthcare system. First, at our Annual HPM Conference in mid-April, Drs. Laura Forese, Norm Payson, and John W. Rowe provided keynote talks on the challenges facing providers and payers alike in the changing healthcare system, after which HPM faculty and alumni hosted three panels that considered similar themes. Second, in late-April, the department hosted a panel in which several CEOs from start-up high-tech health firms compared insights on the extraordinary influence of the growing health tech market. Finally, in early May, Professor Larry Brown convened a two-day conference comparing health reform in the United States and Canada, with academics, policymakers, and other leaders in cross-national comparisons all participating.

As this issue of the *The Link* makes clear, there is a lot going on in HPM! So enjoy reading the issue, stay connected with us here in HPM, and offer your ideas and input. And congratulations again to the Class of 2014!

Michael Sparer, PhD, JD
Professor and Chair
Department of Health Policy & Management

Spotlight on Elaine Duran (CMPH '15)

When she came to Columbia last fall, Elaine Duran was determined to take advantage of all available opportunities. In the eight months that she's been here, she's managed to secure internships with both the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDOH) as well as the Office of Evaluation and Inspections (OEI), housed under the US Department of Health and Human Services. This summer, Duran will complete her practicum in Washington, DC at the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

Duran has also immersed herself in extracurricular activities and events in order to get the most out of her experience at Columbia. She is co-president of Students for a National Health Plan (SNaHP), a group that believes that access to high-quality healthcare is a universal right. "I try to go to as many events as my schedule will allow, not only because I'm interested in learning as much as I can, but also because it's an excellent way to network," Duran says. She participated in the inaugural Spring Case Challenge in April, and her team of full-time Mailman Health Policy & Management students placed second. "I was able to present in front of a panel of people who are strong leaders in their field," she recalls. "It's helpful to get feedback from people who have this level of experience."

At the NYCDOH Duran collaborated on a project that was designed to inform policy makers how to improve a housing policy for the homeless HIV/AIDS population in New York City. The focus of Duran's project was to evaluate the program's efficiency and discern where in the continuum of care the program fit. "With a homeless HIV-positive patient population, there's a gap between individuals knowing their status and being compliant," Duran says, "I was part of the data collection process which included administering surveys and meeting one-on-one with people in the program." The results of the study are currently being compiled, and the data is showing that providing patients with housing can help them remain in contact with their provider and lead to more favorable outcomes in terms of medical compliance.

Duran's work at the OEI was very different. There she focused on a policy-related project analyzing appeals of the Affordable Care Act. "We have 7.1 million people who have signed up on the exchanges," Duran says, "but there are millions of people who have fallen through the cracks." Part of Duran's job was to determine how to make the process more efficient. Her next project at the OEI involves studying policies to determine how Health Resource Services Administration (HRSA) funds are being allocated to Federally Qualified Healthcare Centers (FQHC). This involves analyzing parts of the ACA to determine what the restrictions are for how these funds are allocated. "There are a lot of gray areas," Duran explains, "so my job is to identify those gray areas and try to find those answers within the policies. It's been very rewarding, because this is something that's happening now, and it will continue to impact us."

Duran is currently preparing for her summer practicum in DC. She'll be a product development intern at the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), working on a patient-centered ambulatory care project. Duran is eager to tackle the policy analysis and research aspects of the job, but she's also interested in developing strategies for implementation. "I expect this work will be a strong hybrid of both," she says, "I am looking to create that bridge between patients and providers, and that's what I think I'll gain from my practicum."

Duran is no stranger to tackling challenges. Born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, she came to the US with her family when she was very young and quickly transitioned into a new culture. "English wasn't my first language, so growing up, I always gravitated towards science and math, two subjects that don't rely so heavily on the complexities of language," she says. Duran completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Florida. "I chose biochemistry as my major because by the time I got to college, I was a science and math nerd," she laughs. Duran was on track to become a pediatrician, and much of her time outside of class was spent working in healthcare facilities to gain practical experience. She worked for the Shands Hospital Streetlight Program, a palliative care initiative for adolescents living with chronic illnesses. She worked with young adults who were constantly in and out of the hospital, and who were often remiss in taking medications. The Streetlight



Elaine Duran (CMPH '15)

Program," Duran explains, "was designed to fill that void between the patient and the physician. The program allowed us to get to know the patients on a personal level and to provide the physician with a way to connect with the patient beyond the medical chart," she recalls. "I learned a lot about patient engagement." In college, Duran also worked as an associate director for the Health Disparities Research and Intervention Program at the University of Florida. "I worked with community health workers, strategizing ways to encourage patients to adopt healthy behaviors," she says. This was Duran's first exposure to broader, public health work, and it prompted her to reconsider her career options. "I was on a path to being a pediatrician," she says, "but seeing how fragmented the healthcare system is, I wanted to ultimately do more than just have one-on-one contact with patients."

"My biggest challenge has been holding multiple hats," Duran says of her experience at Columbia. "Balancing my courses and my extracurricular activities is definitely something I've been challenged with, but this program has helped me learn to prioritize." When she graduates next year, Duran hopes to find a position that incorporates policy analysis and research as well as implementation strategies. Her advice for future students coming to Mailman in the fall? "I would tell incoming students as soon as you walk in, you need to be open-minded and engaged. Begin immediately working on your resume, following up with the connections you're making, and attend the networking events." Duran emphasizes the importance of finding and strengthening relationships with faculty and mentors, "It's great knowing that you have such immense support and professors like Meghan Fitzgerald who constantly remind you that you are a future healthcare leader." Duran would like to stay connected to the HPM community as an alum and become a resource for future students. "I'm a believer in giving back," she says. "I recognize that I didn't get here by myself, so I understand the importance of returning the favor."

Alumni Profile: Rami Rafah (EMPH '12)

Rami Rafah talks about his new start-up and reflects on the passions and influences that have helped him succeed



Rami Rafah (EMPH '12)

“My mother says I was born with a mouse in my hand,” Rami Rafah laughs, when asked about his passion for healthcare IT. “Initially I wasn’t sure whether I should focus on the medical route and become a doctor, or pursue the business end of things and try to have an impact there. I’ve always been interested in computers, healthcare and data, and luckily, we’re currently in an environment where those interests line up nicely.”

In the last two years, Rafah has been very successful at combining his passions. He is the visionary behind Spott3r, a healthcare start-up company that helps process gym reimbursement credits to pay individuals for their workouts. Spott3r assists people by navigating the complex administrative aspects of the reimbursement process. “Even if consumers are aware of a reimbursement credit, often they are not utilizing it because putting together the application can be complicated,” Rafah says. Spott3r seeks to alleviate the complications by performing an eligibility check, to see if consumers qualify for a gym reimbursement from their employer or their insurance plan. If they do, Spott3r will review their activity data, compile a reimbursement package and submit all the required materials to the insurance companies.

Rafah originally developed his idea for Spott3r while he was a student in the Executive MPH program. The idea came out of an assignment for his entrepreneurship class. “The course gave me structure, in terms of fleshing out a project,” Rafah recalls, but as the project grew, so did the time commitment. “Suddenly, it was no longer just an idea. I had to shift my thinking to consider how much time I could realistically allocate towards Spott3r, and who I could get on board to help me support this mission.” He credits his experience in the EMPH program for helping him develop skills that he finds crucial to his current work at Spott3r, “The program gave me the confidence to have

high-level strategic conversations with payers and more thoroughly understand the nature of their business.”

Rafah is currently working on ideas for expanding the company, but he wants to keep the original aim of the business intact. “When we first started out, it was very much a health and wellness-oriented company, and that’s where I want to land in terms of outcomes. I want to make sure that we’re showing that people are improving their health through Spott3r.” However, the consumers are not the only ones to benefit from the service. Spott3r helps keep employees healthy and active, which means higher productivity rates for employers, and with greater incentives for members to keep their memberships active, gym owners can benefit from strong membership retention rates.

Though Spott3r is currently based in Manhattan and has partnered with many local gyms in the area, the company is ultimately looking to expand its network to cities like Boston, Chicago, Seattle, and LA. There is also opportunity for expansion based on the types of benefits that insurance companies will offer in the future, including the possibility of reimbursement for workouts outside the gym that can be tracked through fitness apps. “The reason we think we’re going to be successful in the long run,” Rafah explains, “is because we’re not changing procedures that the insurance companies have put into place; we’re working within the existing processes. But if an insurance company wants to offer expanded benefits, we’ll figure out a way to reimburse people outside the gym.” Rafah is also looking at the possibility of expansion with opportunities that include joint venture partnerships. He envisions collaborations with companies that embrace athletic or health-conscious lifestyles to offer workout rewards for consumers, such as athletic gear or nutritional supplements, so that even if people are not eligible for a gym

reimbursement, Spott3r might be able to offer them incentives to work out.

In addition to developing and managing a start-up, Rafah has worked at Pfizer for the last eight years. This work experience has helped him develop valuable management skills. “With my background at Pfizer, and an understanding of how a company works, I recognize that involving multiple players means partnerships can take a long time to develop, so it’s necessary to figure out other ways to stay sustainable throughout that process. It’s given me a lot of patience to be able to see this company forward.” The ability to balance his professional life with his projects is another important skill that Rafah has picked up along the way. While working at Pfizer and taking classes in the EMPH program, he was also working towards a non-degree certificate in Health IT at Columbia. “I’m used to biting off a lot,” Rafah admits, but this realization has played into his understanding that having reliable support is crucial, and as a result, he has taken time to build a strong management team at Spott3r.

Rafah is eager to share his experience building a start-up and is open to being a resource for those who are looking for advice. He stresses that to be successful “people should focus more on their own history and experience, and that will help them connect the dots, have some insight and make their experience applicable.” Rafah’s passion is evident in his advice to current students looking to discover their own place in the system, “Keep in mind there are tremendous amounts of opportunity out there,” he says, “even if you don’t have the bandwidth to start up your own company.” For Rafah, there was no other way, “I’ve sacrificed a lot—financially and personally—to do this, but I don’t think I could ever have ignored that calling.”

Faculty Corner



Dr. Margaret Kruk

Margaret Kruk began her career in healthcare as a family physician in northern Ontario. “I remember being in a perpetual state of fear,” Kruk recalls, of her early days as a resident. As one of three doctors running a hospital in a small Canadian town, Kruk shouldered a lot of responsibility. Part of her work included community outreach with native populations. She witnessed first-hand how the healthcare system functioned for her patients, and she was intrigued by the broader social issues that the populations were facing. Kruk describes the work she did in Ontario as “a big privilege,” and continues, “The faith of the community in the health system was something that we wore quite proudly but also heavily each day.”

After working in Canada for several years, Kruk went on to get her MPH from Harvard, and later was recruited to work with Jeffrey Sachs on the Millennium Development Goals at the UN. The Millennium Project aimed to implement on-the-ground projects to address global health goals, such as reducing child mortality and combating the spread of disease. The initiative targeted countries that had the infrastructure in place to support the goals. “It was an amazing experience,” Kruk recalls of working on the Millennium Project, “I had the opportunity to learn from people who were not just talking about policy, but who were trying to implement big healthcare projects on the ground in countries that were struggling with high mortality rates.” Kruk worked closely with a number of governments

including ministries of health in Ghana, Ethiopia, and Kenya to help devise strategies for health system expansion. While working on the Millennium Project, Kruk noted the discouraging disconnect between data-based evidence and policies that were being put into place. “There was all sorts of wonderful evidence in journals, but very little was directly applicable towards the policy questions people were facing,” Kruk says. She also noted discrepancies in the quality of healthcare between what was promised and what was delivered.

Kruk’s work on the Millennium Project sharpened her own questions surrounding global healthcare issues, and now as the Director of the Better Health Systems Initiative, she’s turning her attention to these questions. This MSPH initiative is an interdisciplinary program that aims to promote the implementation of Universal Health Coverage in low, middle, and high-income countries—including in the United States. “It’s a very entrepreneurial and somewhat unusual take on research,” Kruk explains of the initiative. “I like characterizing the program as a start-up, because we are trying something different: rapid response research, establishing more connections with policymakers, and trying to address questions that are really relevant right now.” Kruk emphasizes the importance of understanding what questions policymakers have and what information they need in order to make better decisions about global healthcare policy. “We’re really spending this first year learning, formulating the kind of questions we want to go after and working with the United Nations and other global health organizations in New York. I think in the long-term we’d love to establish partnerships with countries that are pursuing Universal Health Coverage, to consider questions that touch on coverage and quality and promote those cross-country findings.”

Kruk’s own global health research is concerned with the interaction between people and health systems. Kruk takes frequent trips to Africa to help oversee the projects. She recently returned from a trip to

Mozambique where she is leading a project to investigate the best way to deliver quality, long-term care to pregnant women with HIV. The women have been enrolled in a program under a new policy that provides anti-retroviral treatments. The biggest hurdle is finding the best way to diagnose and treat the patients while ensuring that they continue to return to the clinic for future treatments. “When I visit these clinics, I speak with the women, and I ask them very open-ended questions about how the system is working for them. I meet with the nurses and the administrators. I feel like these visits give me a much richer sense of what the data mean.” She also notes, “The important thing for me is to ensure that we build local capacity for research while getting the best possible quality of data that can shed light on our questions.”

At Columbia, Kruk teaches Program Evaluation and Comparative Health Systems for the Core Curriculum. This year she was awarded the Mailman School of Public Health Junior Faculty Teaching Award. “I really enjoy teaching,” Kruk says. “For me, it is very rewarding to learn from students, mentor them and help them craft their coursework.” In her classes, Kruk emphasizes the importance of being a respectful skeptic, “Everyone in a health department or in a ministry of health or in NGO is trying their best, so we’re not trying to take down that enterprise. But as program evaluators, I want my students to rigorously evaluate a program and to consider the best way to improve it.”

In addition to her hectic travel schedule, her global research, and her teaching commitments, Kruk is a mother of two. She is a self-described soccer mom, and says that keeping everything on track can be a bit of a juggling act. “There is no set way to do this kind of life,” she admits, “You really need to problem solve it as you go along. I am fortunate to have a very supportive husband who is also a researcher in public health and has always supported my career, and kids who get it, and I think they’re proud of me and what I do.”



Book Nook

We've asked our faculty to recommend a book or article that offers a valuable perspective on some aspect of the healthcare industry. Happy reading!

Meghan Fitzgerald (The Business of Healthcare: Reform and Contemporary Issues for Public Healthcare Companies) recommends *The Mortal Presidency: Illness and Anguish in the White House* by Robert E. Gilbert. As we think about future elections and an aging population, more leaders will be older in office and under more stress. It also interesting that Twitter, Facebook, and the internet make it very difficult for any public official to hide illness.

Thomas D'Aunno (Managerial and Organizational Behavior) recommends Adam Grant's best-selling book *Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success*. The book argues that career and life success are better attained by more or less selfless giving than by competitive "taking."

Nathan Dong (Healthcare Finance) recommends *Healthcare Investing: Profiting from the New World of Pharma, Biotech, and Health Care Services* by Les Funtleyder. As our country is

undergoing healthcare reform, the complex structure, ongoing changes and uncertain future of our healthcare market make many investors stay away from this sector. The author describes how the reform could create investment opportunities and in which subsector of the healthcare industry these opportunities exist.

Tom Ference (Strategic Management) recommends "Transient Advantage" (Harvard Business Review, June 2013). Rita Gunther McGrath offers a good perspective on balancing or complementing the "long range" orientation of traditional strategic planning with adaptability and nimbleness in response to the dynamics of real markets. Professor Ference also recommends *The Hidden Value of Organizational Health* (April 2014, *McKinsey Quarterly*, De Smet, Schaninger, and Smith). This text provides a good perspective on the importance of the 'soft tissue' that motivates and holds organizations together.

David Rosenthal (Managing Public Health Non-Profits) recommends *The Signal and the Noise* by Nate Silver, a well-crafted book about predicting outcomes amid the "noise" of extraneous data.

Bhaven Sampat (Research Techniques and Applications in Health Services Administration) recommends *The Art and Politics of Science* by Harold Varmus. This is an insider's view of how the largest funder of biomedical research in the world makes decisions and the role that economics, politics, and science have in that process. The book was written by Harold Varmus—a Noble Laureate, former NIH Director, and Columbia graduate.

Have You Heard?

HPM Faculty & Staff Updates

Professors **John S. Winkleman**, **Tom Ference** and **Nan Liu** have had a proposal accepted for the 2014 AUPHA Annual Meeting for an Education Session. The title of their proposal is *The HealthSquare Simulation: From Chaos to Executive Leadership in the Competitive Healthcare Marketplace*.

Professor **John W. Rowe**, former CEO of Aetna and Chair of the Mailman School Board of Overseers, gave the commencement address at the Mailman graduation on Tuesday, May 20 at the Armory Track & Field Center.

In May, Professor **Thom Blaylock** and his wife Kiyomi welcomed a baby girl, Sumi Rae Blaylock.

Professor **Ira B. Lamster's** new book *Diabetes Mellitus and Oral Health An Interprofessional Approach* was published in May. It is a practical tool for dentists and dental hygienists providing oral healthcare to patients with diabetes mellitus.

Professor **Jeanne Stelman** published an article on the effects of lingering Agent Orange spray in aircrafts used in Vietnam. The report, "Post-Vietnam Military Herbicide Exposures in UC-123 Agent Orange Spray Aircraft" was published in *Environmental Research* (February, 2014).

In May, Professor **Larry Brown** hosted a Healthcare Reform Conference at the Faculty House on Columbia's Morningside Campus. The conference centered on healthcare reform and policies in Canada and the US.

Professor **Margaret Kruk** is the recipient of the Junior Faculty Teaching Award, which is presented to an MSPH assistant professor early in his/her career who is making outstanding contributions to education.

Professors **Jemima A. Frimpong** and **Thomas D'Aunno's** article "Determinants of the Availability of Hepatitis C Testing Services in Opioid Treatment Programs: Results from a National Study" appeared online in the *American Journal of Public Health* (April 17, 2014).

HPM Events Recap

This spring HPM hosted several events including the HPM Healthcare Conference, an alumni career panel, and a Health Tech Panel, organized by two full-time CMPH students. Below, students recap the events in their own words.

The HPM Healthcare Conference

By Sara Gorman (CMPH '15)

On April 11, HPM hosted its third annual Healthcare Conference at the Columbia University Club of New York. The conference drew a variety of students across all HPM programs, including management, part-time, full-time, and executive programs, as well as current faculty and alumni. The depth and breadth of knowledge, expertise, and perspectives across participants resulted in an engaging, fast-paced discussion about the key challenges facing our country's healthcare system.

The morning session opened with a thought-provoking keynote lecture by Dr. Laura Forese (EMPH '95), President of New York Presbyterian Healthcare System. Dr. Forese's lecture, entitled *The View from Inside: Bigger, Faster, Smarter*, was a combination of her own experience managing a large academic medical center, her observations about the directions the hospital management field and medicine in general are taking, and her suggestions about some of the ways in which doctors and managers can face upcoming challenges. Among other things, she spoke about the incentives for doctors to be more entrepreneurial, the long lost days of doctors graduating from medical school and opening their own practices, the growing complexity of medical technology, and the rise in non-hospital care settings, such as urgent care and retail clinics. The second half of the morning session included a lively, entertaining dialogue between Dr. John Rowe, Professor of Health Policy and Management at Columbia, and Dr. Norman Payson, President of NCP, Inc. The two colleagues and friends gave their perspectives on challenges and opportunities facing payers and providers, all the while poking fun at each other and bringing an air of humor to the conference. One of the key issues both speakers addressed was the cultural rift between payers and providers and the question of whether it is better to have that rift exist internally, externally, or as part of a joint venture.

At a revitalizing lunch, Professor Michael Sparer, Chair of the Department of Health Policy & Management at Columbia, expressed his continuing admiration of the students, alumni,



Drs. Norman Payson and John W. Rowe at the 2014 HPM Healthcare Conference

and faculty who make up the HPM community. An hour later, the afternoon sessions convened. All conference attendees had a choice of three sessions: The Paradigm Shift: Adjusting Payer Strategy; Access, Innovation, Outcomes: Navigating Regulated Care; and Drumming up Business: Entrepreneurship to Meet New Health Challenges. I attended the access breakout session, moderated by HPM Assistant Professor Dr. Margaret Kruk. The three panelists in the session included Dr. Wendy Wilcox (EMPH '05), an OB/GYN in the Bronx, Dr. Marcy Borofsky (EMPH '11), a dentist and founder of Smile Programs, and Dr. Lloyd Ratner (EMPH '11), a transplant surgeon. The panelists discussed a broad range of issues affecting access to healthcare and health outcomes in the U.S., including the fragmentation of care, the difficulties that arise in trying to understand the root cause of a complex medical problem, and the challenges of access to healthcare in rural areas. The day then wrapped up with a networking reception.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity to hear about the real-world challenges facing our healthcare system. It was an especially exciting venue for current students to understand the relevance of some of the topics we are covering in our courses. The conference also provided a refreshing opportunity for students to connect with alumni, all of whom are doing exciting work and all of whom look back on their education at Mailman with fondness, considering it an essential component of their ability to succeed in today's increasingly complex healthcare world.

Connecting Startup Leaders with the Mailman Community at the Health Tech Panel

By Amy Millette (CMPH '15) and Alexandra Luterek (CMPH '15)

The passage of the Affordable Care Act, the growth in new models of healthcare delivery, and the demand for HIPPA compliant mobile platforms have inspired the launch of numerous health technology ventures. Based in New York's "Silicon Alley," many of these firms are local to the Columbia community. Their goals of improving healthcare delivery and reducing costs are compatible with the current policy environment. We've also witnessed the growth of many NY-based incubator and accelerator funds including BluePrint Health, the NY eHealth Collaborative, and Columbia's Startup Lab. In considering summer practica, and more broadly, the direction of our careers, we felt that it was an opportune time for students to engage in a conversation with local and emerging leaders in the health tech field.

On April 18th, Mailman students, faculty, and alumni gathered for a discussion with the CEOs of Healthify, Oscar Health Insurance, Mana Health, NY eHealth Collaborative, and Spott3r. Professor Howard Tarre moderated the discussion. The panel explored the ways in which public health graduates can add value to health technology firms, key trends in digital health, and the influence of policy changes on innovation. The panelists represented diverse backgrounds and training in public health, engineering, business, and biotechnology. Their respective initiatives address a wide range of technological solutions in the areas of care provision, patient coordination, payment, and the patient experience.

Manik Bhat, the CEO and Founder of Healthify, discussed his efforts to connect patients with social and behavioral support services through a dynamic resource database. The Healthify platform maximizes the impact of case managers and patient-centered medical homes, and improves quality metrics for programs like Medicaid. The audience also heard from Eddie Segel, the Head of Product for Oscar Health Insurance. Oscar is a young company filling a huge demand for user-friendly and transparent health insurance. Mana Health's CEO, Chris Bradley, shared his perspective on building an award-winning and user friendly portal that allows patients and their clinicians to track and share data. Anuj Desai of the NY eHealth Collaborative reviewed his organization's work to provide a public resource for health information technology, and to support the success of NY startups through its digital health accelerator. Lastly, Mailman alum Rami Rafah (EMPH '12) offered students practical advice on pursuing careers in health technology, and discussed his



Health Tech Panel members Eddie Segal, Manik Bhat and Rami Rafah (EMPH '12)

perseverance in starting Spott3r, a wellness reimbursement company.

MPH graduates commonly pursue careers with government agencies, non-profits, hospitals, academic institutions, and consulting firms. Panelists emphasized how public health professionals are also primed to enter the booming health tech industry. Graduates can add value by providing expertise on the current regulatory environment, the policy process, and by effectively communicating the meaning of large-scale data. The panelists also mentioned the demand for strong project management skills, mastery of statistical software, and knowledge of research methods.

The panel broadened our perspective of the role that public health graduates can play in shaping the future of our healthcare system. Our hope is for other HPM students to plan events that will enhance in-class learning and serve to connect students, faculty, and professionals in unique and interesting ways.

The organization and planning for the Health Tech Panel took place over the course of a month. After deciding upon the topic and guiding questions for the event, we contacted our PDP advisor, Paul Thurman. Professor Thurman served as our faculty mentor and champion for the event. In addition, we partnered with Ben DeCoudres, our Research Methods Teaching Assistant. Ben drew upon his experience at a local healthcare innovation firm, HIT Lab, to help shape the panel content.

With Professor Thurman and Ben's support, we moved quickly to invite panelists. The CEOs were very receptive to our invitation, and excited to join in a dialogue with the Columbia community. The Department of Health Policy & Management and the Office of Student Affairs were instrumental in the event's success. The Future Health Leaders and AcademyHealth student groups co-sponsored the event and supported our marketing efforts. The joint planning team worked cohesively to promote the panel through social media, email announcements, and digital posters around campus. An audience of over 50 people gathered in Hess Commons for the event.

Have an idea for a panel? See the sidebar on page 10: Tips for Organizing a Panel Discussion

Navigating Your Healthcare Career: 5 Ways to Stand Out In a Post-Reform Era



Michael Sparer, Anu Gupta (EMPH '12), Alyse Forcellina, Eliza Ng (EMPH '05) and Tony Jenkins

On Wednesday, March 19, HPM and the Office of Development co-sponsored an alumni panel and networking reception at the Harmonie Club in midtown. The event, *Navigating Your Healthcare Career: 5 Ways to Stand out in Post-Reform Era*, was hosted by EMPH alum Eliza Ng ('05), who formed a panel of career and healthcare experts.

Dr. Sparer was on hand to give opening remarks, and the panel session concluded with a lively Q&A. Attendees included current students as well as HPM alumni from the NYC tri-state area. A post-event survey showed that attendees enjoyed the networking aspect of the event as well as the valuable content. "I

thought it was a wonderful event because it was relevant to my career today and provided insight that is often hard to get from colleagues," one attendee reported. Another individual remarked on the quality of the speakers, "Good panelists -- they were a nice mixture of professional backgrounds...They were serious and well spoken, thoughtful and interacted nicely with the crowd in real-time. I'd attend again."

Panelists for *Navigating Your Healthcare Career: 5 Ways to Stand out in Post-Reform Era* included:

Alyse Forcellina

Principal and Head US Leadership Strategy Services Practice
Egon Zehnder

Anu Gupta

Partner and Managing Director
The Boston Consulting Group

Tony Jenkins

Executive Coach
Catapult Coaching

Dr. Eliza Ng

Senior Medical Director
EmblemHealth

Tips for Organizing a Panel Discussion

By Amy Millette & Alexandra Luterek

- Identify a current and relevant topic that can engage multiple perspectives.
- Connect with fellow students, faculty, and student groups that share your interests.
- Leverage the personal and professional contacts of your co-organizers.
- Approach professionals and leaders whose work is of interest to you, even if you don't know them personally.
- Develop a solid idea and plan of action, then work with the department to coordinate logistics.

2014 HPM Lecture Series



Jordana Rosenberg, Bruce Vladeck and Amanda Hall at the Rosenberg Lecture on Healthcare Quality

The 2014 HPM Lecture Series kicked off in February with a talk by Christopher Koller, President of the Milbank Memorial Fund. Mr. Koller's talk, *Linking Evidence to Practice to Improve Population Health – Lessons from the States*, addressed the economic and qualitative impact that states can affect by overhauling their healthcare systems. After the presentation, Mr. Koller and the audience engaged in a lively discussion of current US healthcare trends.

In March, HPM hosted the inaugural Rosenberg Lecture on Healthcare Quality in honor of the late Dr. Stephen Rosenberg, a former HPM faculty member. Dr. Rosenberg's daughters Jordana and Amanda were on hand for the event as were many of Dr. Rosenberg's friends and former colleagues. Bruce Vladeck, Senior Advisor at Nexera, Inc, and a friend of Dr. Rosenberg, gave a lecture titled *Putting the Patient in Patient-Centered Care*, which discussed how the actualization of patient-centered care, noted by the Institute of Medicine in 2001 as one of the six essential dimensions of a high-quality health system, is still a long way off.

HPM's Goals, Be a Part of the Progress

The nation is in the midst of a critical conversation about the future of our health and healthcare system. Our role at HPM is to be a significant part of that discussion. We have the largest teaching program in the Mailman School and our alumni manage and lead health systems in New York, across the country and around the world. Our faculty produces an extraordinary range of influential research, which both examines and evaluates the health system we have today and leads in thinking about future health systems.

Here are some of our goals:

- Establish a Food Policy Center that will confront the global obesity epidemic
- Expand the Better Health Systems Initiative to work with diplomats and health officials on the overlap between international diplomacy and health system reform
- Establish a research cluster that focuses on management and healthcare reform
- Expand our work in implementation and systems science
- Grow our non-degree management executive education programs to help meet the nation's need for well-trained healthcare leaders

HPM needs resources to achieve our goals. That begins with a new physical space to enable us to hire additional scholars and create a home for the exciting new programs we envision. Plans to create this new space for HPM are already underway. The fourth floor of the Allan Rosenfield Building (722 W 168th Street) will be renovated to accommodate our expansion. The new space will enable growth and enhance collaboration and scholarship, while also providing an appealing educational environment, all of which will help us maintain our place among the best Health Policy and Management programs in the country.

We need your help!

Be a part of HPM in any one of the following ways:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| • Host an Event | Donate |
| • Sponsor a Lecture | HPM Supporter \$100+ |
| • Host a Consulting Workshop | HPM Friends \$500+ |
| • Supervise a Practicum Intern | HPM Leaders \$1,000+ |
| • Volunteer as a Mock Interviewer | HPM Visionaries \$5,000+ |
| • Join the HPM LinkedIn Group | HPM Donor Wall \$25,000 |

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To support HPM's work and to learn more please visit our website:
<http://bit.ly/HPMcampaign>

HPM Highlights



Vincent Santana (EMPH '10)

Andrew Wang (FTM '10) recently co-authored a paper about medication adherence among veterans at the VA health system. It was published this past September in *Psychiatric Services*. He was also the first author on an article in the *Milbank Quarterly* regarding the effects of SES upon prevention of colorectal cancer (September, 2012).

Ingrid Edshteyn (EMPH '15), a Preventive Medicine physician, PGY2, at Yale-Griffin Hospital has recently been elected to the Executive Board of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine. She has embraced Preventive and Lifestyle Medicine as it encompasses both disease prevention and health promotion for individual patients and populations. Her commitments include the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center and Griffin's Weight Management and Wellness Center, where she is developing a model for the clinical integration of a scalable lifestyle program.

Recent PTM graduate **Kristine Kulage** (PTM '14) completed an independent study during her spring 2013 semester which resulted in a first-authored, peer-reviewed manuscript published by the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. The article "How Will DSM-5 Affect Autism Diagnosis? A Systematic Literature Review and Meta-analysis," appeared in the February 2014 issue.

In December, **Vincent Santana** (EMPH '10) received a 2013 Latino Trendsetter Award recognizing the leadership and dedication he has exhibited—both personally and professionally—in the Latino community.

In March, **Lee Eisenberg** (EMPH '05) and **Eliza Ng** (EMPH '05) gathered members of their class together for a mini-reunion in Hess Commons. They organized the event in part to lay the groundwork for greater philanthropic connections for the school.

Congratulations to **Naomi Kruger** (FTM '14) and **Ruchit Kumbhani** (FTM '14) who received the Foster G. McGaw Scholarship Award and **Lindsay Knable** (FTM '14) and **Emily Sarokhan** (CMPH '14) who received the Loewenstein Prize. **Gary Yu** (Biostatistics '14), HPM Exec TA and Excel/STATA workshop instructor, received the Bernard Challenor Spirit Prize.



Naomi Kruger (FTM '14), Ruchit Kumbhani (FTM '14) Dr. Michael Sparer, Lindsay Knable (FTM '14) and Emily Sarokhan (CMPH '14)

HPM students in the PTM and EMPH programs traveled to Cuba to learn about the Cuban healthcare system. Trip participants included **Maria Forero** (EMPH '14), **Casey Garza** (PTM '15), **Nadia Laniado** (EMPH '14), **Sharon Leung** (EMPH '14), **Sarah Lewis** (EMPH '14), **Douglas Pollack** (EMPH '14), **Veeral Sheth** (EMPH '14), and **Emily Dayton** (PTM '15).

Carmen Dominguez-Rafer (EMPH '99), MD, MPH, is the recipient of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM) Excellence in Education Award presented by Paul Gordon, MD, Chair of the STFM Communications Committee.



Case Challenge judges John S. Winkleman and Kirk Drees with the first place teams

Congratulations to the Winners of the Spring Case Challenge

First Place Teams

EMPH Consulting

Advised by Prof. Tom D'Aunno
Sharon Deans (EMPH '15), Captain
Ana Mendez (EMPH '15)
Tracy McDaniel (EMPH '14)
Annabelle Zaratzian (EMPH '14)

RJ2Y

Advised by Prof. Meg Fitzgerald
Jennifer Lee (ACCL '14), Captain
Zhicheng (Ray) Qiu (GPH '14)
Yubin Sohn (ACCL '14)
Yiwei Gu (EPI '14)
Jessica Ken (EPI '15)

Second Place Teams

Mailmen

Advised by Greg Freyer
Erika Eitland (EHS '15), Captain
Madeleine Hopson (EHS '15)
Dan Roskowski (SMS '15)

Insight

No Adviser
Josh Ostapchuk (CMPH '15), Captain
Whitney Blanco (CMPH '15)
Elaine Duran (CMPH '15)

Best Individual Presenter

Erika Eitland (EHS '15)
Team Mailmen

Best Question-and-Answer Participant

Yubin Sohn (ACCL '14)
Team RJ2Y

Stay Connected!

SAVE THE DATES:

The Exchange: A Networking Night
Thursday, November 13, 2014

2015 HPM Healthcare Conference
Friday, April 17, 2015

ALUMNI:

Update your contact information via the HPM homepage:
www.emph.columbia.edu/alumni_update_form.html

Check out our EMPH student blog: www.columbiaemph.wordpress.com

Check the HPM website for future issues of *The Link* to keep up with what's happening in the department.

Contact HPM to share your updates.
Email Carey McHugh: ctm2101@columbia.edu



Rojean Kashanchi (FTM '15) Uchita Patel (FTM '15) Sara Weinstein (FTM '15) at the 2014 HPM Healthcare Conference

THE LINK

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