

New Concentration in Public Health Responds to Workforce Needs

According to Muskie Professor Gino Nalli, today's public health challenges, such as obesity, bio-terrorism, and the aging population, are increasing the need for highly trained professionals. In response, the Muskie School has been working with the USM School of Nursing and state agencies for several months to develop graduate-level training options. This fall, as an initial step, the School's Master of Science program in Health Policy & Management (HPM) will allow matriculated students to develop a concentration in public health.

"The Muskie School's national expertise in health policy as well as our hands-on experience with real-life issues, such as an immigrant health study conducted for the City of Portland last year, make us the ideal choice for offering this option," said Nalli, chair of the HPM program.

In addition to HPM's standard course of study, a concentration in public health will require three courses in evaluation, epidemiology and social and behavioral foundations. Students will also be required to complete their field experience and

capstone project in an area of public health. "This concentration will provide students with a set of public health competencies in epidemiology, biostatistics, community health, evaluation, social health as well as management, all within the context of public policy," said Nalli.

The HPM program prepares graduates to respond effectively to the rapidly changing policy and management challenges confronting health care systems in the 21st century. Working with nationally-recognized health policy research and management faculty, students in the HPM program build the necessary skills to analyze options, define strategies, and manage solutions to quality, access, and financing concerns encountered in the delivery of health services.

In 2006, the program will launch a five-course Certificate in Public Health – separate from the concentration in public health – that does not require matriculation in the master's program. For more information, contact Gino Nalli at gnalli@usm.maine.edu or (207) 780-4237.

Muskie School and Maine DHHS Training Focuses on Developmental Disabilities

"Loneliness is the only real disability" is a favorite expression of Dr. David Pitonyak, a consultant from Blacksburg, Virginia, who recently trained 37 Maine professionals working in the developmental disabilities field on developing positive approaches to difficult behaviors. The training was sponsored by the Muskie School's Center for Learning along with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services' Mental Retardation Services Division.

Through his Positive Approaches Institute (an eight-day program over four sessions), Dr. Pitonyak challenges many of the current practices in the developmental disability field dealing with difficult behavior from clients. Frequently, responses involve restriction and exclusion. Dr. Pitonyak asks participants to recognize that most challenging behavior occurs because people feel ignored, excluded, or marginalized and to respond creatively to promote positive behavior change. Instead of withdrawing support if someone misbehaves, Dr.

Pitonyak suggests adding support for the person and the people around him or her. "Because the program is spread over three months, participants can implement new techniques in the field, then come back and share results with the group," said Melanie Swift, a project specialist at the Center for Learning.



Dr. David Pitonyak (standing) works with participants during a break-out session.

This training was one of several professional development programs offered to agency staff in the behavioral health field by the School's Center for Learning, working in partnership with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

Upcoming Events

Tue Aug 2

**Farewell Reception
for Karl Braithwaite**

3:30 - 5:30 p.m.
Room 506, Law Building
USM Portland campus

Tue Sep 6

**Fall Semester
Begins**

**Thu - Fri
Oct 6 - 7**

National Training Course

"Resolving Land Disputes"
presented by the
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
and the Consensus
Building Institute

USM Stone House
Conference Center

**Mon - Tue
Oct 17 - 18**

**USM Muskie School's
1st Annual Forum for
Health Care Leaders**

"Health Care Quality
and Performance ...
Everyone's Watching"

USM Stone House
Conference Center



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE

School Presents October Forum for Health Care Leaders

Measures of quality and performance are increasingly used to scrutinize health care organizations. Clinical supervisors, physicians and managers must understand and be able to respond to this trend. At the Muskie School's 1st Annual Forum For Health Care Leaders, "Health Care Quality and Performance...Everyone's Watching," attendees will learn about current trends and initiatives, develop an understanding of the importance of leadership and teams, and learn strategies for quality improvement and performance management.

The forum will be held October 17 - 18 at Stone House Conference Center in Freeport, Maine. The registration fee is \$300 for the first attendee from an organization and \$250 for each additional attendee from the same organization. Attendance is limited to 75. For more information, contact Norma Charrette, (207) 780-5892, normaj@usm.maine.edu. This forum is presented in partnership with USM's Division of Community and Professional Education.

Cutler Institute Staff Central to National Conference

Staff from the Muskie School's Cutler Institute for Child and Family Policy will be moderating numerous panel presentations at the 2005 Meeting of States and Tribes, "Cultivating Change: Strategies for Improving Outcomes in Child Welfare," in Washington, D.C., August 23 - 25. For several months, the National Child Welfare Resource Center within the Cutler Institute has been helping to organize the event, which is sponsored by the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The conference will explore strategies for improving child welfare and highlight state and tribal initiatives to improve practice, advance policy, augment resources, and build infrastructure. Organizers expect to draw over 400 staff from all 50 state child welfare agencies, state court representatives, tribal staff and federal government staff. Attending the conference from the Cutler Institute are Lynda Arnold, Susan Kanak, Steve Preister, Kris Sahonchik and Peter Watson.

Online Journal Features Nutrition Case Study

A team from the Muskie School, the USM Department of Sports Medicine and the Maine Bureau of Health will publish preliminary observations from a project to study teen food choices in school. The case study will be included in the December 2005 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's online journal, "Preventing Chronic Disease" (www.cdc.gov/pcd).

The article describes the results of working with seven public high schools in Maine to provide healthy food options in vending machines and in "a la carte" programs. "This intervention is based on the premise that a healthy school nutrition environment will assist students in achieving and maintaining healthy weights," said Anne-Marie Davee, one of the case study authors. Other authors include: Lori Kaley from the Muskie School; Janet Whatley Blum, Rachel Devore and Christina M. Beaudoin from USM's Department of Sports Medicine; and Janet L. Leiter and Debra A. Wigand from the Maine Bureau of Health.

National Land Use Training Offered This Fall

This fall, the Muskie School will again be hosting the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Consensus Building Institute's national course on "Resolving Land Use Disputes." The two-day training, which attracted participants from four states and Canada in 2004, will be held October 6 - 7 at USM's Stone House Conference Center in Freeport. If interested, contact Professor Jack Kartez at 780-5389.

Staff News

On July 7, **Cathy Baron** was honored at a reception to celebrate her retirement from the Muskie School following 29 years of service. Upon her retirement, Cathy was the Director of Finance and Administration for the Cutler Institute for Child and Family Policy (CICFP).



L to R: Freda Bernotavicz, Andy Coburn, Cathy Baron, and Helaine Hornby (former CICFP director)

Freda Bernotavicz, director of the Institute for Public Sector Innovation, will be giving a presentation on August 9 at the 2005 National Summit on Recruitment and Retention of Social Services Professionals organized by the Performance Institute in Arlington, Virginia. The half-day session is entitled "Chickens and Eggs: Building a system to support a high performance workforce."

Carlene Goldman, the School's Director of Student Services, retired in July having worked closely with Muskie School graduate students and alumni for 17 years.

On July 15 and 16, Professor **Jack Kartez** and **Jennifer Hutchins**, Communications and Outreach Coordinator, conducted workshops for the Maine Municipal Leadership Program, jointly presented by the School and the Maine Municipal Association.

Erica Hansen King, coordinator at the Institute for Public Sector Innovation, will be presenting at the American Corrections Association's National Conference in Baltimore, Maryland in August. The session, entitled "Linking Girls in The Community," will describe Maine's efforts in juvenile corrections to develop gender responsive service and support alternatives for girls.

USM Muskie School Annual Fund

Last month marked the start of the 2005-06 USM Annual Fund. Gifts specifically designated for the Muskie School will support the student scholarship program. "As we build these funds and seek outside support," said Sue Ward-Diorio, development officer, "it is important to show solid support from our faculty and staff. I hope everyone will consider supporting Muskie students through the Annual Fund." In August, Muskie staff will receive a letter about how to make a gift through payroll deduction. Contact Sue Ward-Diorio at (207) 228-8164 or sdiorio@usm.maine.edu with questions.