

California Medical Leadership Forum for Public Health/Preventive Med

31st Meeting; 5th using Video (Zoom, Courtesy of CAPM)

Tuesday, June 8, 2021, 8:00-9:30 am PT

MINUTES

This meeting CAPM's Zoom account. A link was sent.

1. Zoom Arrivals and Roll Call by Institution, with Introductions of Newcomers and Guests

CAPM: Mark Horton (Chair), Ron Hattis (Secretary), Don Lyman
ACPM (American College of Preventive Medicine): Melissa Ferrari
CMA: Yvonne Choong
Northstate Univ.: Davinder Sandhu
CA Health Sci. Univ.: Sara Goldgraben
Western Univ.: Maryam Othman
USC: Howard Hu (Presenter), Jo Marie Reilly
UCSD: Margaret Ryan

2. Minutes of March 9, 2021 Meeting

These had previously been shared with all who spoke at the meeting. They were sent out with this meeting's announcement. There were no additions or corrections. The Chair determined that they were approved.

3. Reports from Any Members Who Will Be Leaving the Call Early

There were no requests to report early.

4. Today's Special Topic: Research studies from the USC Department of Preventive Medicine, Relating to COVID and to Social Determinants of Health: Howard Hu, Chair, and Jo Marie Reilly

Ron Hattis made a brief introduction.

Dr. Howard Hu, reporting from a visit to Ann Arbor, MI, described the history and expansion of his department, which began about 35 years ago, mostly at the initiative of cancer epidemiologists at USC who helped found the Norris Comprehensive Cancer Research Center. Howard has been the Chair since 2020. Immediate predecessors Jonathan Samet and Tom Valente were regular participants in this Forum. The faculty totals 113, of whom 51 are tenured or on a tenure track; the rest are clinical researchers. Formerly overwhelmingly male, the faculty are now 70% female. There are three Vice-Chairs, including a new position for Research, which will be held by Chanita Hughes-Halbert for Research, arriving in July from the University of South Carolina. The 6 divisions are Bioinformatics, Biostatistics, Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics, Disease Prevention Policy and Global Health, Environmental Health, and Behavioral Research. There are three research institutes, for Global Health, Behavioral Prevention Research, and Addiction Science. The department includes 13 research centers, mostly supported

by NIH grants, including one on pandemics, and a number of research labs. Among Preventive Medicine departments nationally, USC is second in NIH funding (about \$54 million, which is equivalent to the top ten schools of public health). Additional funding is obtained from the state, L.A. County, and various health agencies. The department is research-intensive and very dependent on “soft money.”

The department operates the L.A. County Cancer Surveillance Program, funded by the National Cancer Institute of NIH. This is a population-based cancer registry for the county, which is a valuable source of data (especially because of the diverse population) utilized for large cancer research studies and training. The USC Center for Genetic Epidemiology operates the Multiethnic Cohort Study, with a database of some 220,000 mostly minority people, in collaboration with the University of Hawaii, and is a source of risk information for genetic associations of cancer and other chronic diseases. The Center for Gene Ontology Consortium is part of an international program in its 20th year, probing how genes function including molecular and cellular pathways. The effects of COVID on cells is one of the studied topics. The Institute for Health Promotion and Addiction studies tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and other substances, and utilizes “network science” to investigate the role of human interactions in addiction. This institute works with 71 faculty from multiple departments of USC. The Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center is a leader in air pollution research around the world. Examples of its areas of research have been the impact of air pollution on childhood asthma, and more recently, the effects of wildfires on health. The Institute on Inequalities in Global Health has a focus on human rights and has collaborations in Africa and the Asian Pacific Rim. The Department of Preventive Medicine is also an important source of university training, with about 400 undergraduate students participating, and over 500 graduate students obtaining various master’s (including MPH) and doctoral degrees, including dual degrees.

Dr. Jo Marie Reilly a joint member of the Departments of Preventive Medicine and of Family Medicine, then described the dual MD-MPH program, which is 9 years old and involves 5 years of training. Most of the participating medical students take the MPH after the third or fourth year of medical school, and no tuition is charged for the extra year. An attempt to incorporate everything in just four years proved too difficult for both students and faculty. Over the years, there has been an 8-fold increase in medical students choosing this path (about 16 annually), following a nationwide trend (430% increase over the past 8 years), that Dr. Reilly co-authored a paper on earlier this year in Public Health Reports. About 70% of physicians with dual degrees obtain residency training in primary care specialties (75% if OB-GYN is included). About 40% are under-represented minority students. There has also been an increase in medical students, including those not in the dual degree program, choosing population-based studies as their mandatory research projects. Some of these have been group “capstone” community-based projects, with examples including firearm violence and the legislature, health care disparities in community surrounding the Keck School of Medicine, and COVID vaccine access for

L.A. low-income and minority communities. Some students have gone to Sacramento and met with state legislators on health care bills. The Department is currently reviewing alumni data to find out how physicians with the dual degree have utilized the extra training in their careers.

Howard Hu finished the presentation with information about the COVID Research Center. Aspects studied include risks for severe illness, with advice to the county health department on where the epidemic seemed to be going; the concurrent epidemic of epidemic misinformation and how to disrupt it with social networking; disparities in COVID infection associated with racial/ethnic groups and the relationship to type of employment; the potential to utilize drive-through testing sites as also vaccination sites; and the use of arts and trusted sources of information to spread accurate vaccine information in the Latino community. A number of ongoing projects include among others antigen testing for surveillance in schools, beginning studies on post-COVID syndromes, and cellular and antibody immunity to the vaccines against various variants over time.

The department name is changing, with the leading proposal being Department of Population and Public Health Services. There are advocates for keeping Preventive Medicine in the title, and a final decision has not been reached yet. The department is continuing to grow.

Discussion: Mark Horton asked about the increase in opioid overdose mortality during the COVID pandemic. Howard Hu noted that this has been especially severe among African Americans, who already had high mortality from the virus. Study is not complete on this issue. Ron Hattis expressed the general feeling of high respect for the overwhelming scope of the department, and noted that one future area of development could be a Preventive Medicine residency program. Mark also noted that none of the dual degree students underwent Preventive Medicine residencies elsewhere (even though an MPH gives partial credit). Jo Marie mentioned that a USC Family Medicine residency has just been reestablished after a gap of a couple of years, and Ron noted that there have been joint Family and Preventive Medicine residencies at other schools. Howard formerly headed the Harvard Occupational Medicine residency, and mentioned that one can find employment in that field without such training. For Preventive Medicine, he said that funding is “sparse.” (See also agenda item 6.) Mark thanked Howard and Jo Marie on behalf of the Forum for their important and impressive presentations. Howard will send the pdf file with slides, for distribution.

5. Funding Challenges Attempts to Obtain State, Federal Funding for Preventive Medicine Residencies: Mark Horton, Linda Hill

Linda Hill has been a champion for efforts to increase federal funding for Preventive Medicine training. Currently, a small amount of funding is available from HRSA but not enough to assist all residency programs nationwide. Recently, a state budget surplus has

stirred hopes of getting state subsidies, and Mark Horton commended Linda for developing a briefing sheet and a proposal for \$10 million annually in the state budget, to assist in funding up to 66 residents in Preventive and Occupational Medicine. Mark said that over the last 10-12 years there was an erosion of public health staffing, including physicians, and this proposal would help restore public health medical leadership both in public health departments and in health care systems. Mark obtained “rapid action” approval to represent the California Academy of Preventive Medicine, and approached staff of Senator Pan and Assembly Member McCarty, but it was late in the process of “May Revise” budget approval. Mark hopes to make further contacts with Senator Pan’s office looking to the future.

Ron Hattis said that the most effective action would be to get an item into the Governor’s budgets, as the Legislature only is able to make minor modifications. Ron also noted that Gov. Brown had made drastic cutbacks in public health during the Great Recession deficits, and that most of these had not been restored. As a result, local and state health departments did not have “surge capacity” to divert to the COVID pandemic. Instead, staff normally working on usual communicable diseases were diverted, leaving gaps, and partly as a result, there has been a large increase in sexually transmitted infections.

Howard Hu said that the Schools of Public Health have a group similar to this Forum, currently chaired by Dean Michael Lu of UC Berkeley, which is trying to raise private funding for public health. Howard suggested that we collaborate and will forward information to Ron.

6. Medical Schools and Prevention/Public Health - Need More Information to Update Spreadsheet Started 2017: Ron Hattis (handout, Excel spreadsheet)

Columns at far right have been added for social determinants of health and dealing with racial inequities. School representatives were asked to check their school’s row; there is much incomplete information, including little or no info yet from most of newest schools added (rows highlighted). Sarah Goldgraben said that she has completed the row for California Health Sciences University. Dr. Sandhu said we should soon have the information from Northstate.

7. COVID-19 Updates: Mark Horton and General Discussion

Mark reported that member nations of the G7 have agreed to send COVID vaccine to countries unable to afford it. Ron Hattis mentioned that the latest CDC guidelines on masks have caused some confusion. Ron also has heard that Trump and Republican candidates plan to attack Anthony Fauci in the 2022 campaigns.

8. American College of Preventive Medicine

Melissa Ferrari has provided us with our first representation from ACPM in a long time. She joined ACPM in November of last year as Vice-President for Membership and Operations. CEO Donna Grande told her about our meetings. She considers us (and

CAPM) to be part of ACPM's "constituency," and wanted to join our meeting and learn about our engagement. Ron Hattis warmly welcomed her and mentioned that we had not had ACPM representation for some time.

9. California Medical Association

Yvonne Choong reported that CMA will be developing material on the major issues that will be brought to the House of Delegates (HOD). Health equity and the corporatization of medicine. New policy on climate change has been established on the basis of recent resolutions, and will not be one of the major topics at the HOD. Ron Hattis and Don Lyman expressed appreciation to Yvonne for her staff support work to the CMA Council on Science and Public Health (CSPH), and informed her that the California Academy of Preventive Medicine has nominated a new CSPH member, Health Officer Aimee Sisson, to replace Rob Oldham who was "promoted" to the Board of Trustees, and has endorsed continuation of CSPH members Don Lyman and Jessica Nunez de Ybarra..

10. Updates from Schools of Medicine

Northstate: Dr. Davinder Sandhu, appointed as the representative by the dean, reported that he just joined the school a couple of weeks ago, but that the medical school was founded in 2015, preceded by the Schools of Pharmacy and of Psychology; and next year the entering class will be increased to 110 students. Family Medicine is a major emphasis, and an extraordinary percentage of graduates, 57%, have been going into that specialty. Dr. Sandhu plans to study how that came about. In the future, there may also be a dental school. Currently, students work at a Kaiser hospital but there are thoughts of starting a new hospital.

Western University: Maryam Othman reported that a new dual DO-MPH program will start next year, in cooperation with Claremont Graduate Schools. The plans were finalized only a week ago.

California Health Sciences University College of Osteopathic Medicine: The first entering class has completed its first year and will be returning in July. The next entering class will have 120 students. There is also a new Pharmacy school.

11. Next Virtual Meeting: September 14, 2021

Topics suggested for consideration include cybersecurity at healthcare institutions, and equity issues related to COVID. (A later suggestion was to discuss heat emergencies in view of climate change and record-breaking temperatures in California.)

Submitted by Ronald Hattis, Secretary

Approved at September 14, 2021 meeting