Welcome to the first edition of the Center for Aging and Population Health's CAPH Telegraph. Our research focus on healthy aging, longevity, and prevention of disability has a long history in the Department of Epidemiology. The dense concentration of older adults in Western Pennsylvania has provided a rich environment to conduct public health research. This serves as a platform for training future scientists.

A major emphasis of CAPH research has been and will continue to be the maintenance of function and prevention of disability. Our experienced investigators and staff have advanced technical skills, positioning us as one of the foremost resources, both nationally and internationally, in conducting population-based research in aging. The faculty of CAPH has active collaborations with many investigators in Departments outside of the Graduate School of Public Health including geriatric medicine, endocrinology, rheumatology, neurology, psychiatry, nephrology, cardiology, dentistry, physical therapy, and others. Our resources include sophisticated facilities and equipment measuring cross-sectional differences and longitudinal change in risk factors and disease outcomes in each domain of aging that affects cognitive and physical function.

Our research findings have changed the expectations for aging and have identified new targets for intervention. We have shown that aging is a process of adaptation. There is a tremendous capacity to respond to lifestyle changes. Medications such as statins, antihypertensives, and antiresorptives for bone prevent heart attack, stroke and osteoporotic fracture. Efforts in prevention have great potential to continue to improve quality of our later years.

As Director of CAPH, I seek to bring all of our resources to bear on these important issues. Our work is evident, but I hope you share in my optimism as I look to the future. On behalf of my Co-Directors, Drs. Jane Cauley and Steven Albert, and the dedicated, talented faculty and staff of CAPH, we look forward to facing the challenges of our aging population through cutting edge science and research at the Center for Aging and Population Health.

Anne B. Newman, MD MPH
Ladies Hospital Aid Society Gala Benefits GSPH Aging Research

The Westin Convention Center Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh was the place to be seen on August 28, 2010, for the Ladies Hospital Aid Society’s (LHAS) annual fundraising gala, “The Best is Yet to Come!” The gala benefitted research in aging and longevity at the Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH).

Researchers at GSPH are actively engaged in initiatives—from basic research to understand the aging process at the chromosomal level to health policy changes that affect elders—that are aimed at improving longevity and quality of life. GSPH Dean Donald S. Burke, MD, announced at the gala that all funds raised from event will support a new, interdisciplinary program called Innovations in Aging. The program will offer pilot grants to facilitate collaborative research across the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

The LHAS recognized the research excellence of four GSPH faculty members by naming them Honored Guests for the evening. They are Anne B. Newman, MD, MPH, Professor and Chair of the Department of Epidemiology, and Director of the Center for Aging and Population Health (CAPH); Jane A. Cauley, DrPH, Professor of Epidemiology Vice-Chair for Research, and Co-Director of CAPH; Steven M. Albert, PhD, Professor of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, Associate Chair for Research and Science and Co-Director of CAPH, and Lewis H. Kuller, MD, DrPH, Distinguished University Professor of Public Health and past Chair of the Department of Epidemiology. Research into human aging and longevity conducted at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health targets optimal rather than usual aging. GSPH researchers are actively engaged in studying such topics as healthy aging in place, Alzheimer’s disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, menopause, osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.

Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders (LIFE Study)

As the life expectancy of older Americans increases, prevention of age related physical decline and disability has become an important public health priority. The LIFE Study is an opportunity to enhance the quality of life and promote independence in adults aged 70-89.

The LIFE Study is sponsored by the National Institute on Aging and partially funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This groundbreaking research project takes place at the University of Pittsburgh Center for Aging and Population Health, as well as 7 other universities across the U.S. Anne Newman, MD MPH is the CAPH Principal Investigator.

The LIFE Study is a Phase 3 multi-center randomized controlled trial being conducted to compare a moderate-intensity physical activity program to a successful aging health education program in 1,600 sedentary older adults (200 per site). The proposed trial will provide definitive evidence regarding whether lifestyle modification interventions are effective and practical for preventing major mobility disability.
Study of Testosterone and Men’s Health (T Trial)

The Center for Aging and Population Health has received funding to participate in the largest national study to date on the effects of testosterone treatment in men 65 and older, to find out if correcting low levels of the male hormone improves physical and mental health. The Testosterone Trial (T Trial), a multicenter study sponsored by the National Institute on Aging (NIA), will explore whether hormone therapy can improve diminished physical function, low vitality, impaired cognition, reduced sexual function, cardiovascular disease and anemia—all of which have been linked to low levels of testosterone. The CAPH Principal Investigator is Jane Cauley, DrPH.

T Trial investigators will screen testosterone levels of men 65 and older who have one of the following conditions: anemia, decreased physical function, low vitality, impaired cognition or reduced sexual function. Men with low levels of testosterone will be randomly assigned to receive a testosterone or placebo gel to be applied to either the torso, abdomen or upper arms. Serum testosterone will be measured monthly for the first three months and then every four months for up to a year. Participants will be tested on a range of measures to evaluate physical function, vitality, cognition, cardiovascular disease and sexual function. The men will be tracked for two years to see if the group getting testosterone has significant improvement in vitality and well-being. It may also offer some early signals on whether testosterone gel could put men at increased risk of prostate cancer, since the hormone has been linked in the past to that malignancy.

Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly (ASPREE)

Aspirin is known to prevent heart attacks and strokes in people with established heart disease—benefits which clearly outweigh any associated risks like bleeding, but the role of aspirin in people without a history of cardiovascular disease is less certain. Anne Newman, MD MPH, CAPH Principal Investigator, has been awarded funds from the National Institute on Aging to participate in the, “Aspirin in Reducing Events in the Elderly Study (ASPREE).” ASPREE is designed to assess whether among moderate risk individuals, the potential beneficial effects of aspirin in preventing death, cardiovascular disease, dementia and disability outweigh the known harmful effects on stroke and GI bleeds.

ASPREE is a randomized double-blind placebo-controlled trial of aspirin among healthy people without cardiovascular disease to determine whether daily low dose aspirin (100 mg enteric coated) extends the duration of disability-free life and whether the benefits of aspirin (particularly the prevention of heart disease, stroke and vascular dementia) outweigh the risks of severe bleeding in this age group.

The ASPREE study will enroll 6,500 healthy individuals age 70 and over in the U.S. and another 12,500 in Australia. Up to 800 of these participants will come from the Pittsburgh area. All eligible participants will be randomly assigned to take either low dose aspirin or placebo daily for about 5 years. Participants will receive initial measurements on specific health markers, as well as functional and cognitive ability, and changes will be monitored throughout the study.

www.caph.pitt.edu
The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has awarded a 5-year grant to CAPH Director, Anne B. Newman, MD MPH, "Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research Center." Previously known as ‘The Center for Healthy Aging’ (CHA), the project was developed to meet the needs of older people in Allegheny County and the surrounding regions of southwestern Pennsylvania (PA) by stressing whole person prevention strategies (recognizing multiple risks and multiple conditions) and ten key risk factors that have a strong evidence base for the prevention of highly prevalent chronic disease.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has awarded a 2-year grant to CAPH Co-Director, Steven M. Albert, PhD MSPH, “Comparative Effectiveness of Community-Based Falls Prevention in Pennsylvania.” The project will focus on preventing falls among older adults through usual care, an education program, and an education-plus-exercise program. The project is part of a larger group of Prevention Research Centers focusing on preventing, diagnosing and monitoring health conditions in community settings.

The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases has awarded CAPH Co-Director, Jane Cauley, DrPH, funding to conduct an, “Epidemiological Study of Bone Marrow Fat and Osteoporosis.” This is a cross-sectional study to evaluate the relationship between bone marrow fat (BMF) and various skeletal outcomes such as bone mineral density, bone geometry and bone turnover markers. The study seeks to improve our understanding of the connection of BMF with bone density, geometry and turnover by recruiting 150 men who are currently participating in the Osteoprototic Fractures in Men (MrOS) study at the Pittsburgh clinic site.
Faculty: [http://www.hr.pitt.edu/affirmativeAction/positionListing.asp](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/affirmativeAction/positionListing.asp)

**Assistant Professor of Epidemiology** Position #0127986 [http://www.hr.pitt.edu/affirmativeAction/viewPosition.asp?posID=48229](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/affirmativeAction/viewPosition.asp?posID=48229)

The Department of Epidemiology invites applications for a full-time non-tenure stream Assistant Professor position, requiring a doctoral degree in public health, or a related field, as well as experience and training relevant to directing programs in promotion, community-behavioral intervention, aging and prevention programs. The successful candidate will be part of a research and teaching group involved in the promotion of healthy aging and the prevention of disease through community intervention programs.

**Associate/Full Professor, Aging Epidemiology** Position #0117715 [http://www.hr.pitt.edu/affirmativeAction/viewPosition.asp?posID=47319](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/affirmativeAction/viewPosition.asp?posID=47319)

The Department of Epidemiology invites applications for a full-time tenure stream Associate or Full Professor position, with a doctoral degree and training in the epidemiology of aging, with research experience including but not limited to the epidemiology of healthy aging, mobility, and neuroimaging, or aging and global health.

Staff: [http://www.hr.pitt.edu/employment/default.htm](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/employment/default.htm)

**Senior Statistician** Position # 0127827

The person in this position will serve as biostatistician in support of several large observational longitudinal cohort studies and intervention studies on aging. Duties include collaboration with scientist investigators, coordination with data managers in creation of cross-sectional and longitudinal analytic datasets, design of statistical analyses for analysis plans and grants, conduct statistical analyses, present results to research teams and preparation of manuscripts for publication.

**Data Manager** Position # 0115523

This individual will provide senior level research support as data manager and will serve as a statistical assistant. Duties include organizing data collection systems, developing quality control procedures, and conducting statistical analyses.

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**Joni Vander Bilt, MPH**

Joni Vander Bilt, MPH, recently joined CAPH as part of the CDC Prevention Research Center staff. She is working with the Arthritis Foundation to offer exercise and the 10 Keys program to various sites around Allegheny County, PA. She has a background in public health and has been involved in a variety of health specialty areas, including working in programs focused on addictive behaviors at Harvard Medical School, specifically gambling addiction and a substance abuse program for homeless individuals. She moved to Pittsburgh in 1999, and has been a senior research associate at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in a project offering therapy for mood and anxiety disorders, and most recently in a community study examining the risk and preventive factors for memory problems and dementia. She looks forward to working with the communities involved with the CAPH CDC Prevention Center.
To learn more about how you can support the Center for Aging and Population Health and gift options, please contact Apryl Eshelman, Director of Development of the Graduate School of Public Health, at (412) 624-5639 or Eshelman@pitt.edu.

Please make your tax deductible gift payable to the “University of Pittsburgh” and note “CAPH” in the memo line, then mail to:

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