

**For immediate release**

**Contact: Michael Broder, (510) 642-9572, [mbroder@berkeley.edu](mailto:mbroder@berkeley.edu) or  
Linda Anderberg, (510) 643-4707, [landerberg@berkeley.edu](mailto:landerberg@berkeley.edu)**

## **UC BERKELEY HONORS FOUR PUBLIC HEALTH HEROES**

**Epidemiologist Who Helped Discover HIV, Leader in the Fight Against Tobacco,  
Adolescent Health Expert, and Global Humanitarian Nonprofit to Receive Awards**

SAN FRANCISCO—On April 2, 2008, the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley, will honor three individuals and one organization at the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Public Health Heroes Awards Ceremony, which will be held at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco. **Dr. Donald P. Francis** will receive the International Hero award for his many contributions to global health, including his leadership in the eradication of smallpox, the discovery of HIV, and the control of Ebola hemorrhagic fever. **Dr. David A. Kessler** will receive the National Hero award for his leadership and courage in challenging the U.S. tobacco industry. **Dr. Barbara Stagers** will receive the Regional Hero award for her leadership in promoting adolescent health, particularly among high-risk, urban, and minority youth. **International Medical Corps**, a global, humanitarian, non-profit organization, will receive the Organizational Hero award for advancing public health in the face of global shortages in the health care workforce, particularly in the world's most poverty-stricken, remote, and dangerous environments.

Francis's award will be presented by former CDC director **Dr. William Foege**; Former Vice President **Al Gore** will present Kessler's award in absentia by video; Former

Assemblywoman **Wilma Chan** will present Stagers with her award; and **Dr. Mark Smolinski** of Google.org will present the award to the International Medical Corps.

The Public Health Heroes honor was established by the UC Berkeley School of Public Health to recognize innovative leaders who have made meaningful contributions to the protection and promotion of health. For information about the Public Health Heroes Awards Ceremony or to reserve seats, visit <http://www.publichealthheroes.org>.

“Our honorees are truly heroes who have gone to great lengths to advance the field of public health,” said Dean Stephen M. Shortell of the School of Public Health. “It is our privilege to pay tribute to individuals and organizations dedicated to eradicating disease and promoting health for all of us.”

### **International Hero Donald Francis**

As an infectious disease trained pediatrician and epidemiologist, Donald Francis has more than 30 years experience in epidemic control and vaccines. He spent 21 years working for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) focusing on vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, cholera, smallpox, and hepatitis B. He directed the World Health Organization's Smallpox Eradication Program in Sudan and U.P. State in Northern India. His hepatitis B vaccine work included Phase III trials among gay men in the United States and among infants born to carrier mothers in China. Francis was also a member of the WHO team investigating the world's first outbreak of Ebola virus in 1976. His work in retroviruses began at Harvard, where Francis received his doctorate.

Francis has worked on HIV/AIDS since its emergence in 1981. He initially directed the AIDS laboratory at the CDC and worked closely with the Institut Pasteur to identify the causative virus. Later, he spent almost seven years developing and assessing HIV prevention programs in the United States. Francis's early efforts to call attention to the threat of AIDS and warn of the inadequacy of the public health response were chronicled in *And the Band Played On*, journalist Randy Shilts's seminal account of the early years of the AIDS epidemic.

After his retirement from the CDC in 1992, he joined Genentech to spend his full time developing vaccines, while he also helped found what became the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative. With waning private sector interest in HIV vaccine development, Francis started a new company, VaxGen, to ensure that an HIV vaccine would be developed. In 2003, VaxGen completed the world's first Phase III trials of two candidate HIV vaccines in North America and Europe and in Thailand, respectively. Francis left VaxGen, where he had served as president, in early 2004 to cofound Global Solutions for Infectious Diseases and serves as its chairman and executive director.

### **National Hero David Kessler**

As commissioner of the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), David Kessler took a strong public position against the tobacco industry, advocating for FDA regulation of tobacco products. Appointed by President George Bush and reappointed by President Bill Clinton, Kessler served as FDA commissioner from November 1990 until

March 1997. His tenure at the FDA was marked by efforts to speed approval of drugs and devices, especially for serious and life-threatening conditions, and by nutrition labeling for food and regulations to restrict the marketing of tobacco to children. Kessler recounts the fight against the tobacco industry in his 2001 book, *A Question of Intent*.

Kessler has a wide range of experience in research, clinical medicine, education, administration, and the law. He received his J.D. degree from the University of Chicago Law School in 1978, and his medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 1979. He completed his internship and residency in pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. He was dean of the School of Medicine and vice chancellor for medical affairs at the University of California, San Francisco from 2003 to 2007. Prior to this appointment, he served for six years as dean of the Yale University School of Medicine.

From 1984 until his FDA appointment, he was the medical director of the Hospital of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York, where he held teaching appointments in the Department of Pediatrics and in the Department of Epidemiology and Social Medicine. From 1986 until 1990, Kessler also taught food and drug law at the Columbia University School of Law in New York. He was a consultant to the United States Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee from 1981 until 1984. Kessler has published numerous articles in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *JAMA*, and other major medical journals, and received many awards.

**Regional Hero Barbara Stagers**

Barbara Stagers is a nationally recognized authority on the medical, psychosocial and psychobiological needs of adolescents. Stagers can discuss such topics as eating disorders, developing/raising healthy adolescents, health care needs of adolescents, issues of diversity in adolescent health care, reproductive health issues of adolescents (i.e. sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancy), violence in adolescents, issues of the abused adolescent; adolescent suicide, substance abuse and mental health issues.

In 2002, Stagers cofounded the Faces for the Future internship program to inspire and support minority students who are interested in pursuing careers in health care. The program has had a 90 percent retention rate for its graduates and has shown great success in encouraging students to stay in school and to pursue a college education.

In 2005, Stagers unveiled a school-based health clinic at McClymonds High School in West Oakland. The Chappell Hayes Health Center is recognized as a national model for school reform to combat West Oakland's notorious levels of violence, homicide, abuse and dropout rates. A second and more expansive health clinic opened between Youth Uprising and Castlemont High School in East Oakland.

In addition to her many responsibilities, Stagers also runs the Outreach and Training Cores of the Center of Excellence in Nutritional Genomics of the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

She has received numerous awards, including the National Child Labor Committee Award, the National Violence Prevention Council Angel of Peace Award, the University of California, Berkeley, Peter E. Haas Public Service Award, and the UC Berkeley School of Public Health Alumna of the Year Award.

### **Organizational Hero International Medical Corps**

International Medical Corps (IMC) is a global, humanitarian, nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives and relieving suffering through health care training and relief and development programs. By offering training and health care to local populations and medical assistance to people at highest risk, and with the flexibility to respond rapidly to emergency situations, IMC rehabilitates devastated health care systems and helps bring them back to self-reliance.

IMC was founded by Dr. Robert Simon, who, as a young emergency-room physician at UCLA Medical Center, was moved to take action after reading of the tragic plight of the Afghan people as a result of the 1979 Soviet invasion and subsequent occupation. All but 200 of the country's 1,500 doctors had been executed, imprisoned, or exiled, and all relief agencies had been ordered out of the country, leaving ill and injured civilians, pregnant women and developing children with essentially nowhere to turn for basic health care.

Nancy A. Aosse joined International Medical Corps as president & CEO in 1986 and has led the organization since. By 1990, IMC had graduated more than 200 medics who

helped established 57 clinics and 10 hospitals in 18 provinces throughout rural Afghanistan—serving more than 50,000 patients per month.

International Medical Corps has gone on to provide life-saving care in more than 45 countries worldwide, responding to nearly every emergency in the last two decades. It deploys quickly in emergencies and then stays on to teach life-saving skills so that people locally can become self-reliant. Its training assures continuity and a new level of care for those impacted by conflict, tragedy and extreme poverty.

Over the years, International Medical Corps has responded to the world's most devastating man-made and natural disasters, including famine in Somalia, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, the Rwandan genocide, and atrocities against children in Sierra Leone. More recently, IMC was a first responder after the 2004 tsunami in southeast Asia, the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, responded domestically following Hurricane Katrina, and is among the dwindling number of humanitarian agencies still working in Darfur and Iraq.

### **Background**

The **Public Health Heroes** award was founded to honor pioneers working towards improved health for all and to raise awareness of the field of public health, a field in which many individuals and organizations work with dedication toward the greater good. Previous recipients of University of California, Berkeley, Public Health Hero awards have included actor Rob Reiner, who cofounded the I Am Your Child Foundation; U.N.

Millennium Project director Jeffrey Sachs; and *Rowe v. Wade* attorney Sarah Weddington.

Building on a campus tradition of pre-eminent interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scholarship, education, and public engagement that challenges conventional thinking, the **UC Berkeley School of Public Health** develops diverse leaders equipped to help solve the health challenges of the 21st century and beyond. The mission of the **UC Berkeley School of Public Health** is to conduct world class, rigorous research; apply knowledge to prevent disease and injury and promote the health of individuals and communities in California, the United States and the world; develop diverse leaders for professional and research careers through undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs; and enhance the knowledge and skills of the public health workforce through continuing education and technical assistance.

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