

## Bess Marcus, PhD, Appointed Senior Associate Dean for Public Health at UC San Diego

November 13, 2014 | Jackie Carr

**B**ess Marcus, PhD, has been appointed senior associate dean for Public Health with the UC San Diego School of Medicine. This new appointment recognizes the rapidly growing field of public health in academic medicine and its pivotal role in protecting and improving the health of individuals and communities through promotion of healthy lifestyles, research for disease and injury prevention, detection and control of infectious diseases and assessing hazardous environments.



Bess Marcus, PhD, senior associate dean for Public Health, UC San Diego School of Medicine.

Marcus will develop a Public Health Institute to serve as a home for all public health-oriented efforts at UC San Diego. This strategic role is designed to promote public health research and education activities across the campus, foster interdisciplinary conversations and collaborations, focus the need for resources and oversee public health degree offerings at UC San Diego.

“The ultimate goal of this new role and the Institute is to help people achieve healthier, happier lives,” said Marcus who also serves as chair of the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine. “The university wants its passionate and talented public health students to serve in the broader community where, mentored by our top-notch research faculty, they can help to implement evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention programs.”

“The field of public health is central to addressing some of the most pressing health issues we face today, such as rising health care costs and the need for greater prevention of disease and disability across the lifespan,” said David Brenner, MD, vice chancellor for UC San Diego Health Sciences and dean of

the School of Medicine. “We are fortunate to have Dr. Marcus in this leadership role and look forward to developing programs that will impact the health of our local communities.”

Marcus earned her MS and PhD degrees in clinical psychology from Auburn University, with a fellowship in Behavioral Medicine at Brown University. She has published more than 200 peer-reviewed articles and three books. Her colleagues have recognized her with numerous awards, including the “Women Who Mean Business” Award from the *San Diego Business Journal* and the UC San Diego Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action and Diversity Award.

For more than 25 years, Marcus has had continuous funding from the National Institutes of Health to conduct research aimed at promoting exercise adherence and understanding the acquisition and maintenance of exercise behavior. She developed and validated assessments for understanding the stages and processes of exercise behavior change and has also developed interventions to promote moderate-intensity physical activity in community, workplace, and primary care settings. Over the past 10 years her research has focused on increasing physical activity among underserved and vulnerable populations.

She has regularly participated in American Heart Association, American College of Sports Medicine, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institutes of Health panels, which have created recommendations and guidelines on the quantity and intensity of physical activity necessary for health benefits. She served on the Executive Committee for the Development of a National Strategic Plan for Physical Activity and she now serves on the Board of Directors for the National Physical Activity Plan Alliance.

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