The University of Michigan Regents, the Office of the President, the School of Public Health, and the Center for Global Health present:

Presentation of the Thomas Francis, Jr. Medal in Global Public Health to Alfred Sommer, M.D., M.H.S.

Thursday, November 4, 2010
2:00–4:00 p.m.
Ross School of Business, Blau Auditorium
Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr., University of Michigan director of the Poliomyelitis Vaccine Evaluation Center and the founding chair of epidemiology in the School of Public Health, directed the field studies of the Salk polio vaccine developed by Dr. Jonas Salk and his team at the University of Pittsburgh. Salk studied under Francis as a graduate student at the University of Michigan.

Francis designed and led an unprecedented $17.5 million nationwide field trial to test the vaccine. Conducted by a staff of more than 100 people from the University of Michigan, the year-long trial involved 1.8 million children in the U.S., Canada, and Finland and an enormous network of community volunteers. The results of the study were announced at Rackham Auditorium of the University of Michigan on April 12, 1955, and signaled an era of hope and success in combating infectious diseases and more broadly in the development of large-scale efforts for the good of society.

Francis also is remembered for first isolating influenza virus and for developing the first killed-virus flu vaccine—the technology still used in flu shots. Salk’s polio vaccine employs the same approach as Francis’ flu shot to develop immunity. Francis also mentored John Maassab, who, as a U-M epidemiology professor, developed the technology behind the nasal spray flu vaccine, employing attenuated live flu virus.

The University presented the Thomas Francis, Jr. Medal in Global Public Health for the first time on April 12, 2005 to Dr. William Foege on the 50th anniversary of Francis’ historic announcement. The medal periodically will be given to a recipient whose contributions have advanced global public health and helped to establish a healthier future for society.
FROM THE PRESIDENT

As an institution, the University of Michigan is dedicated to improving public health and welfare throughout the world. Today, as this planet becomes one large community, we face new global challenges and old enemies that require our continued vigilance and innovation.

We created the Thomas Francis, Jr. Medal in Global Public Health as a means to symbolize our University's commitment to advancing the health and wellbeing of the world's peoples. The medal is intended to recognize the extraordinary achievements and heroic efforts of people like Alfred Sommer and William Foege, who have done so much to improve public health.

The Thomas Francis, Jr. Medal also represents the steadfast commitment of the University of Michigan to improving global public health as it is conferred on other leaders in public health for their contributions to scientific discovery, public policy, effective action, or health promotion.

We would also hope this award will draw public attention to the many needs that still exist. Around the world, people still suffer needlessly from diseases that could be brought under control by vaccines, treatments, or better living conditions. The Thomas Francis, Jr. Medal represents our dedication to addressing the pressing needs of global public health, now and in the future.

Mary Sue Coleman
President
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE U-M CENTER FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

The University of Michigan Center for Global Health (CGH) seeks to improve health and to address health inequalities across the world through engagement in research, training, and action. By leveraging partnerships and encouraging the development of new approaches to solving the problems of chronic disease, infection, malnutrition, and environmental threats, the center seeks long-term solutions to improve health, particularly in the world’s low and medium-resourced regions.

The CGH, therefore, is privileged to join in honoring a man whose contribution matches so well with the center’s mission. Dr. Alfred Sommer’s work with vitamin A supplementation has saved millions from blindness and death by using the most rigorous science combined with public health advocacy, policy, diplomacy, and action.

Thanks to the work of pioneering giants of public health such as Dr. Sommer and Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr., for whom the medal we bestow today is named, the U-M CGH has an enlightened model of how to go about ameliorating the immense suffering from chronic disease in every corner of the world. What Dr. Francis, through his work with the Polio trials, and Dr. Sommer, with his tireless work on vitamin A supplementation, have shown us is that science is a powerful tool for improving human life.

Dr. Sommer continues to inspire us with his message that science must serve the public interest, and that scientists must be involved in understanding and shaping public policy. It is with similar goals that the U-M Center for Global Health works with nearly 200 faculty and students in more than 80 countries, who actively are engaged in pursuing the important work of ensuring public health equity.

Sofia Merajver, Director, Center for Global Health, Professor of Internal Medicine and of Epidemiology, Schools of Medicine and Public Health
FROM THE DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

It's fitting that one of the major buildings in the University of Michigan School of Public Health complex bears the name of Thomas Francis, Jr. Few people have done more to improve human health than Dr. Francis. One of the great physician-scientists of his generation, he not only oversaw the massive field trials for the Salk polio vaccine—an unprecedented public health challenge—but he also played a key role in the first mass influenza vaccinations in the United States, and he launched the historic Tecumseh Study, which revolutionized our understanding of both infectious and chronic disease. Thomas Francis, Jr. was truly a giant in our field, and his achievement is an inspiration to us all.

Alfred Sommer is another public health hero, and I am immensely proud that the University of Michigan has chosen to award him the Thomas Francis, Jr. Medal in Global Public Health. I can think of no more deserving recipient. Dr. Sommer's pathbreaking research into vitamin A deficiency has saved millions around the world from blindness and death. Like Thomas Francis, Jr., Dr. Sommer is an exemplary public health leader, whose scientific rigor and extraordinary compassion have inspired countless individuals—myself included.

The Francis Medal calls attention to the increasingly global nature of public health, and to the vast and interconnected health challenges that schools of public health, among others, must work to address. From infectious disease to malnutrition, to health care policy, chronic disease, and the very health of our planet, we face extraordinary challenges. Seeking remedies to such problems requires deliberate, concerted, substantial and often collective action. The Thomas Francis, Jr. Medal in Global Health reminds us that remedies may not easily be forthcoming, but they are within our reach if we can summon the generosity of spirit and the political will to pursue them.

As we celebrate the achievements of Drs. Francis and Sommer, then, let us rededicate ourselves to fulfilling their visions by committing our energies, talents and resources to working together to improve the welfare of our neighbors throughout the world. What better place to start than health?

Ken Warner, Dean, School of Public Health, and Avedis Donabedian Distinguished University Professor of Public Health
PROGRAM
Thursday, November 4, 2010

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  Blau Auditorium, Stephen M. Ross School of Business

Welcome
Kenneth Warner, Dean, School of Public Health, and Avedis Donabedian Distinguished University Professor of Public Health
Sofia Merajver, Director, Center for Global Health, Professor of Internal Medicine and of Epidemiology, Schools of Medicine and Public Health

Video Presentation
“The A Factor: Highlights”
Produced and provided by Steven C. F. Anderson, Anderson Productions Ltd.

Introductions and Remarks
President Mary Sue Coleman

Presentation of the Thomas Francis, Jr. Medal in Global Public Health and Introduction of the Medal Recipient and Keynote Speaker
President Mary Sue Coleman
Regent Julia Donovan Darlow

Keynote Address
“Vitamin A Deficiency, Health and Mortality”
Dr. Alfred Sommer

Panel Presentation and Discussion
Sofia Merajver (introductions and summary)
Ken Warner (moderator)
• Anil Deolalikar, Professor of Economics and Associate Dean, Social Sciences; Co-Director of the One Health Center, University of California Global Health Institute
• Kathy Spahn, President and CEO, Helen Keller International
• Eduardo Villamor, Associate Professor of Environmental Health Sciences and Epidemiology, U-M School of Public Health

Closing
Sofia Merajver

4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  Public Reception
Blau Auditorium Atrium
Alfred Sommer's work with vitamin A supplementation has saved millions from blindness and death.

Dr. Sommer is a professor of epidemiology, international health, and ophthalmology at the Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

He is emeritus dean for the Bloomberg School of Public Health, and has published five books and more than 250 scientific articles. He's received dozens of top honors, including the Lasker Award for Medical Research, and was the first recipient of the GVF prize of the German Association of Applied Vitamin Research.

Dr. Sommer's initial vitamin A work occurred from 1976-1980, when he conducted a series of studies in Indonesia that suggested vitamin A deficiency was more common than previously recognized, and that even mild vitamin A deficiency dramatically increased childhood mortality rates.

Parallel studies Dr. Sommer organized with colleagues in Africa showed that most cases of measles-associated pediatric blindness, and half of all deaths, were also related to low vitamin A levels and could be prevented by timely administration of vitamin A to all cases of severe measles.

Next, Dr. Sommer and his colleagues ran large-scale randomized trials from 1983 through 1992 and demonstrated the link between even mild vitamin A deficiency and pediatric mortality.

Dr. Sommer and colleagues showed oral high-dose vitamin A supplementation could quickly and cheaply treat the devastating effects of vitamin A deficiency. Subsequently, the World Development Report (World Bank) declared vitamin A supplementation one of the most cost-effective of all health interventions.

The latest research by Dr. Sommer and his colleagues has shown that supplementing Nepalese women of childbearing age with vitamin A or beta-carotene can reduce maternal mortality by an average of 45 percent, and newborn vitamin A supplementation can reduce neonatal mortality by 20 percent.

The Francis Medal ceremony wraps up a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps, which was an idea born at U-M. Dr. Sommer has a strong connection and loyalty to the Peace Corps. While still in medical school he and his wife signed up and were accepted for Peace Corps service but a position at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta became available. Dr. Sommer accepted an assignment to the Cholera Research Laboratory (now ICDDR,B) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, where he conducted groundbreaking epidemiologic investigations into cholera, smallpox, and provision of disaster assistance.

Dr. Sommer credits the Peace Corps for fueling his initial desire to work overseas in a public health capacity. Today, Peace Corps volunteers are involved in the administration of vitamin A to children in countries around the world, and Dr. Sommer said he often gets e-mails from Peace Corps volunteers worldwide with questions about vitamin A supplementation.
Anil Deolalikar's area of research specialization is the economics of human capital—particularly nutrition and health—in developing countries. He has published four books and more than 60 articles in the areas of child nutrition, health, education, poverty, and social protection in developing countries.

Deolalikar was elected in 2007 as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for “…distinguished contributions to research and policy discourse in the field of development economics, particularly in the areas of household behavior and human capital accumulation.”

He is co-editor of the *Journal of Asian and African Studies* and the *Journal of Developing Societies*. In addition to his research, he has been an adviser to a number of developing-country governments and international organizations, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme, in designing and evaluating economic and social policy interventions.

Deolalikar taught previously at the University of Washington, University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard University. He also served briefly as lead human development economist for the World Bank at their regional offices in New Delhi, India, and Nairobi, Kenya.

Deolalikar obtained an A.B. *summa cum laude* in 1977 from Harvard College, a Diploma in Economics in 1978 from Cambridge University, and a Ph.D. in economics in 1981 from Stanford University. He also served as a postdoctoral fellow in economic demography at Yale University during 1981–83.

**KATHY SPAHN**
*President and CEO, Helen Keller International*

Kathy Spahn is a seasoned executive with significant experience in non-profit organizations related to vision, nutrition, and health. She joined Helen Keller International in 2005 as president and chief executive officer, responsible for global strategy and management of this international development organization dedicated to the prevention of blindness and malnutrition.
Ms. Spahn has also served as president and executive director of ORBIS International, a global non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention and treatment of blindness in the developing world; and executive director of God’s Love We Deliver, a New York-based organization dedicated to combating malnutrition and hunger among people living with HIV/AIDS and other life-altering illnesses.

In March 2010, Ms. Spahn was elected chair of the board of directors of InterAction, the largest alliance of U.S.-based international nongovernmental organizations focused on the world’s poor and most vulnerable people. She also currently serves on the boards of directors of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and The Bernadotte Foundation for Children’s Eyecare.

EDUARDO VILLAMOR, M.D., M.P.H., DR.P.H.
Associate Professor of Environmental Health Sciences and Epidemiology,
University of Michigan School of Public Health

Eduardo Villamor’s research focuses primarily on the study of nutritional determinants of maternal and child health with the use of epidemiologic methods. His current research interests span a wide range of topics at the intersection of nutritional, reproductive, and infectious diseases epidemiology. They include studies of the impact of maternal obesity on pregnancy outcomes, the influence of perinatal and early life exposures on immunity in the offspring, the burden and etiology of childhood obesity in countries with atypical patterns of development, and the role of nutritional factors on outcomes related to infectious diseases.

Dr. Villamor serves as co-principal investigator of the NHLBI-Global Health Initiative Center of Excellence for the prevention of chronic disease in Mesoamerica and the Dominican Republic.

He has earned a Dr.P.H. in Epidemiology and Nutrition from Harvard University, an M.P.H. from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and an M.D. from National University of Colombia Medical School.

He has been published in a number of professional journals including the Journal of Infectious Diseases, American Journal of Epidemiology, Journal of Nutrition, Fertility and Sterility, and Lancet.

His professional affiliations include the American Society for Nutrition, American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research, Society for Epidemiologic Research, and the International Society for Developmental Origins of Health and Disease.
The following Selection Advisory Committee (2008-2009) assisted President Coleman with identifying Dr. Alfred Sommer as the second recipient of the Thomas Francis, Jr. Medal in Global Public Health

Kenneth E. Warner, Ph.D. (Chair)
Dean, School of Public Health and Avedis Donabedian Distinguished University Professor of Public Health, University of Michigan

Huda Akil, Ph.D.
Gardner C. Quarton Distinguished University Professor of Neurosciences, Professor of Psychiatry, Co-Director and Research Professor, Molecular and Behavioral Neurosciences Institute, Medical School, University of Michigan

Robert H. Bartlett, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of Surgery, Medical School, University of Michigan

Sandro Galea, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.
Founding Director, Center for Global Health and Professor of Epidemiology, School of Public Health; Research Professor, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan (currently at Columbia University)

Margaret K. Hostetter, M.D.
Jean McLean Wallace Professor and Chair, Pediatrics Chief, Immunology, Physician-in-Chief, Yale–New Haven Children’s Hospital

Robert P. Kelch, M.D.
Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Michigan (currently emeritus)

Howard Markel, M.D.
George E. Wantz Distinguished Professor of the History of Medicine, Professor of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, Director, Center for the History of Medicine, University of Michigan

Janet Olszewski, M.S.W.
Director, Michigan Department of Community Health

Barbara K. Rimer, Ph.D.
Dean, Gillings School of Global Public Health, Alumni Distinguished Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Teressa A. Sullivan, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Sociology, College of Literature, Science and the Arts, University of Michigan (currently at University of Virginia)

President’s Office Representative: Lisa Connolly, Project Manager, Office of the President

School of Public Health Representative: Terri W. Mellow, Director of Communications, School of Public Health, Dean’s Office
THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY
Julia Donovan Darlow, Ann Arbor
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Thank you for attending this program. The University of Michigan strives to create a truly open forum, one in which diverse opinions can be expressed and heard.

It is the right of members of the University community, speakers, artists, and other invited guests to express their views and opinions at the University. We will protect the right of individuals to speak or perform, and the rights of those members of the University community who wish to hear and communicate with an invited speaker or artist.

Protesters also have a right to express their opposition to a speaker in appropriate ways, both within the confines of this building and outside the facility. However, protesters must not interfere unduly with communication between a speaker or artist and members of the audience.

If the hosts of this event or University representatives believe that protesters are interfering unduly with a speaker or performer's freedom of expression, those protesters will be warned. If the warnings are not heeded and the interference continues, then the individuals responsible may be removed from the building.

We reaffirm these policies in order to most fully protect the rights of free expression for speakers, performers, and protesters alike, as set forth by our Civil Liberties Board in our Student Handbook, and in accordance with the U-M Standard Practice Guide; Regents' Ordinance Article XII, Section 1; and state statutes.