

Resnick Legacy in Adolescent Health



Michael Resnick, PhD, FSAHM,
Professor Emeritus

For almost four decades, Michael Resnick has been serving adolescents and young adults through his roles at the University of Minnesota. Joining the UMN in 1981, Michael has held various positions during his tenure; Professor of Pediatrics, Nursing, and Public Health, the Gisela and E. Paul Konopka Chair in Adolescent Health and Development, and Director of the Leadership Education in Adolescent Health program and the Healthy Youth Development – Prevention Research Center (20 years). He serves on the Board of Directors for the Guttmacher Institute and the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota, while also serving as the 2015-2016 President of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine.

Dedicating his career to disseminating and translating findings into best practices and promising approaches to improving the health and well-being of adolescents and promoting excellence among those who care for young people, Michael has often been credited with helping to shape the field of adolescent health in the US and globally. In the early 1980s, Michael directed the National Adolescent Health Resource Center (NAHRC), working with the states of Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Minnesota, and North Carolina to create, implement, analyze, and disseminate findings from comprehensive youth health surveys involving tens of thousands of young people. This ground-breaking research set the stage for additional state- and national-level adolescent health surveys (the Minnesota Student Survey – MSS, and CDC’s Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System) and helped implement measures focused on assessing protective factors in the lives of young people, something not explored prior. Michael also served as the co-investigator of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), for which Michael and colleagues developed and published the first paper from this landmark national survey, one of the most frequently cited adolescent health papers in the world.

In addition to his contributions to the science of adolescent health, Michael’s career also includes accomplishments in teaching, with various awards and contributions to the public good. His teaching, advising, and mentoring styles exemplify his overall dedication to assuring that young people are regarded as whole human beings living in the context of family, peers, school, and community, not to be regarded as a simple set of risk indicators.

In retirement, with his spouse Lyn Bearinger, Michael is enjoying more time for travel, grandchildren, music, and various hobbies. He thanks the wonderful colleagues and students who have helped to create a varied and deeply meaningful career.