

Edward Kidder Graham Faculty Service Award

K. Elizabeth Moracco, PhD, MPH

Associate Professor, Department of Health Behavior
Gillings School of Global Public Health
Associate Director, UNC Injury Prevention Research Center

Health Behavior Professor Elizabeth “Beth” Moracco has an impressive track record of service and dedication in numerous areas: as a public health practitioner and researcher, a mentor, an administrator and an instructor who works tirelessly to positive effect.

Dr. Moracco’s research program is dedicated to the widespread public health problem of gender-based violence. She is a leading expert in the prevention and reduction of intimate partner violence (IPV). She has been studying the implementation of domestic violence protective orders (DVPOs)—civil orders that have proven effective at reducing IPV—as the principal investigator on a long-term study funded by that National Institute of Justice. She also led a separate study examining firearm surrender and confiscation processes used by law enforcement as part of these protective orders. This research stands to inform judicial and law enforcement practices to ensure the reliable implementation of DVPOs in order to avert violent outcomes. In addition, she is also a co-principal investigator for a CDC-funded study evaluating an ongoing rape prevention education program and another to prevent teen dating violence. Her body of work will impact hundreds if not thousands of lives in North Carolina and beyond.

As a professor, Beth Moracco is recognized as a dedicated mentor and instructor. She has won numerous teaching awards since joining the faculty in 2008. As a respected administrator, she has served as director of her department’s Master of Public Health program since 2012, during which time she has been instrumental in using her evaluation, implementation and scholarly expertise to strengthen the program from she received her MPH in 1992. She also earned a PhD from the department in 1999.

In her work at the intersection of academia and practice, Dr. Moracco’s research is always applied; she engages with community-members and leaders through every step of her work so that she can ensure that her research will have immediate utility and benefit people, and that they can in turn be empowered to find solutions. In this way, she embodies the ideal of a public health leader by working with communities and individuals, and being sensitive to their demonstrated needs.

Nominated by Professor Elizabeth Chen, graduate student Julie Kafka and Department Chair Kurt Ribisl, Department of Health Behavior, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health