The Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences’ i-BSHS (Innovations in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences) lecture series fosters collaborative discussion on innovative behavioral and social science-based approaches to improving population health.

“The Childhood and Adolescent Obesity Epidemic: The Most Cost-Effective Prevention Strategies”

Steven Gortmaker PhD is Professor of the Practice of Health Sociology at the Harvard Chan School of Public Health. He directs the Harvard Chan School of Public Health Prevention Research Center (HPRC), whose mission is to work with community partners to design, implement, and evaluate programs and policies that improve nutrition and physical activity, reduce overweight and chronic disease risk among children, youth and their families and to reduce and eliminate disparities in these outcomes. Current activities include continuing implementation, dissemination and updating the widely disseminated school curriculums: Planet Health and Eat Well and Keep Moving, the afterschool curriculum co-developed with the YMCA of the USA - Food and Fun, and the Out of School Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative. A major research focus is the CHOICES project that is evaluating the cost effectiveness of more than 40 childhood obesity interventions. Dr. Gortmaker has been an author of more than 240 published research articles, including the first report in the United States concerning the obesity epidemic among children, the first longitudinal study linking increases in sugar sweetened beverage intake to increased obesity incidence in youth, a four paper obesity modeling series in the Lancet, and CHOICES papers in Health Affairs, the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Pediatrics and the New England Journal of Medicine.