# PREVENTING CHRONIC DISEASE

PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND POLICY

VOLUME 5: NO. 2 APRIL 2008

LETTER

## The Topography of Poverty

Suggested citation for this article: Buttery CMG. The topography of poverty [letter]. Prev Chronic Dis 2008;5(2). http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2008/apr/07\_0231.htm. Accessed [date].

### To the Editor:

"The Topography of Poverty in the United States: A Spatial Analysis Using County-Level Data From the Community Health Status Indicators Project" (1) is a fascinating article that describes how county-level poverty data were created into maps. Although appropriate for review by my students, the article raises the issue of how to explain such maps to elected officials. I have a hard enough time understanding the math, and I doubt whether one in a thousand elected officials could understand the maps or the data analysis if the mathematical formulae had to be explained. As a past local, regional, and state health director, I have had to elucidate many complex issues to elected officials to persuade them to implement policies that would improve the health of those for whom I was responsible. Is there some way to add transitional explanations to articles such as this one that would allow my students to use the maps (or similar maps) to work with policy makers during their internships to improve the health status of our communities?

#### Christopher M. G. Buttery, MB, MPH

Department of Epidemiology and Community Health School of Medicine Virginia Commonwealth University Richmond, Virginia

#### References

1. Holt JB. The topography of poverty in the United States: a spatial analysis using county-level data from the Community Health Status Indicators project. Prev Chronic Dis 2007;4(4). http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2007/oct/07\_0091.htm. Accessed October 24, 2007.

The opinions expressed by authors contributing to this journal do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Public Health Service, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or the authors' affiliated institutions. Use of trade names is for identification only and does not imply endorsement by any of the groups named above.