

A Message from the Editor

As we go to press, the nation and the world are dealing with the H1N1 influenza outbreak and preparing for the potential of a pandemic. RADM Galson shares his perspective on this important topic—especially America’s preparedness—in a special message appended to his *Surgeon General’s Perspectives* column on healthy aging.

This issue of *PHR* contains two products: a regular issue with its usual array of excellent articles and a supplemental issue on occupational intervention (OI) studies. The regular issue has two articles on the ever-mounting evidence of the negative health effects and public health burden from smoking. The first article on cigarette pricing by Toomey et al. found that the price of cigarettes varied by youth racial/ethnic composition in a neighborhood, suggesting that the tobacco industry might vary its marketing strategies based on brand as well as neighborhood and store characteristics. The second article by Ashford et al. assesses the efficacy of education interventions to prevent postpartum smoking relapse among pregnant women exposed to secondhand smoke.

Also in this issue, an article by Hendryx et al. focuses on excess mortality rates relative to the economic benefits of coal mining in Appalachia from 1979 to 2005. The authors found that the heaviest coal mining areas of Appalachia had the poorest socioeconomic conditions and largest excess number of age-adjusted deaths. This article highlights occupational safety and health as an important area of public health in America, which is coincidentally the topic of our supplement.

Before leaving my previous post at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), I was fortunate to work with Dr. Robert Rinsky, the previous Editor of *PHR*, and with Drs. Lisa Brosseau and David Parker, the two co-guest editors of the OI supplement, in its early stages of development. As described by Lisa and David in their Guest Editorial, the 19 articles in this supplement are a logical extension of the work being conducted on intervention effectiveness (IE), which was first stimulated by NIOSH when it identified IE as one of the 21 priority research areas in its National Occupational Research Agenda. The articles in this supplement describe results of practice- or research-based evaluation, implementation, or effectiveness studies in a broad range of workplaces, including small businesses, and among a wide array of workers (e.g., disadvantaged and hard-to-access populations). Clearly, the study of OI is a growing area of research

that will continue to yield a rich source of science-based data for improving worker safety and health.

On March 23, 2009, Dr. George Moore—a frequent contributor to *PHR*’s *Public Health Chronicles* column—received the U.S. Surgeon General’s Outstanding Service Award in his hometown of White Stone, Virginia, by RADM Robert C. Williams, Acting Deputy U.S. Surgeon General. George is a retired Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) who served a 20-year career in a variety of challenging assignments in the U.S. and abroad. In his distinguished post-PHS career in Virginia, he served as Health Director of Charlottesville; Associate Professor of Preventive Medicine at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond; and Director of the Northern Neck Health District. George and his daughter, Professor Berwyn Moore, have written several columns over the years, including an upcoming column looking back at his time in Nepal.

On the subject of columns in *PHR*, I would like to recognize a changing of the guard for our *Local Acts* column. Since the column’s inception in 2007, Dr. Joshua Sharfstein has served as its editor, in addition to his day job as Commissioner of Health for the City of Baltimore. In early April 2009, Josh stepped down as column editor for *Local Acts* and left his duties as Commissioner to become the new Principal Deputy Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). His extensive work in the Baltimore City Health Department served to enhance the strength and credibility of *Local Acts*. On behalf of *PHR*, we extend our thanks and best wishes to Josh in his new and important role at the FDA. Dr. Lorna Thorpe has been selected to succeed Josh as the new editor of *Local Acts*. Lorna currently serves as the Deputy Commissioner of Health at the New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, where she directs the Division of Epidemiology. She has led numerous scientific initiatives aimed at understanding and improving the health of NYC residents. This experience, along with Lorna’s extensive work with CDC, will make her contributions as column editor significant and relevant in the field of public health.

Finally, please note that we have revised the author’s guidelines, as shown on the last page of each regular issue and on the *PHR* website (www.publichealthreports.org). Most notably, please pay special attention to the 4,000-word limit requirement for manuscripts.

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