A Message from the Editor

The first issue of *Public Health Reports* for 2007 has been out for about two months now. We have received both praise and criticism (always polite and meant to be constructive). A couple of old friends who work in design suggest that I provide them with the opportunity to redesign the appearance of the Journal. They point to the many other journals that appear (to them) more contemporary and inviting. I reply "Isn't the invitation to read the Journal implicit in the fact that it is produced and offered for sale, and later for free on the web? Do people need to be seduced by the style of the Journal before they read about what they are interested in knowing?" The answer, they say, is yes. Okay then—it might be worthwhile to consider whether a new design or format is in order. There is nothing wrong with making the Journal more attention-grabbing. But such is only window dressing, and I fear it can obscure the substance of a journal. So, for the time being, I think we are going to concentrate on the content. And therefore I would like to point out what hasn't changed, again, this year.

We still have all the columns (Law and the Public's Health, NCHS Dataline, International Observer, Chronicles, and From the Schools of Public Health) that you have come to expect. This year, as in each of the past six years, we have introduced a new column—Local Acts, edited by Josh Sharfstein and NACCHO. Never before have we gotten so much interest in a new column. Innovation at some local health authorities is alive and well, I am happy to report. Indeed, one can argue that most innovations are still occurring at the local level.

Our subscription price remains extremely low—the lowest I know of for a journal of this genus. There still is no commercial advertising accepted. You do not have to wonder if the decision to present or reject an article is influenced by economic pressures.

The cover design still contains the Volume and Issue numbers, a single black-and-white photo or graphic depicting the subject of one of our featured papers, the Table of Contents of the main body of the Journal complete with titles and author names, and the logos of the partners involved in the production of the issue. What else is there? We do change the color every year, but that is to make it easier to identify the different volumes when the Journal is in your bookcase rather than for any sort of fashion consideration.

Again this year we will feature articles that highlight philosophy of public health (Viewpoint section), models for successful public health methods and interventions (Practice section), and descriptive analyses and hypothesis testing (Research section).

In addition to the six regular issues, you can continue to count on at least one supplement that examines a public health subject in depth (this year there are two), as well as other special projects, such as the CD on a History of Vaccines that was delivered with the January/February 2007 issue.

We will continue to search out and encourage writing on subjects that are not necessarily fashionable, but important and often underappreciated in public health. In consideration of that, let me bring to your attention the articles in this issue by Judith Graber et al. on the subject of carbon monoxide poisoning. Year after year, with nauseating predictability, this well understood and completely avoidable poisoning occurs and is noted on hospital intake records and death certificates. Graber and her colleagues suggest another way.

Something else that is new this year is our live webcasts to provide an opportunity for students and practitioners to have contact with an author. We will select one paper featured in each issue and arrange for the author to be available. I cannot at this time report on how it is going—our first webcast (scheduled for 3:30 on February 6th) has not taken place at the time of this writing, but will have by the time you are reading this. But we have great hopes and reason to believe it will be a success and become a valuable regular production of the Journal. The next *Meet the Author* live webcast is scheduled for April 3rd from 2:30 to 3:30 Eastern time. Its title is *Building a Public Health Surveillance System for Carbon Monoxide Poisonings: Issues and Challenges* and it will be hosted by Judith Graber with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Check it out on www.publichealthreports.org/webcast.

So—we are not exactly *Architectural Digest*. But we continue to publish manuscripts that constitute the fabric of public health and are introducing new features every time we think we can further the purpose of PHR. The rest, after all, is just window dressing.

Robert A. Rinsky, PhD