A Message from the Editor

Keeping up with health-related news and discerning fact from fiction is an increasingly difficult challenge. From advertisements for an exhausting array of prescription drugs to discussions on current issues such as the obesity epidemic and vaccinations, Americans are constantly bombarded with health information—and potential misinformation.

One of the most hotly debated topics is the landmark Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) passed in March 2010. Each day, another aspect of the PPACA is moving toward implementation. As public health professionals, you may be asked questions about how the Act will affect individuals or public health as a whole. In this issue of *Public Health Reports* (*PHR*), Rosenbaum succinctly explains the Act and includes a timeline of when certain aspects of the Act will be implemented. For example, the PPACA will not be fully implemented until 2014, so changes to health and medical care will most likely evolve in the coming years. Look for upcoming articles in *PHR* to further elucidate the Act's impact on the U.S. health-care system.

As a service to our readers, *PHR* has initiated a new section entitled *Reports and Recommendations*. In this section, we will publish manuscripts from national and international advisory groups and other entities responsible for releasing recommendations that affect public health. Our first contribution to this new section comes to *PHR* via a new partnership with the National Vaccine Program Office (NVPO), which has agreed to publish the recommendations and reports from the National Vaccine Advisory Committee in *PHR*. In this issue, an article by Angela Shen, Direc-

tor of Policy and Vaccine Development at the NVPO, provides background on the Committee and its role in contributing to vaccine safety.

This issue of *PHR* also includes our new *Environmental Health* column, which focuses on a key environmental issue and its role in public health. The inaugural column by Hoppe and colleagues evaluates the effectiveness of an Oregon well-water testing law in establishing a system to monitor water quality. Their analyses resulted in specific recommendations for improving the Oregon legislation, and offers guidance for other states considering similar legislation.

In looking to the future, it is always important to reflect on lessons learned from the past. In our *Public Health Chronicles* column, RADM (ret) Jerrod Michael provides an intriguing look at the short-lived National Board of Health. The article traces the changes in our country's social and economic framework, which prompted a need to establish standardized laws to address the emergence of national epidemics. Michael illustrates the conflicts that arose between local authorities and the federal government over control of these responsibilities.

We'd like to acknowledge one of our more prolific *Public Health Chronicles* columnists, George Moore, who passed away in September 2010. Moore's columns chronicled his fascinating career in the U.S. Public Health Service, which took him from battling sexually transmitted diseases in North Carolina to fighting insect-borne diseases in Nepal. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Moore set an admirable example for public health service.

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