

# Journal of Public Health Policy

ANTHONY ROBBINS and PHYLLIS FREEMAN  
ACTING CO-EDITORS\*

To our Readers:

In October 2002, Milton Terris, the founder and Editor of the *Journal* since 1980, died in his 88th year. His widow and associate editor, Lillian Terris, wants the *Journal* to go forward in the tradition of its only Editor. A transition to new editors is almost complete. At a November meeting, the Editorial Board will have an opportunity to formalize our appointment as the new Editors.

Our objective is to continue the progressive editorial policy, simple and elegant design, and rigorous editing of the Drs. Terris. We have fashioned a survival strategy for the *Journal* around three immediate goals:

- Increase the number and quality of submissions. To achieve that goal we propose to shorten greatly the turnaround on editorial

\*By way of introduction, here's who we are:

Phyllis Freeman, J.D., is a Professor in the College of Public and Community Service and a Senior Fellow at the MacCormack Institute, University of Massachusetts, Boston, specializing in law, public policy, and public health. She has worked at Committee on Energy and Commerce of the US House of Representatives, with the Pan American Health Organization, the US Institute of Medicine, and the Fogarty International Center at the National Institutes of Health. She served on the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Center for Infectious Diseases. During the 1992–93 academic year, she was a Fulbright Scholar at Mexico's Academy of Medicine and National Institute of Public Health.

Anthony Robbins, M.D., M.P.A., is a Professor at Tufts Medical School, specializing in public health. He has directed the Vermont State Health Department, the Colorado Department of Health, the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and the US National Vaccine Program. He has held teaching posts at Harvard, McGill, the University of Vermont, the University of Colorado, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, and Boston University. He worked for the US House of Representatives and was President of the American Public Health Association. For five years, he edited *Public Health Reports*, the scientific journal of the US Public Health Service.

responses—reviews and editing. Electronic submission and review is simply the first step. We hope you will suggest to your colleagues that they send submissions to the *Journal*.

- Expand the reader base. We have decided not to increase the subscription price this year, but to concentrate on renewals and new subscriptions. We hope you will renew and suggest to colleagues that they subscribe.
- Create an endowment *Fund for the Future of the Journal*. With the support and assistance of Lillian Terris, we propose to create a \$1 million fund in honor of Milton Terris.

Mission statements are often pretentious and less than useful, but Milton Terris was clear and prescient in 1980, when he wrote: “The *Journal* seeks to improve knowledge and understanding of public health for researchers, policymakers, program managers in health and development, and the general public.” Almost a quarter of a century later, we want to reconfirm that mission and concentrate on many factors that influence population health—public health policy and interventions, the environment, science, democracy, social welfare, disparities, economic development, and other human activity—plus ways in which health influences other elements of society. Thus the *Journal’s* mission will become explicitly even more global.

We have begun informal and more formal consultations around the world with readers, colleagues, journal editors, publishers, leaders of public health and professional organizations (including the National Association for Public Health Policy), libraries, government agencies, international organizations, and grant-making foundations to help us set a course for the *Journal*. We welcome comments and suggestions from readers to: [jphp@umb.edu](mailto:jphp@umb.edu)

Our updated mission demands new strategies to succeed. The *Journal* must continue to fulfill a need and create a niche among hundreds of print and electronic publications—collaborators and competitors. We must serve people who read and subscribe and others who *search*. For those who read the *Journal* regularly, we must meet a demanding expectation that every article, commentary, and book review is worth the time and effort it takes to read. The *Journal* is searchable on Medline—which with the internet expands access far beyond anything Dr. Terris could have contemplated in 1980—a great benefit to our authors.

To sustain interest in the *Journal*, we are contemplating several en-

hancements. For the unsolicited scientific and policy articles that have been at the core of the *Journal*, we plan to publish well-constructed abstracts or summaries, improving readers' use of the *Journal*. We hope to solicit and print editorials and commentaries to help place the scientific and policy contributions in context and help explain the importance of findings to more general readers.

Reflecting changes in communications media, the excellent book review section will be expanded to include occasional reviews of television productions, films, and theatre. Preserving the *Journal's* simple elegance, we want to pay new attention to our graphic presentation of quantitative data. We may even find ourselves reviewing software that will benefit public health people around the world. And if possible, with the help of The Stinehour Press, we hope to include an occasional photographic essay.

We will undertake our expanding coverage of global issues in at least three ways:

- invite experts to write short pieces about policies, programs, and results they have observed in their work and travels;
- engage alert colleagues around the world, particularly at United Nations agencies such as WHO, PAHO, UNICEF, and UNESCO, to find critical developments and people who can write about them; and
- organize a mentoring system so that inexperienced authors from developing countries can publish their work and ideas in the *Journal*.

Other topical features might build further interest in the *Journal*:

- survey research and opinion polling results;
- new population data developed at WHO and UNESCO;
- meta-analysis—often applied in medicine, but just emerging in public health;
- historical articles; and
- profiles of public health leaders.

Finally, we want to add a timely service to the *Journal's* website, <http://members.aol.com/jphpterris/jphp.htm>. *Journal Watch*<sup>1</sup> has offered

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1. A publication of the Massachusetts Medical Society and its *New England Journal of Medicine*.

timely abstracts within several medical disciplines, but no one regularly reviews the scientific literature—medicine, the environment, and social sciences—abstracting articles to create summaries aimed at public health readers. We hope to undertake that task at the *Journal of Public Health Policy*, if we are able to attract grant support.

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As our transition begins, we thank several people who committed their time and efforts, above and beyond the call of duty, to keeping the *Journal* functioning: Lillian Terris, who took over on Milton's death and who will remain a lifetime Associate Editor; David Rosner who read and found reviewers for dozens of manuscripts; Ruth Roemer who identified book reviewers for the stream of review copies that arrives weekly at the *Journal*; Anneliese Koenig, the trusted Administrator who did everything else that was needed; and to old public health friends Max Pepper and Peter Orris for their valuable counsel.

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