

Improving quality of life and promoting health for all are among the main goals of modern public health, and improvement in the health of nations is dependent on effective public health endeavors. No field of endeavor is more multifaceted than public health, because it includes the wide range of individual and collective efforts to improve health, forestall disease, and protect health. To adequately cover this field requires many different types of expertise across a range of professionals and up-to-date knowledge ranging widely from genetics to biostatistics and health services organization and management, and from environmental epidemiology to sociology and demography.

That is why it is so rare to see a comprehensive treatment of public health written by only two authors. Yet Ted Tulchinsky and Elena Varavikova have responded to this challenge with a volume that covers the public health waterfront, is eminently readable, and provides a valuable resource for both students and practicing public health professionals. One advantage of this economy of authors is a consistent tone, perspective, and extent of references.

Originally intended for use as the introductory and core textbook for the new Schools of Public Health being developed in the Newly Independent States, it is now used in Israel, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the USA. It is also appropriate as an introductory text for the increasing number of students studying public health in undergraduate programs. The previous editions of this work have been translated into many languages. Much of the information in this book derives from the experiences in Western Europe and the USA, and it is being successfully used in departments and schools of public health and other related institutions.

This book assumes limited prior knowledge, providing definitions for key terms. Yet it can also serve as a reference for the experienced public health generalist and for those in other disciplines for whom public health knowledge is advantageous.

The chapters on the history of public health and its expanding definition are an excellent introduction to the underlying concepts and the evolution of our understanding of health determinants and disease and injury control opportunities. A significant portion of the volume treats health care systems, both generically as a set of complex organizations whose stewardship requires strategic thinking, planning, and operational expertise, and more specifically as to

how these systems operate in different social, cultural, and economic environments.

The title *The New Public Health* is apt. Today, public health is defined broadly, understanding that what we do in the health sector is insufficient to produce maximum attainable health, but must be complemented by attention to how decisions in other sectors affect the public's health. Is there any doubt that decisions about taxation policy, educational systems, transportation, urban planning, or agricultural subsidies affect health? Also, the New Public Health emphasizes the importance of reducing preventable health disparities within and between populations. Furthermore, governmental public health needs many partners to fulfill its mission – schools, religious institutions, employers, and other agencies. While these concepts are not entirely new, they have been rediscovered and emphasized to a much greater extent than was common during the twentieth century. We also have much new evidence about which programs and policies can effectively improve health. Recent research has aided our understanding of the basic mechanisms influencing health and disease, and the interventions to prevent and reduce disease processes and injuries. And we have standardized methods to assess bodies of evidence that increase our confidence in the reproducibility of results of policies and programs.

In short, this work is approachable, instructive, practical, and timely. Its use will help to assure that public health professionals in all nations where it is read are current and well informed about the New Public Health.

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Dr Fielding is a Distinguished Professor of Health Services and Pediatrics at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Fielding School of Public Health. He serves as Director of Public Health and Health Officer for Los Angeles County, where he is responsible for the full range of public health activities for 10 million county residents. Dr Fielding teaches Determinants of Health and participates as faculty lecturer in several other courses. He received his MD, MA (History of Science), and MPH from Harvard University, and his MBA from the Wharton School of Business Administration. His areas of expertise

include systematic assessment of the best evidence of effective population-oriented interventions, the development of clinical preventive services guidelines, economics and financing of prevention and health promotion for children, adults and families in community, clinical and occupational settings. As the founding Co-Director of the Center for Health Enhancement, Education and Research at UCLA, he directed the first comprehensive university-based center to focus on clinical and worksite prevention opportunities. He formerly served as Founding Board Member, Chairman of the Board, and member of the Executive Committee of The California Wellness Foundation, the largest US Foundation devoted to disease prevention and health promotion. He

was a founding member of the US Preventive Services Task Force and chairs the US Community Preventive Services Task Force. He is a past President of the American College of Preventive Medicine. Dr Fielding's awards include the UCLA Medal, the Fries Prize for contributions to improving health, the Sigerist and Roemer prizes from the American Public Health Association, the Porter Prize for his national impact on improving the lives of Americans, and membership in the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine. He is the author of over 200 original scientific articles and chapters, and the long-time Editor of *Annual Review of Public Health*. He is also a founding member of the Editorial Board of *Public Health Reviews*.