

Preface

Earlier this century, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) concluded that keeping the public healthy required a well-educated public health workforce, thus leading to its recommendation that public health education be available to all undergraduate students (IOM 2003). *Preparing the Public Health Workforce: Educational Pathways for the Field and the Classroom* explores the key issues and concepts that should be considered when responding to this call to action. Specifically, this book examines lessons and key issues that the educational system and governmental public health practitioners should incorporate into their preparation of the current and future public health workforce as they strive to address health, safety, and quality of life issues that persist in a social environment that is more complex than what we experienced in the last century. Furthermore, *Preparing the Public Health Workforce: Educational Pathways for the Field and the Classroom* addresses how the public health workforce operates in a public health system that is often resource-constrained and diverse in its organization and governance at the local, state, national, and international levels.

Preparing the Public Health Workforce: Educational Pathways for the Field and the Classroom examines, in great detail, topics that are pertinent to the education and practice of public health in today's dynamic and global healthcare, business, and technological environments. Representative topics covered include core functions of public health, public health system organization, accreditation and competencies, workforce challenges and opportunities, public health services and systems research, interprofessional collaboration, and the integration of public health and healthcare, as well as a discussion of the current and future challenges facing the public health workforce in the twenty-first century, as determined by leaders in public health education and practice.

In addition, chapters in *Preparing the Public Health Workforce: Educational Pathways for the Field and the Classroom* utilize real case studies to illustrate initiatives to educate today's public health student, as well as the challenges and successes of practicing public health at various governmental levels. The case studies highlight examples of public health practice that occurred in different public health systems, such as the international coronavirus outbreak (MERS-CoV), antibiotic resistance, and a local investigation of a pediatric fatality due to childhood lead poisoning, for example. Based on the complementary presentation of the educational

methodologies implemented in today's academic environment and the case studies that demonstrate the body of knowledge and practice required of today's public health workforce, a roadmap for achieving the IOM's goal of a well-prepared public health workforce for the twenty-first century and beyond is presented.

Preparing the Public Health Workforce: Educational Pathways for the Field and the Classroom is a detailed resource that presents evidence-based approaches that academicians and public health professionals will find useful as they prepare the public health workforce to promote health, prevent disease, and protect populations from the public health challenges of an ever-changing environment. The lessons and topic areas within this resource are timeless and offer a framework that can be expanded upon by the Instructor or Public Health Director based on his or her own experiences. Although the public health crises occurring in the world can and will change over time, the key concepts and lessons provided within this book are essential to our practice of public health.

The writing of this book has offered me the opportunity to reflect on my own preparation, both academically and professionally, to be able to work as a public health educator and practitioner. As such, I gratefully acknowledge the following: my mentors at Regis College, Dartmouth Medical School, Boston University School of Public Health, and Harvard School of Public Health for the rigor their academic programs offered and the training in inquiry and research they so expertly delivered. I also thank my faculty colleagues at the University of New Hampshire for their mentoring and encouragement as I strive to continually perfect my teaching, research, and service responsibilities.

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues at the Manchester, New Hampshire Health Department and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, for these are the organizations where I learned to practice public health.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to those public health academicians and practitioners who gave of their time to respond to my questionnaire which addresses their view of public health education and practice today and elicits their professional recommendations on how to successfully prepare the public health workforce.

Lastly, I am truly grateful to the CEO, administration, and healthcare practitioners at Portsmouth Regional Hospital in Portsmouth, New Hampshire for opening the doors of their "house" and letting me further examine my interest in the integration of the public health and healthcare systems while on sabbatical. You have provided me with an opportunity few have had and the experience has been one I shall not soon forget. The discussions, observations, and time for reflection have influenced my views on the operations of these two complex systems and have informed my future research questions. You have set me on a new path of inquiry that involves improving the management of population health in a reformed healthcare system for generations to come.

Reference

Institute of Medicine. (2003). *Who will keep the public healthy? Educating public health professionals for the 21st century?* Washington, DC: National Academy.

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Educational Pathways for the Field and the Classroom

Caron, R.M.

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