

FOREWORD

In the spring of 2011, leaders of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) *Total Worker Health*[®] program, including all of the editors of this volume, set a goal to publish a book focused on this emerging area of interest by 2020. Such is the power of goal setting: The book is 1 year ahead of schedule! The volume you hold in your hands is the first of its kind—a book dedicated to the *Total Worker Health* (TWH) approach.

Even in the early days of the TWH program, NIOSH leaders realized it would be essential to collect the work of authors, nationally and internationally, into one volume in order to capture the TWH story in an authoritative publication accessible to a wide audience. It was the vision then, and remains the vision today, that this volume would share the work of thought leaders engaged in both TWH research and practice to disseminate the knowledge gained beyond peer-reviewed scientific journals. During the last 15 to 20 years, NIOSH has learned much about this paradigm-shifting approach to occupational safety and health—an approach that recognizes the wholeness of each worker, where what's work-related and non-work-related are integrated, not separated. Yet it is only through the adoption of this approach by practice communities dedicated to worker safety, health, and well-being that the ultimate goals of improving the physical spaces where work is done, improving the design and organization of work itself, protecting workers from safety and

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health hazards related to their work, and advancing worker well-being through work will be achieved.

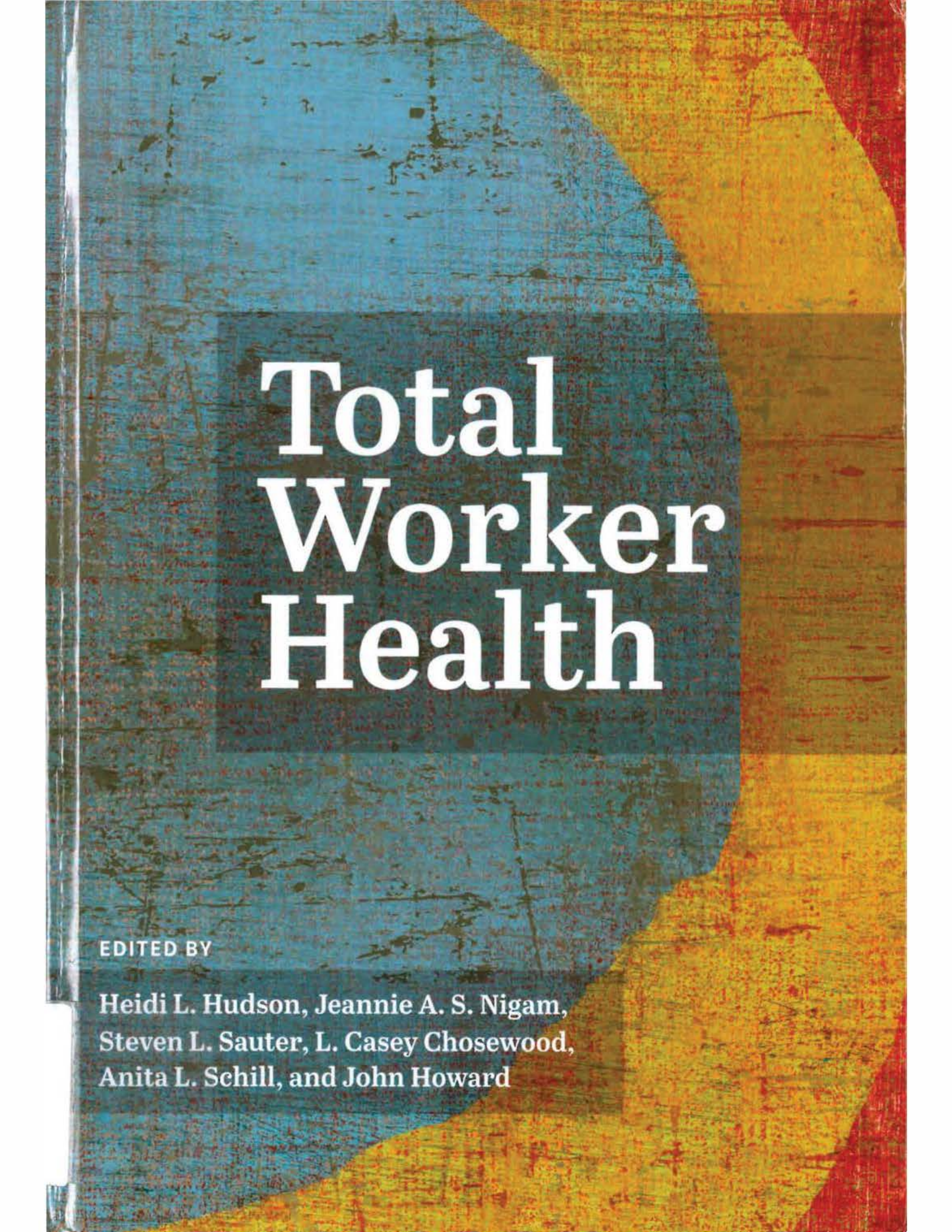
The editors of this volume are current or former NIOSH scientists who have spent significant portions of their careers charting the new direction in occupational safety and health that has become the TWH approach to worker safety, health, and well-being. Together, the editors have worked to create new ways of addressing long-standing challenges in occupational safety and health. At the same time, NIOSH has considered shifts in the sociocultural environment; their impacts on work and workers; and how these shifts have created unmet needs that sometimes threaten worker safety, health, and well-being.

The editors believe that this book has something for everyone interested in the TWH concept. Readers who are very familiar with the TWH approach will find programmatic details, nuanced perspectives, and practical applications that will augment their understanding and contribute to their pursuit of the TWH discipline. Those who are new to the TWH approach will learn from authoritative sources what it is, and what it is not, including fundamental concepts, empirical research findings that provide rationale for the approach, and ideas for program implementation. All readers will gain insights that will assist with their efforts to protect worker safety and health and advance worker well-being in an integrated way.

The challenges facing the American workforce are greater than ever. The TWH approach provides a key strategy for support of a workforce that is prepared to respond to the constantly changing demands related to 21st-century work. A strong economy depends on a workforce that is innovative and resilient. At a minimum, these qualities are possible only when work is safe, is free from health hazards, and promotes worker well-being. Realizing the full potential of the workforce becomes more likely when work enhances individual well-being both on and off the job. The TWH approach can be used to benefit individual workers, employers, communities, and the national economy.

—*John Howard, MD*

Director, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



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