

2012 Total Worker Health™ Symposium

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Foreword

The University of Iowa College of Public Health, Healthier Workforce Center for Excellence, was pleased to host the first Total Worker Health™ (TWH) Symposium—Safe, Healthy and Cost-Effective Solutions—on November 30 and December 1, 2012. The goals of the Symposium were to bring together investigators from the four National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Centers of Excellence to Promote a Healthier Workforce, NIOSH TWH investigators and administrators, other national TWH leaders who serve as Center advisors, and Iowa practice and policy leaders, to present, and discuss TWH research, practice, and policy. One hundred twenty participants from 18 states and Washington, DC, participated in the Symposium.

The Symposium was organized into six sessions, each with a plenary presentation by a senior investigator addressing a major TWH theme. Each session also included a research and research-to-practice presentation, and in the final session, a policy panel presentation—all intended to be consistent with the content covered by the plenary presentation. Those submitting abstracts for presentation at the Symposium not selected for a platform presentation by the Symposium Program Committee, composed of the four TWH Center directors, were invited to present posters of their work. Not all presenters submitted manuscripts, and not all manuscripts were accepted for publication after peer review.

Gathering together many of the national leaders in developing the national TWH agenda offered an opportunity to gain candid perspectives from NIOSH Director John Howard and 17 other senior participants on how they individually define TWH, how TWH can make a difference in the workplace, and the value or return-on-investment of TWH. Their comments compose an interesting commentary on TWH as NIOSH continues to implement this promising, but still young, national program intended to provide the research foundation to assist employers and employees realize the tremendous opportunity for a healthier and more productive workforce.

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