

Preface

The role of the President's Cancer Panel, which reports directly to the President of the United States of America, is to "monitor the development and execution of the activities of the U.S. National Cancer Program". This two-part special issue of *Reviews on Environmental Health* (Part 1, Volume 24, No. 4, December 2009; and Part 2, Volume 25, No. 1, January 2010) highlights selected papers presented during 2008 and 2009 by prominent public health scientists, health advocates, and governmental representatives at four President's Cancer Panel meetings on *Environmental Factors in Cancer*, which were organized by the U.S. National Cancer Institute. The 2008-2009 meeting series explored the evidence regarding causal associations between environmental exposures and cancer, as well as the evidence assessing the magnitude of the cancer burden attributed to environmental exposures. The meeting series addressed a wide range of questions, including evaluating the adequacy of current governmental regulation and policies to protect workers and the public from exposure to carcinogens, the adequacy of research resources to evaluate the relations between environmental exposures and cancer, identifying workers and populations that are disproportionately affected by cancer, the health impact of agriculturally related chemicals on cancer, the contribution of foreign sources of carcinogens to the U.S cancer burden, and the increased cancer risk posed by medically related ionizing radiation exposure, former nuclear weapons testing, and radiation emitted from consumer goods.

The two-part special issue includes an introduction by Dr. LaSalle D. Leffall, Jr., who serves as chair of the President's Cancer Panel, and Dr. Margaret L. Kripke, a member of the President's Cancer panel, followed by a selection of the papers presented within the four topical areas—Part 1 - (1) Industrial and Manufacturing Exposures; (2) Agricultural Exposures; and Part 2 - (3) Indoor/Outdoor Air Pollution and Water Contamination; and (4) Nuclear Fallout, Electromagnetic Fields, and Radiation Exposure. The authors of the selected papers were provided an opportunity to perform minor editorial changes, but otherwise the papers remain relatively unchanged from those originally presented to the President's Cancer Panel as a "White Paper".

Although all papers presented to the President's Cancer Panel will be available as a U.S. government document, the importance of further global dissemination of the papers cannot not be overstated. As the special issue will be indexed in *PubMed* and other indexing/abstracting services, the special issue allows a greater identification and availability of these cutting-edge papers to a broader spectrum of researchers, public health professionals, health care experts, students, and scientific organizations. Enhanced communication between researchers, public health practitioners, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders is critical to the goal of reducing the burden of environmentally-induced cancers.

We thank the President's Cancer Panel for providing this important forum to discuss environmental causes of cancer and look forward to their upcoming report to the President.

Guest Editor: R. William Field

Department of Occupational and Environmental Health
and Department of Epidemiology, College of Public Health
University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, USA