

# Public Health Reports

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## EDITORIAL

With this issue, David M. Ozonoff, MD MPH, joins *Public Health Reports* as the book review editor. Dr. Ozonoff works for the Veterans Administration and is a Professor in and Chair of the Department of Environmental Health at the Boston University School of Public Health. Under David's leadership we will

expand this department of the journal, bringing you insight into public health's major intellectual advances and controversies through reviews by some of the field's leading experts and critics. And of course we will continue to review the books and films that shape the general public's understanding of public health.

## PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS & NOTES

### Reports Highlight Vaccine Inequities

The percentage of fully immunized 2-year-old children in the United States rose from 55% in 1992 to 75% in 1994 and 1995, according to a report by the Children's Defense Fund. At the same time, the report pointed out, the rate of vaccine-preventable illness among young children dropped by 41% from 1993 to 1995, with seven of eight vaccine-preventable illnesses reaching all-time record lows,

Worldwide, however, more than two million children still die annually from diseases that could have been prevented by vaccination, according to a World Health Organization-United Nations Children's Fund joint report.

Another five to six million children in poor countries die from vaccine-preventable diseases because the vaccines are not available to them, the report added.

Increasing costs and diminishing financial contributions from governments and philanthropies could threaten future efforts to prevent such child killers as diarrhea, respiratory infections, and malaria, for which vaccines are currently being developed, according to the joint report.

*The Children's Defense Fund report can be obtained by telephone at 202-662-3551 or by e-mail at <healthaa@childrensdefense.org>. The World Health Organization-United Nations Children's Fund report, State of the World's Vaccines and Immunization, is available from Celinda T. Verano at 212-963-8320.*

### Medicare Beneficiaries Need New Care Options, Better Protection: IOM

The health care options available to Medicare beneficiaries should be expanded, but only after the Federal Government and private insurers take steps to make all health plans more responsive and understandable to the elderly, according to a committee of the Institute of Medicine (IOM).

Medicare participants are moving into managed care arrangements at an unprecedented pace, especially in California and Florida. Still, 31 states have no significant enrollment in health maintenance organizations among Medicare beneficiaries. Only 10% of the Medicare population is enrolled in managed care, compared with 70% of the non-Medicare population.

Medicare, the single largest payer