



Dean Susan C. Scrimshaw presented UIC's Public Health Appreciation Award to Senator Richard J. Durbin at Commencement 2004 in recognition of his ongoing advocacy of public health issues.

## From the Dean

Never before has the voice of public health been so essential in setting national and global policy. We are living in an age when our society and our world are vulnerable to dangers from all sides. We are struggling to deal with naturally occurring epidemics, the resurgence of diseases we had once thought conquered, and environmental hazards. We must also be prepared to respond to deliberate acts of terrorism and sabotage, to health disparities that divide our nation, and to diseases that can destroy entire countries. The special tools of public health—disease prevention, health promotion, and population-based approaches—are vitally needed to pursue improvement of quality of life, both here and beyond our borders, in a humane and cost-feasible manner. Our government also needs the vision and commitment necessary to support and deploy these resources.

The University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health is actively involved at the local, regional, national, and international levels in a broad array of initiatives aimed at understanding and solving today's health problems. We consider all our work in research, service, and education to be incomplete, however, until our findings have achieved functional recognition through the implementation of policies that serve the communities and individuals who have shared their time, information, and experience with us to help enhance our knowledge and practice of public health.

Our faculty members have taken the opportunity of this election year to consider selected policy issues that have an impact on everyone's health. I have used my own article in the magazine to discuss the need for policymakers to take the long view on health promotion and disease prevention and to continue funding prevention, especially when it is working. Dr. Bernard Turnock looks at the effects fiscal sleight-of-hand approaches are having on our public health infrastructure. An article on our Chicago Project for Violence Prevention explores an extremely successful program that has radically reduced the number of violent deaths in some of our most troubled neighborhoods here and is now expanding to assist cities beyond Chicago. Dr. Susan Curry reviews effective measures for improving the health behaviors of millions of people, and Dr. Youfa Wang suggests steps we can take to combat the obesity epidemic. Dr. David DuBois advocates for the need for caution in care as we set about launching mentoring programs for our youth. Our Center for the Advancement of Distance Education describes the arsenal of technological resources being built today to improve public health tomorrow, and our environmental and occupational health scientists present a sampler of the investigations they are conducting to help us move toward safer, cleaner workplaces and a safer, cleaner world. Dr. Arden Handler highlights our Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Program and its preparation of analytic experts to lead data-based decision-making to promote the health of mothers, children, and families.

We hope that this issue of *Healthviews* magazine will encourage the reader to consider public health policy concerns and the ways in which they need to be addressed in election year 2004 and beyond.

Susan C. Scrimshaw, PhD  
Dean