A Note From the Editors

Welcome to the 2004 JTPE Monograph issue! With this issue Dr. Deborah Tannehill steps down as editor of the journal after four years of service. Deborah has done a superb job of providing leadership for JTPE. During her tenure, JTPE became the official journal of AIESEP, an international physical education organization. This was accompanied by an increasing number of submissions, especially international submissions, which Deborah skillfully managed. Beginning with Volume 23, all manuscripts were required to be submitted electronically. Through these changes, Deborah maintained the high quality of the publication, along with her sense of humor, professionalism, and unending energy. Thank you for your service, Deborah.

We welcome Melinda Solmon of Louisiana State University as the new JTPE coeditor for a four-year term. Melinda is a well-known and respected scholar who has contributed to the knowledge base in a number of areas. Her knowledge and research expertise will make her an excellent coeditor for the journal.

The 2004 JTPE monograph grew out of several editorial board discussions regarding current issues critical to physical education. Several board members noted that physical activity and public health are concerns common to leaders in many countries, and they wondered particularly about the impact of the Surgeon General’s report of 1996 on physical education programs in the United States. To help initiate discussion on the topic, which we hope will lead to action, we decided to invite respected scholars from a variety of areas to comment on the decade following the 1996 Surgeon General’s report. We specifically asked the following four questions:

a) In your view, what historically has been the role of physical education in physical activity and public health?
b) What impact, if any, do you perceive the Surgeon General’s report has had on physical education programs?
c) In your view, what impact should physical education have on public health and physical activity?
d) In your view, what should teacher education programs in physical education be doing to prepare teachers, given the role of physical education?

As you will see in the monograph articles, some scholars chose to answer those questions directly, whereas other scholars chose to address topics they believed were related to those questions and were important to a complete discussion about physical education and its role in public health.

The monograph begins with the views of one of the political leaders in physical education, Stephen L. Cone, former AAHPERD president. Cone presents his personal perspective on the role of physical education in public health, optimistically focusing on the potential impact of physical educators.

Marlene Tappe and Charlene Burgeson contribute to this discussion by describing how the Surgeon General’s report and physical education are situated
historically. Having both worked on the Surgeon General’s and other CDC reports, they have the insiders’ perspective on the issues. They also provide a valuable list of other national reports and initiatives in the U.S. that relate to physical education and its role in public health.

In the third article, Thom McKenzie and David Kahan directly address the four questions through the eyes of physical education teacher educators who have worked to enhance children’s physical activity in physical education classes. Stewart Trost, who also directly tackles the four questions, describes his views in light of his public health background. He presents the RE-AIM framework as a means of determining the impact of physical education programs on public health.

In the fifth article, Ken Fox, Ashley Cooper, and Jim McKenna present the issue of how the impact of physical education on public health has played out in the United Kingdom. They describe the active school model of physical activity promotion, based on the idea that a physical education curriculum alone cannot truly have an impact on public health. Paul Fardy, Azz Azzollini, and Ariela Herman then present the urban perspective of physical activity and public health. They describe a health-focused alternative to traditional physical education programs that has been successfully implemented in New York City.

An important but rarely heard perspective is presented by John Evans, Emma Rich, and Brian Davies. They bring up several problems with the “facts about obesity,” and how care must be taken when we interpret those facts. Finally, Mary O’Sullivan, noted scholar in physical education, responds to the articles, revealing her valuable insights on the relationship between physical education and public health.

So sit back, relax, and enjoy the articles! After reading the monograph, you might find yourself with an overwhelming urge to respond to one or more of the articles. Wonderful! That is the intent of this monograph—to initiate discussion that we hope, as mentioned before, will lead to action! For those of you moved to do so, we encourage you to submit an “In-Response” paper.

*Bonnie Tjeerdsma Blankenship and Melinda Solmon*