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Food and Nutrition Board

Advancing Effective Obesity Communications: A Workshop Speaker and Planning Committee Biographical Sketches



Carol Byrd-Bredbenner, Ph.D., R.D., F.A.N.D.

Rutgers University

Planning Committee Member and Facilitator

Carol Byrd-Bredbenner is Distinguished Professor of Nutrition and the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program Director at Rutgers University. Her research focuses on elucidating the role of cognitive and environmental factors on nutrition behaviors and health outcomes and developing recommendations for nutrition communications and health promotion interventions. Currently, she is leading the innovative childhood obesity prevention program HomeStyles that motivates parents to make quick, easy, evidence-based modifications to their home environment and lifestyle practices (HealthyHomeStyles.com). Dr. Byrd-Bredbenner has published nearly 200 research articles, numerous nutrition books, including the college-level textbook Wardlaw's *Perspectives in Nutrition*; software packages, including FoodWorks; and theory-driven, behaviorally focused nutrition curricula and intervention materials. She received the Helen Denning Ullrich Award for Lifetime Excellence in Nutrition Education from the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior and the Excellence in Nutrition Education Award from the American Society for Nutrition. Dr. Byrd-Bredbenner earned her doctoral degree at Pennsylvania State University.



Paula F. Clayton, M.S., R.D.N., L.D.

National Association of Chronic Disease Directors

Invited Speaker

Paula F. Clayton is Public Health Consultant to the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors for the past 4 years focused on building state and national capacity for improving population health, drawing from her 25+ years' experience in developing and directing the state chronic disease and health promotion program for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. She actively collaborates with various research teams, aiding in building the capacity of state health departments and cultivating successful public-private partnerships. As a former President of the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, she has helped lead several efforts to promote policy, systems and environmental changes in support of healthy eating and active living during her nearly 30 years in practice. Ms. Clayton holds a master's degree in foods and nutrition from Kansas State University and is a registered dietitian, licensed to practice in Kansas.

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Brian Dunn, M.A.

Concentric Health Experience

Invited Speaker

Brian Dunn is Chief Behavioral Officer at Concentric Health Experience. His area of expertise is the functional neurocircuitry of human emotion, specifically the interface of emotion and cognition in the human prefrontal cortex. His research work has focused on fMRI studies of ongoing emotion experiences, and behavioral measures of decision-making and cognitive bias. Brian draws insights from over 15 years of experience in the fields of experimental psychology, cognitive neuroscience, and psychiatry research. He is a coauthor of research publications in the areas of molecular psychiatry, neuroeconomics, and human affective neuroscience. Mr. Dunn has served as a medical editor, senior copywriter, and associate medical director, focusing on central nervous systems diseases and medical decision making. He founded and now leads Concentric Health Experience's Applied Cognitive Science capability. His current intellectual passions include the application of behavioral economics/neuroeconomics principles to healthcare communication as part of Concentric's Health Intelligence division. Mr. Dunn holds an M.A. in experimental psychology from Concordia University.



Adelaide Feuer, R.D.N.

Edelman

Planning Committee Member and Invited Speaker

Adelaide Feuer is Senior Vice President at Edelman where she helps her clients evolve, protect and promote their brands and products in an ever-changing health and nutrition environment. As a registered dietitian and communications expert, Ms. Feuer combines her passion for good food and health with marketing to develop strategic communications programs that build awareness, shift perceptions and build advocacy for health-forward organizations, brands and products. At Edelman, Ms. Feuer oversees a portfolio of clients representing Kellogg's, Barilla, bel Brands and GoGo squeeZ. Over the course of her career, she has helped Burger King improve the nutritional quality of its kid's meals and marketing to kids practices; Barilla combat misperceptions about pasta; and Unilever champion Agents of Change who are helping to create a healthier and more sustainable future. Prior to Edelman, Ms. Feuer began her career in nutrition communications at Burson Marsteller, and provided nutrition counseling for personal training clients at a corporate gym. Ms. Feuer is the past President of the Chicago Nutrition Association and is a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Adelaide received her Bachelor of Science degree from Miami University and completed her Dietetic Internship at Loyola University Chicago.

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Allyson Frazier, M.S.W.

American Heart Association, Voices for Healthy Kids

Invited Speaker

Allyson Frazier is currently Campaign Research and Development Senior Manager for Voices for Healthy Kids at the American Heart Association.

She has worked in the field of public affairs for over twenty years. In over a decade with the American Heart Association, she has been responsible for planning and implementing advocacy campaigns on the local, state and regional level. Currently, she oversees grassroots strategy, media advocacy, public opinion research and policy development in support of Voices for Healthy Kids. Voices for Healthy Kids is a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Heart Association working to make every day healthier for all children. Prior to joining the AHA, Ms. Frazier was the campaign manager of Clean Air Works, the successful campaign making Boston one of the first major cities to go smoke-free, and ultimately paving the way for a smoke-free state law. Her prior experience was in supporting the passage, implementing and monitoring of public health laws and regulations which provides her an excellent understanding of the process of implementing changes once a bill becomes a law. Ms. Frazier was awarded a Master's in Social Work from Arizona State University specializing in community-based strategies and a B.A. from American University in international studies.



Gary Foster, Ph.D., M.S.

WW International, Inc.

Roundtable Member and Invited Speaker

Gary Foster is Chief Scientific Officer at WW International, Inc. Dr. Foster, a psychologist, obesity investigator and behavior change expert, was previously the Founder and Director of the Center of Obesity Research and Education and Laura Carnell Professor of Medicine, Public Health and Psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia. Prior to Temple, he served as the Clinical Director of the Weight and Eating Disorders Program at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He has authored more than 180 scientific publications and three books on the etiology and treatment of obesity. Foster has received numerous honors including President of The Obesity Society, Honorary Member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Outstanding Contributions to Health Psychology from the American Psychological Association, and the George A. Bray Founders Award from The Obesity Society. Dr. Foster's current focus is on scalable, evidence-based approaches to wellness for adults and children in community settings. Dr. Foster earned his B.A. in psychology from Duquesne University, an M.S. in psychology from University of Pennsylvania, and a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Temple University.

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Christopher Gallagher

Potomac Currents, LLC

Invited Speaker

Christopher Gallagher is President and Founder of Potomac Currents, LLC. He founded Potomac Currents in 2007 and currently serves as President of the firm where he manages a wide array of health care issues -- working closely with Federal agencies such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Food & Drug Administration. He also directs Potomac Currents' client advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill - consistently engaging legislators and their staff on key congressional health care committees. More often, he prefers developing and honing the advocacy skills of the members of his client organizations - helping them help themselves to build strong relationships with their elected representatives. Mr. Gallagher's legislative and lobbying experience spans three decades. In that time, he served as a legislative aide to former New Jersey Democratic Senator Bill Bradley where Mr. Gallagher specialized in health care, tax and education issues. In addition, he has spent over 15 years directing the government affairs and health policy efforts of three national physician specialty organizations, including 11 years at the American College of Surgeons (ACS), where Mr. Gallagher served as both the senior federal lobbyist and Manager of the ACS State Affairs program. He studied political science at Fairfield University.



Luis A. Garcia

MarketVision

Invited Speaker

Luis Garcia is President and Lead Strategist of MarketVision, an award-winning culture-inspired marketing firm focused on understanding diverse audiences and developing culturally relevant communication to bring about behavior change. MarketVision utilizes a human-centered approach to designing marketing platforms that make meaningful connections and a lasting impact. Mr. Garcia has more than 25 years of experience developing communication and marketing campaigns across health care, consumer packaged goods, automotive, financial services, and travel & tourism industries. He began his career in Account Planning for GSD&M, later moving into Account Management for Sosa & Associates and DMB&B. In 1998, Mr. Garcia founded one of the first Hispanic-focused integrated marketing firms, Garcia 360°, and in 2008 joined MarketVision as President. Mr. Garcia has led strategic planning and campaign development on Hispanic communication and outreach for various CDC and CDC Foundation campaigns, including HIV/AIDS awareness, Zika awareness, and the acclaimed VERB social marketing campaign. The VERB campaign, an integrated effort to reach Hispanic children and their parents with a message about the importance of physical activity, included the Spanish-language component "Niños Activos, Familias Sanas"/Active Children/Healthy Families. Mr. Garcia is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin.

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Suzanne (Suzi) Gates, M.P.H.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Planning Committee Member, Invited Speaker, and Facilitator

Suzanne (Suzi) Gates has worked in public health at the local, state, national, and international levels for more than 20 years and is the communication team lead for community and web support in CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Nutrition. Since joining CDC, she has managed state communication for tobacco control; coordinated youth communication and health literacy efforts; co-led the VERB activity campaign; and helped create the CDC-INFO inquiry response system. In addition, Ms. Gates lead CDC's efforts for health insurance enrollment and response to Meaningful Use. She facilitated CDC's personal health record effort and managed consumer health informatics projects. Prior to coming to CDC, Ms. Gates worked at the Missouri and Louisiana state departments of health and is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer. She received her M.P.H. from Tulane School of Public Health.



Patricia (Patty) Nece, J.D.

Obesity Action Coalition

Invited Speaker

Patricia (Patty) Nece advocates for the eradication of weight bias, sound obesity treatments, and insurance coverage for those treatments. She encourages change by sharing her personal experiences with life-long severe obesity. A noted advocate, Ms. Nece has been invited to speak at numerous venues, including Rethink Obesity Forums at the 2016 Democratic and Republican Presidential Conventions, the Obesity Medicine Association, the George Washington University School of Medicine, the Partnership for a Healthier America, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the Society for Behavioral Medicine, and Obesity Week 2018 and 2019. Ms. Nece also holds a number of positions in the obesity field. She is the Vice Chair of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) and Chairs OAC's Weight Bias Task Force. She has also served as a Commissioner on the Lancet Commission on Obesity and a member of the American Psychological Association's Guideline Development Panel for Childhood Obesity. She has worked on projects with the STOP Obesity Alliance and testified before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Ms. Nece earned her J.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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Megan Nechanicky, M.S., R.D.

General Mills

Roundtable Member, Planning Committee Member, and Facilitator

Megan Nechanicky is currently Nutrition Manager for General Mills Canada where she provides strategic direction for business and research & development partners related to health and wellness. She also works externally with government, trade associations and academic institutions to positively position General Mills for future growth. In 2017, Megan completed a 6-month international assignment in the General Mills Nyon, Switzerland office where she gained experience living and working within the Europe and Australian Region to build and advance nutrition science, research and communications. When Megan first joined General Mills in 2014, she led health influencer communications for some of General Mills largest brands including Cheerios, Fiber One and Nature Valley. In this role, she delivered cutting-edge science, consumer trends and new product development and marketing to health influencers such as dietitians, physicians, nurses and fitness professionals. Prior to General Mills, Megan was the first dietitian to work at the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition. In her role, Megan led nutrition and physical activity-related initiatives and events. Megan was also responsible for the Department of Health and Human Services coordination of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative to end childhood obesity within a generation. Megan served on the Federal steering committee to develop the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines Midcourse Report and coordinated the communications strategy and report launch in 2013. Megan is a Registered Dietitian and holds a Bachelor's degree in Food Marketing from Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, PA and a dual Master's degree in Exercise Physiology and Nutrition from San Diego State University.



April Oh, Ph.D., M.P.H.

National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health

Invited Speaker and Facilitator

April Oh is Program Director in the Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch (HCIRB) at the National Cancer Institute (NCI). She leads a research grants portfolio in physical activity and diet communication, neighborhood and policy effects and community health promotion, mobile health, technology applications to promote behavior change and public health. Dr. Oh's scientific work includes examination of the context of eating and activity behaviors (policy, communication, built and social environments), multilevel communication interventions to promote HPV vaccination uptake, neighborhood environments, and social determinants of behavioral health and health disparities. Dr. Oh has scientific and programmatic interests in dissemination and implementation science research and serves as Program Director for NCI's [Speeding Research Tested Interventions into Practice \(SPRINT\)](#) training program and works as a programmatic liaison to the Implementation Science Team at NCI. She previously served as Senior Policy Advisor to the U.S. Surgeon General. Dr. Oh also serves as a lead for the NCI Centers initiative on Implementation Science in Cancer Control. Dr. Oh holds a doctoral degree

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in public health (community health sciences) from the University of Illinois at Chicago, a master's degree in public health from the University of Michigan, and a bachelor's degree in public health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Nicolaas (Nico) Pronk, Ph.D., M.A., FACS, FAWHP

HealthPartners Institute and HealthPartners, Inc.

Chair, Roundtable on Obesity Solutions

Nicolaas (Nico) Pronk is President of the HealthPartners Institute and Chief Science Officer at HealthPartners, Inc. and holds a faculty appointment as Adjunct Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, Massachusetts. HealthPartners Institute is one of the largest medical research and education centers in the Midwest, the Institute has about 450 studies underway each year, trains more than 500 medical residents and fellows and more than 500 students, and provides continuing medical education for 25,000 clinicians as well as patient education and clinical quality improvement. HealthPartners, founded in 1957 as a cooperative, is an integrated, non-profit, member-governed health system providing health care services and health plan financing and administration. It's the largest consumer governed nonprofit health care organization in the United States. Dr. Pronk's work is focused on connecting evidence of effectiveness with the practical application of programs and practices, policies and systems that measurably improve population health and well-being. His work applies to the workplace, the care delivery setting, and the community and involves development of new models to improve health and well-being at the research, practice and policy levels. His research interests include workplace health and safety, obesity, physical activity, and systems approaches to population health and well-being. Currently, Dr. Pronk serves as co-chair of the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services' Advisory Committee on National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives for 2030 (aka Healthy People 2030). He is a former member of the Community Preventive Services Task Force and the Defense Health Board (formerly known as the Armed Forces Epidemiological Board). He was the founding and past president of the International Association for Worksite Health Promotion and currently serves on boards and committees at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, the American Heart Association, and the Health Enhancement Research Organization, among others. He is widely published in both the scientific and practice literatures and is an international speaker on population health and well-being. Dr. Pronk received his doctorate degree in exercise physiology at Texas A&M University and completed his post-doctoral studies in behavioral medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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Rebecca Puhl, Ph.D.

University of Connecticut

Invited Speaker

Rebecca Puhl is Professor of Human Development & Family Sciences at the University of Connecticut. She is also the Deputy Director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, where she leads research and policy efforts aimed at reducing weight-based stigma and discrimination. Her research on weight stigma includes more than 120 publications on topics including weight-based bullying in youth, the impact of weight stigma on emotional and physical health, weight stigma in health care and the media, and policy strategies to reduce weight-based bullying and discrimination. As a national research expert on weight stigma, Dr. Puhl has testified in legislative hearings on weight discrimination and routinely provides expertise on strategies to reduce weight bias to national and international health organizations. She has also developed evidence-based trainings to reduce weight stigma in health care that have been implemented in medical facilities across the U.S., and her work is routinely cited in the national media. Dr. Puhl has received multiple awards for her work both at the University of Connecticut and from national organizations such as the National Eating Disorders Coalition, the Obesity Action Coalition, and most recently The Obesity Society's 2018 scientific achievement award for excellence in an established research career. Dr. Puhl received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Yale University.



Kevin Ronneberg, M.D.

HealthPartners, Inc.

Roundtable Member, Planning Committee Member, and Invited Speaker

Kevin Ronneberg is Vice President and Associate Medical Director at HealthPartners. Kevin joined HealthPartners in 2015 and is responsible for designing health solutions for employer groups, strengthening consumer partnerships, and building new services and programs. He works closely with multiple teams including product development, health and care engagement, network management, sales and marketing to connect consumer, employer and care delivery perspectives with a focus on improved health and well-being. Dr. Ronneberg has held multiple clinical and administrative leadership roles. Prior to HealthPartners, he was medical director at Target and led efforts to make high-quality health care more affordable and accessible in the retailer's in-store clinics and pharmacies. His areas of focus included brokering partnerships with health systems in key markets and developing new models of care to leverage the expanding role of the pharmacist and nurse practitioners. Dr. Ronneberg has also served as medical director for health management at Medica health plan, and was a medical director and founder of Fairview's Sports and Orthopedic Care clinics before that. He is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Medical School and completed residency training with Park Nicollet Health Services. He is board certified in family medicine.

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Sylvia Rowe, M.A.

SR Strategy

Roundtable Member, Planning Committee Chair, and Invited Speaker

Sylvia Rowe is currently President of SR Strategy, which addresses the science to communications to policy continuum on a broad range of global health, nutrition, food safety and risk issues. She is also an Adjunct Professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Tufts Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy. Previously Rowe served as president and chief executive officer of the International Food Information Council (IFIC) and IFIC Foundation, in Washington, DC. During her eleven-year tenure, IFIC established itself as a leader in consumer research and consumer-based communications in nutrition, food safety, and health. Ms. Rowe's leadership resulted in national public-private partnerships and coalitions between IFIC and preeminent government agencies and health organizations committed to developing science-based communications and programs. Ms. Rowe is Chair of the Food Forum and a member of the Food and Nutrition Board. She is also a Contributing Editor of *Nutrition Today*. Ms. Rowe has served on several Boards and Advisory Committees of the following: American Heart Association, The Obesity Society, Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network, American Society for Nutrition, Washington, DC Mayor's Commission on Food, Nutrition and Health, Grains for Health Foundation, University of Rochester Medical Center, Food and Drug Law Institute, Society for Nutrition Education Foundation, Maryland Title IX Commission and the American Society of Association Executives Foundation. She is also a member of the International Women's Leadership Forum and the National Press Club among other professional groups. Ms. Rowe's background in media and expertise in issues management are reflected in her professional history as a producer and on-air host of several television and radio talk shows covering social, political, and economic and consumer issues. She also previously held positions in public relations, marketing, and membership development for several diverse associations. Ms. Rowe received a Bachelor's degree from Wellesley College and was awarded a Master's degree from Harvard University, both with honors.



Dietram A. Scheufele, Ph.D.

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Planning Committee Member and Invited Speaker

Dietram A. Scheufele is the Taylor-Bascom Chair in Science Communication and Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and in the Morgridge Institute for Research. Dr. Scheufele's research focuses on public attitudes and policy dynamics surrounding emerging science. He is a member of the German National Academy of Science and Engineering, and an elected fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the International Communication Association, and the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters. He currently co-chairs the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Standing Committee on Advancing Science Communication Research and Practice, and serves on

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NASEM's Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education Advisory Committee, the Board on Health Sciences Policy, and the Division on Earth and Life Studies Advisory Committee. Since 2012, he has co-organized four NASEM Colloquia on the Science of Science Communication. Scheufele has been a tenured faculty member at Cornell University and has held fellowships or visiting appointments at Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and - most recently - the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster. His consulting portfolio includes work for DeepMind, Porter Novelli, PBS, WHO, and the World Bank. Dr. Scheufele earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in mass communications from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Liz Skrbkova, M.A.

Novo Nordisk Inc.

Planning Committee Member and Facilitator

Liz Skrbkova is Associate Director of U.S. obesity communications for Novo Nordisk, a global healthcare company. She has a strong background in marketing communications and public relations, having worked in the global health and non-profit sectors in London, Sydney, Paris, Copenhagen and NYC. Ms. Skrbkova spearheads strategic product/pipeline and disease awareness communications and engages with partners, influencers and communities around weight and health, fostering education and advocacy to combat weight bias and expand access to respectful and complete obesity care. She earned her M.A. from the University of Sydney.



Brian Southwell, Ph.D., M.A.

RTI International and Duke University

Invited Speaker

Brian Southwell is Senior Director of the Science in the Public Sphere Program in the Center for Communication Science at RTI International. In addition, Dr. Southwell is an Adjunct Professor and Duke-RTI Scholar with Duke University, where he has taught courses in sociology, public policy, and documentary studies. He also is a graduate faculty member (in Media and Journalism) and Adjunct Associate Professor (of Health Behavior) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Southwell's contributions appear in more than 100 journal articles and chapters and his various books, including *Misinformation and Mass Audiences* (University of Texas Press) and *Social Networks and Popular Understanding of Science and Health* (Johns Hopkins University Press), have been based on social science research. Dr. Southwell is also host of a public radio show, [*The Measure of Everyday Life*](#), for WNCU. He holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in communications from the University of Pennsylvania.

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Kasisomayajula (Vish) Viswanath, Ph.D.

Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health

Invited Speaker

K. (Vish) Viswanath is Lee Kum Kee Professor of Health Communication in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH) and in the McGraw-Patterson Center for Population Sciences at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI). He is also the Faculty Director of the Health Communication Core of the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center (DF/HCC). He is the founding Director of DF/HCC's Enhancing Communications for Health Outcomes (ECHO) Laboratory. He chairs the Steering Committee for the Health Communication Concentration (HCC) at HSPH and teaches health communication courses within this concentration. Dr. Viswanath's work, drawing from literatures in communication science, social epidemiology, and social and health behavior sciences, focuses on translational communication science to influence public health policy and practice. His primary research is in documenting the relationship between communication inequalities, poverty and health disparities, and knowledge translation to address health disparities. He was the Chair of the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Center for Health Marketing at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta from 2007-2010. He has served as a member on four Institute of Medicine (IOM)/National Academy of Medicine Committees: Committee on Gulf War and Health: Treatment of Chronic Multisymptom Illness (CMI), the Committee on Sports-Related Concussions in Youth, the Committee on Health and Safety of Youth and The Committee on Parents of Young Children. He was a member of the National Vaccine Advisory Committee (NVAC) of the U. S. Department of Health & Human Services and Chaired its Working Group on Vaccine Acceptance (2012-2016), and is a member of the Board of Scientific Counselors, Office of Public Health Preparedness, CDC. Dr. Viswanath received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.