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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the International Joint Commission, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and the Ontario College of Family Physicians for their financial support for consultants, design, printing, and teaching of the curriculum.

We thank all the expert consultants and consulting authors who assisted with review and writing of the individual modules:

Lead	Dr. Monica Campbell, Toronto Health Unit
Outdoor Air	Dr. David Steib, Environmental Health Directorate, Health Canada
Indoor Air	Dr. Robert Dales, University of Ottawa
Pesticides	Dr. Donald Cole, Institute for Work and Health, Toronto
Clusters of Disease	Dr. Doug Sider, Brant County Health Unit, Ontario
Persistent Organic Pollutants	Dr. Brian Gibson, Boston University

Thanks to all past and present members of the Ontario College of Family Physicians Environmental Health Committee, and the Health Professionals Task Force on Environment and Health of the International Joint Commission, for contributing to our concepts of key skill sets and content areas of environmental health in family medicine, and for supporting the project along the way.

We also appreciate the extensive reviews and comments on several modules by three international experts in environmental health:

Dr. Drew Brodtkin	University of Washington
Dr. Brian Gibson	Boston University
Dr. Peter Orris	University of Illinois Chicago

Acknowledgements

Thanks also to: Drs. R. Bray, K. Kerr, J.Krulewitz, TK Lee, K. Martin, C. Levitt, K.Trouton; and Virginia Salares and Jim Houston, for encouragement, planning, contribution of case material for the modules, reviews, and logistic support.

Thanks to Chris Irvine of Triax Design, Owen Sound for his contribution to design and graphics for the project.

Finally, our special thanks to the Ontario College of Family Physicians for their longstanding and continuing support of environmental health in family medicine, including research, joint projects with many other organizations, and educational workshops for practicing physicians.

Alan Abelson

Marg Sanborn

May , 2000

Foreword

As physicians practicing medicine in our communities and concerned with our patients' welfare, we cannot ignore the continuing degradation of our environment. Those of us who practice in large urban areas have witnessed our patients suffering from the adverse effects of air pollution. Walkerton, on the other hand, provides rural practitioners with a stark example of the lethal consequences of water pollution. The recent loss of life there poignantly underlines the urgent need for action. As our patients' advocates, we must work toward reversing the current deterioration of the environment in Canada and the United States, as well as in the rest of the world.

The hard work of the authors and the International Joint Commission should inspire us in this effort. Their Environmental Health in Family Medicine curriculum material is an invaluable resource, one which will help family physicians to cultivate a more detailed knowledge of environmental issues. We anticipate that family physicians, working in concert with other groups, will ultimately respond by raising the profile of health issues stemming from environmental degradation. Amid rising public awareness, voters will persuade politicians to overcome their intrinsic resistance to change.

On behalf of physicians and the public, I would like to thank the authors for their commitment to this vital cause. We hope that this curriculum material will inform all who make use of it, inspiring them to commitment and action.

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