

# 2008

## New Partners for Smart Growth Lifetime Achievement Award

**Richard J. Jackson, MD, MPH**

**A national leader in improving the health of the people**

**D**r. Richard J. Jackson has dedicated his professional life to protecting the health of the public and training future generations of public health leaders.

Jackson received his M.D. from the University of California, San Francisco and M.P.H. from UC Berkeley. He began his diverse, multi-faceted career as a public health officer in the San Francisco Bay Area. He served nine years as Director of the National Center for Environmental Health at the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). His most recent position brought him back to UC Berkeley, where he was a professor of environmental health. Jackson has just accepted a position at the University of Michigan to lead the Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute and will take over the job in late February.

It was while he was working at the CDC that Jackson began to focus on the connection between land-use planning and health. He co-authored the influential book, "Urban Sprawl and Public Health: Designing, Planning, and Building for Healthy Communities," which exhaustively describes the negative health effects of sprawl.

As an inspiring, articulate, visionary speaker, Jackson rapidly came to the forefront of the smart growth movement and has tirelessly and selflessly served as a keynote speaker at workshops and conferences held throughout the U.S. and England.

In early 2004, Jackson left the CDC to accept an appointment by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger as California's State Public Health Officer. During his tenure there, he traveled to most of the state's 58 counties to meet with local public health officials and speak at meetings, conferences and workshops about the negative effects of poor land-use planning on health. His impact is clearly visible as many planners and public health officials throughout the state are now working together.

Jackson's accomplishments have extended far beyond the smart growth movement. His work in California has strengthened farmworker health protection, food safety and child health. The California Birth Defects Monitoring Program was established through his efforts.

At the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, he worked for the addition of folic acid to food to prevent birth defects, established the national asthma epidemiology and control programs, and oversaw the childhood lead poisoning prevention programs.

Jackson instituted the current federal effort to biomonitor chemical levels in the U.S. population, and in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster, was the U.S. lead under several government efforts around health and environment in Russia, including radiation threats. In the late 1990s, he was the CDC leader in establishing the U.S. National Pharmaceutical Stockpile to prepare for terrorism and other disasters – a plan that was activated following the World Trade Center attack.

Dr. Jackson has served on many medical and health boards. Since 2005, he has served on the board of directors of the national American Institute of Architects. For the past three years, he has also served on the board of directors of the Children's Environmental Health Network.

Jackson's positive impact on the world as we know it today is both measurable and inspirational. The smart growth movement would not be where it is today without him. We will be eternally grateful to him for his tireless leadership.

**“We can create environments that can be much smarter in terms of protecting the planet, protecting human well-being and, in the long run, protecting the economy and prosperity.”**

– Dr. Richard J. Jackson

