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## Foreword

In July 1980, delegations representing the world community of nations convened in Copenhagen, Denmark, to evaluate the progress made by women in health, education, and employment during the past 5 years, and to set goals and make plans to further that progress in the coming 5 years. This was the "Mid-Decade" World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, 1980, held half-way through the 10-year period, designated as a time for the entire world to strive for equality for women and to make significant efforts to address their problems.

Each country that participated in the conference was invited to bring "country papers" reporting the status of women's health, education and employment for their countries. This special supplement to *Public Health Reports* is the United States' "country paper" on health. While this paper was written by Dr. Emily Moore, staff from each of the six Public Health Service's agencies were extremely helpful in providing data for this paper and in reviewing the manuscript in different stages of its development.

This report documents the progress that has been made in the health status of American women. However, it also notes many of the health problems which continue to pose special problems for women, ranging from the fact that lung cancer will soon overtake breast cancer as the leading cancer threat to women's lives, to problems that women face in obtaining needed health services or in receiving appropriate treatment.

In considering the extremely useful material which this report contains it is, in fact, surprising that a document such as this has not, to date, been prepared. I believe this report is particularly valuable for several reasons. First, as we move toward insuring comprehensive health care for the entire population, it is essential to have a data base which allows us to identify specific problems faced by different segments of the population. This report begins to provide this type of data on women's health problems which can help us target future health resources and services more effectively. Second, because this report looks not only at the status of women's health, but also at their roles as consumers and providers of health care, we can identify issues that

can help us develop strategies to address problems that may affect women in these roles. And, third, the wide number of topics covered in this report can provide an agenda for activities that can and should be pursued by a number of different public and private groups that have an interest in women's health.

We are publishing this report to share our enlarged understanding of U.S. women's health issues with the broader public health community. Let us all accept its challenge to further improve the health of American women during the last half of the United Nations Decade for Women.

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