

PAUL PLACEK RETIRES JANUARY 3, 2005

Paul has worked on ICF development and implementation for the past 12 years of his 30+ year career at the National Center for Health Statistics. He started at NCHS in August of 1974 with a Ph.D. in Medical Sociology and Biostatistics at Vanderbilt. After 18 years working on vital records followback surveys, he began working in disability classification 12 years ago. His recent responsibilities have included writing these Clearinghouse messages, developing ICF projects, helping plan the annual NACC meetings on ICF, participating in the annual WHO conferences of the Family of International Classifications, and encouraging ICF research. He hopes to continue with ICF consulting, and asks his friends and colleagues to continue contacting him with ICF news and events at:

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His retirement party in Hyattsville is set for January 25th, and an announcement may be obtained by contacting Dr. Gerry Hendershot at 301-927-1120 or Ghendershot@earthlink.net. Paul hopes to have a little more time for his nine-year old son Vincent, wife of 27 years Becky, and his classic and hot rod car collection, as shown in this photo of Paul with his 1941 Ford streetrod.

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Paul wishes to thank his colleagues for very kind remarks and good wishes, and these are reproduced below with their permission. Paul says that it is really great to read such nice things about himself, especially since he did not have to be dead to have them said!

"It's been wonderful working with you on ICF matters for the past 41/2 years. I appreciate so much all the guidance you offered me during the initial learning curve. Our Canadian/US international border seemed to almost melt away as we worked together on NACC activities, in particular the annual conference. I'm delighted that you're staying involved with ICF. My very best wishes on this new chapter of your career." Diane Caulfeild, Canadian Institute for Health Information

"Dear Paul, Thank you so much for being such a positive moving spirit behind the field. You know retirement is never absolute--who knows maybe we can work on some joint projects in the future? Please keep in touch. All the best for a happy retirement! With gratitude, respect, and admiration, JJ"
Josefina J. Card, Ph.D., President, Sociometrics Corporation

"You deserve enormous credit for the focus and energy you've put into disability measurement, statistics, and ICF. I hope you will find some mechanism for continuing to help in this work. Peace, Don" Donald J. Lollar, Ed.D., National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

"Paul, I will miss you. Your intelligence, compassion, humor and perseverance will not easily be matched by anyone who may take over. However, begrudgingly, I must say you've been at our common work a long, long time. Enjoy your retirement, which sounds as if it will keep you busy. I hope that your activities bring you here one day or that we will find a common ground for future activity. Thanks, you enriched my professional life. Kate Seelman " Katherine D. Seelman, Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh

"I really wish you all the best as you turn the page and pursue new endeavors-- including more time with your son. I'm sure you'll find that to be one of the most rewarding experiences. Enjoy this time to the fullest and you should be well pleased with the contributions you've made from your position there. Best wishes always, Jayne Lux"

"Dear Paul: For quite some time I have been thinking what to write in celebration of your retirement. There is so much to say! There are so many memories! I have known you for about 15 years. Over the years you have become a role model and great friend for me. I admire the many contributions you have made in the field of disability and I want to compliment you for all the work you have done. First, you have been instrumental in supporting, promoting and moving forward the APHA Disability Forum. Your enthusiasm and creative ideas were invaluable. And above all, your sense of humor has left many marks. Even this year at the annual APHA conference, while sitting in the APHA Disability Form booth, we were talking about re-instating the wrapping of crackers with papers with the printed Disability Forum sponsored sessions on it. But the number of sessions is growing so fast that the paper may not fit the crackers any more..! Second, your vision and commitment in promoting the ICIDH/ICF has been most influential. In my opinion, the ICF has received the national attention and the interest of scholars, policy makers and many others thanks to your support and effortless work in promoting the ICF. You have been a team player, a cheerleader and a perfect coach in coordinating the ICIDH revision, and now the ICF activities. I know that this has been, and still is, of significant interest to you, not only professionally but also personally. I remember how, in one of your ICIDH training presentations, about 9 years ago, you showed a slide of the cover page of the ICIDH book. "This is my baby" you said, "and here is my other baby" (a beautiful baby picture of your son). Both have grown, and both still need your help in their further growth and development! Furthermore, Paul, you are an excellent writer. I always enjoy reading your reports and papers. Your writing is succinct, persuasive and convincing. In 1996 you wrote me a reference letter when I applied for a job at Wayne State University. That was one of the best reference letters I ever received! I keep a copy of that letter in a special file. I hope, Paul, that you will continue to make many contributions, share your expertise, share your sense

of humor, musical talents and stories about your two grown-up babies, and old cars, for many more years to come! Have a great retirement party. Very best wishes, Els" Els R. Nieuwenhuijsen, PhD, University of Michigan

"Hi Paul, Just got back from holidays and read the Clearinghouse letter.... and saw the news about your retirement! My first reaction is how happy I am for you... good for you! I know you enjoy some down time to spend time with your family and pursue your hobbies (I have my collector car proudly displayed in my family room). But I am sad that we won't be working on the 2006 ICF conference together. Its been a pleasure working with you and I do hope our paths cross again in the future." Kathey Cauley, Canadian Institute for Health Information

"Congratulations Paul. Wishing you full participation in retirement" Gale Whiteneck, Craig Hospital

"Hi Paul, I've just learned of your upcoming retirement from the November 2004 Messages - NACC Clearinghouse on ICF. You seem to have the after-NCHS-life all well-planned. I just want to wish you good life in your retirement and to let you know that it was a pleasure for me to have been part of the DISTAB group. Regards, Margaret" Margaret Mbogoni, United Nations Statistics Division

"Paul, Congratulations on your career and your decision to begin a new phase of life! Sometimes we don't always know how we affect events, organizations or individuals. I have been admiring your work from afar because our work assignments are not as closely aligned as before. I have been personally challenged by your example, and your willingness and ability to explore the unexplored. There are now and will be thousands more people with disabilities whose lives will be happier and more productive because of your efforts. That is an accomplishment few can match! I wish you the best in your new life. Thanks, Dan" Dan Young, National Institutes of Health

"Paul, Congratulations on your impending retirement. I hope you will continue to find fulfilling projects, paid or unpaid, that advance the causes most dear to your heart, or that you will just find the time to stop and smell the roses. Whatever! In any case, thanks for your assistance with my contacts with the ISDS. Aloha! Bob" Robert M. Schacht, Ph.D, University of Hawaii