

By
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LSUHSC'S FONTHAM MAKES HISTORY – 1ST NON-PHYSICIAN ELECTED NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

New Orleans, LA – Elizabeth T. H. (Terry) Fontham, MPH, DrPH, Dean of the LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans School of Public Health, has become the first nonphysician elected national President of the American Cancer Society. She was inducted at a special ceremony during the Society's National Assembly Meeting on November 20, 2008 in New York City. She is also the first epidemiologist and the third female to serve as president in the organization's 96-year history.

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer through research, education, advocacy, and service. With more than two million volunteers nationwide, the American Cancer Society is one of the oldest and largest voluntary health agencies in the United States.

“Dr. Terry Fontham has dedicated a great deal of her life to fighting cancer, and she has made enormous and life-saving contributions,” said Dr. Larry Hollier, Chancellor of LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans. “We are very proud that the American Cancer Society has recognized Dr. Fontham's strong leadership ability, something we have had the privilege to know firsthand for many years.”

Dr. Fontham is the first Dean of LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans School of Public Health and is Professor of Epidemiology as well as Professor of Pathology in the LSUHSC School of Medicine. A graduate of Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Dr. Fontham has been on the faculty in the LSU Health Sciences Center since 1980 and was Chairman of the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine prior to the establishment of the School of Public Health. She is Associate Director of the LSUHSC Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center and is Senior Consultant Epidemiologist to the Louisiana Office of Public Health.

Dr. Fontham's major area of research is cancer epidemiology with a focus on the etiology of tobacco- and diet-related cancers. She has made significant contributions in establishing the risk of lung cancer associated with involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke. She was an author of the first U.S. case-control study of lung cancer reporting an increased risk of lung cancer in nonsmokers passively exposed to tobacco. Subsequently she led the largest study of lung cancer in nonsmoking women, a U.S. multi-center study that provided critical information on the association between passive smoking and lung cancer risk. Dr. Fontham has also published extensively on premalignant lesions leading to gastric cancer, modifiable factors associated with progression, and chemoprevention of this cancer.

Dr. Fontham has served as a member of the National Cancer Institute Board of Scientific Counselors. She was Treasurer and member of the Board of Directors of the American College

of Epidemiology of which she is a Fellow. She was a member of the inaugural Editorial Board of *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention*, Chairman of the Scientific Editorial Board of the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries and has been a co-author of both the Surgeon General's Report and International Agency for Cancer Research Carcinogenesis Monograph series. She is recipient of the C.L. Brown Award for Leadership Excellence in Tobacco Prevention, the Leadership and Distinguished Service Award of the American College of Epidemiology, and the Pfizer Award for Excellence in Research, Education and Patient Care. Dr. Fontham is a long time active volunteer in the American Cancer Society at the local, division and national levels. She has served as President of the Greater New Orleans Unit Board, Chairman of the Board of the Mid-South Division, and is a member of the ACS National Board of Directors where she serves as the First Vice President. She was a member of the ACS Cancer Action Network Board of Directors and has served on many ACS committees. She currently chairs the national Reduction of Cancer Incidence and Mortality Committee and co-chairs the International Affairs Advisory Committee. Other current committee/workgroup memberships include Research and Medical Affairs Committee and Advocacy and Public Policy Committee. She is a recipient of the ACS Capitol Dome Award and the St. George Medal as well as Life Saver Awards from both her unit and division.

“Dr. Fontham has been and continues to be a leader in the building of our Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans and the Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium, as the co-director for Population Sciences,” notes Augusto Ochoa, MD, Director of the LSUHSC Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center. “She is also an example for our cancer researchers for her continued commitment to propose novel research projects that continue to help us understand the impact of cancer on the population of Louisiana and the United States in general.”

LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans educates the majority of Louisiana's health care professionals. The state's academic health leader, LSUHSC comprises a School of Medicine, the state's only School of Dentistry, Louisiana's only public School of Public Health, Schools of Allied Health Professions and Graduate Studies, as well as the only School of Nursing in Louisiana within an academic health center. LSUHSC faculty members take care of patients in public and private hospitals and clinics throughout Louisiana. In the vanguard of biosciences research in a number of areas worldwide, LSUHSC faculty members have made lifesaving discoveries and continue to work to prevent, treat, or cure disease. LSUHSC outreach programs span the state.