Foreword

The Milbank Memorial Fund is an endowed operating foundation that works to improve health by helping decision makers in the public and private sectors acquire and use the best available evidence to inform policy for health care and population health. The Fund has engaged in nonpartisan analysis, study, research, and communication since its inception in 1905.

Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children, by Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, is the twenty-fourth book in the series California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public. The publishing partnership between the Fund and the University of California Press encourages the synthesis and communication of findings from research and experience that could contribute to more effective health policy.

Markowitz and Rosner's first book published in the California/Milbank series, *Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution*, provided the early history of the lead industry's efforts to sell its product while knowing the devastating health effects it had on those exposed to it, particularly factory workers employed in lead-based industries and children living in homes decorated with lead paint. In *Lead Wars*, the authors reveal how this preventable, century-long public health scourge continues to plague children because partial removal of lead from homes—a process that proponents claim yields safe levels of lead—has been the chosen policy over complete abatement. While children rarely die of lead poisoning today, their exposure to “safe” levels of lead, instead of being protective, has caused them irreparable damage in the form of neurological, physiological, and behavioral problems.

Lead Wars underscores the present-day challenge of public health, with the field's shift of focus from prevention to harm reduction in the face of declining resources, lack of political mandate, and questionable professional

will. As a result of the authors' thorough research and analysis, this book will provide compelling reading for historians, sociologists, public health officials, ethicists, environmentalists, and anyone else interested in the effects that public policies have on people's health and the environment.

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