It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Dr. Richard (Dick) Keenlyside, which occurred on September 13, 2014. His kind demeanor, sense of humor, and unfailing commitment to public health will be deeply missed by many. Before retiring in December 2012, Dick spent 27 years working at CDC. His most recent position was as Country Manager for CDC’s HIV/AIDS programs in China, Russia, Ukraine, Central Asia, and India.

Dick first came to the United States, and to CDC, in 1976 as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer, where he carried out research on a variety of infectious and non-infectious diseases. In the years following, he held various positions at CDC, including serving as the Associate Director for Global Health in the National Center for HIV, STD, and TB prevention in 1999-2000. In all of his positions, Dick stood out as an incredibly insightful epidemiologist and program manager as well as a caring and committed colleague in the war against disease.

In addition to his tremendous work at CDC, Dick served as a lecturer in the Department of Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, a consultant with the Pan American Health Organization’s Caribbean Epidemiology Center, and a state epidemiologist at the Rhode Island Department of Health. Dick always thought of the health and well-being of others and demonstrated an ongoing commitment to learn and grow, both personally and professionally. He received his medical degree from London University Westminster Medical School, his MS in Epidemiology from Harvard University School of Public Health, and a Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene from the London School of Hygiene.

For Dick’s retirement celebration in December 2012, Ron Peterson of CDC-India captured the essence of what many say working with Dick was like: “You have the uncanny ability to take a stressful situation and turn it into a situation with a lot of laughs. You are able to draw out the best in people who work with you and are always a joy to have around...you will be greatly missed. You are a friend and a mentor.”
Dr. Jeffrey Koplan, former CDC Director, says Dick was a “charming, witty, and endearing person who made friends easily across the world. He was dedicated to his public health responsibilities which ranged from occupational health to infectious diseases to a keen focus on HIV/AIDS. He was a steadfast and loyal friend and an always helpful colleague. He'll be missed by public health workers wherever he worked and by his many friends in Atlanta.”

Dick was well known for his compassion and for his ability to bring humor and happiness to any situation. When one of his Drepung Loseling Monastery resident teachers was undergoing a liver transplant at Emory, Dick signed on immediately to help with in-patient and post-operative care. As his teacher, Geshe Ngawang Phende recalls, “although my health condition was very serious, he always had a way of lightening up the mood with his mindfulness, a smile, and a joke.”

Dick’s career path took him both in and outside of CDC. Wherever he went, he was a positive influence that touched the lives of many and it was clear to all who worked with him that he genuinely loved his work. DGHA and many others across the public health community are deeply saddened by this loss, but thankful to have benefitted from Dick’s many contributions and good will.

Condolences may be sent to the Keenlyside Family at 5 Conklin Street, Wappingers Falls, New York 12590.