Politicians have talked endlessly about the seismic economic and social impacts of the recent financial crisis, but many continue to ignore its disastrous effects on human health—and have even exacerbated them, by adopting harsh austerity measures and cutting key social programs at a time when constituents need them most. The result is that many countries have turned their recessions into veritable epidemics, ruining or extinguishing thousands of lives in a misguided attempt to balance budgets and shore up financial markets. Yet sound alternative policies could instead help improve economies and protect public health at the same time.