



NATIONAL
PREVENTION
COUNCIL

National Prevention Strategy

AMERICA'S PLAN FOR BETTER HEALTH AND WELLNESS



June 2011



National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council

*For more information about the National Prevention Strategy, go to:
<http://www.healthcare.gov/center/councils/nphpphc>.*

**OFFICE of the
SURGEON GENERAL**

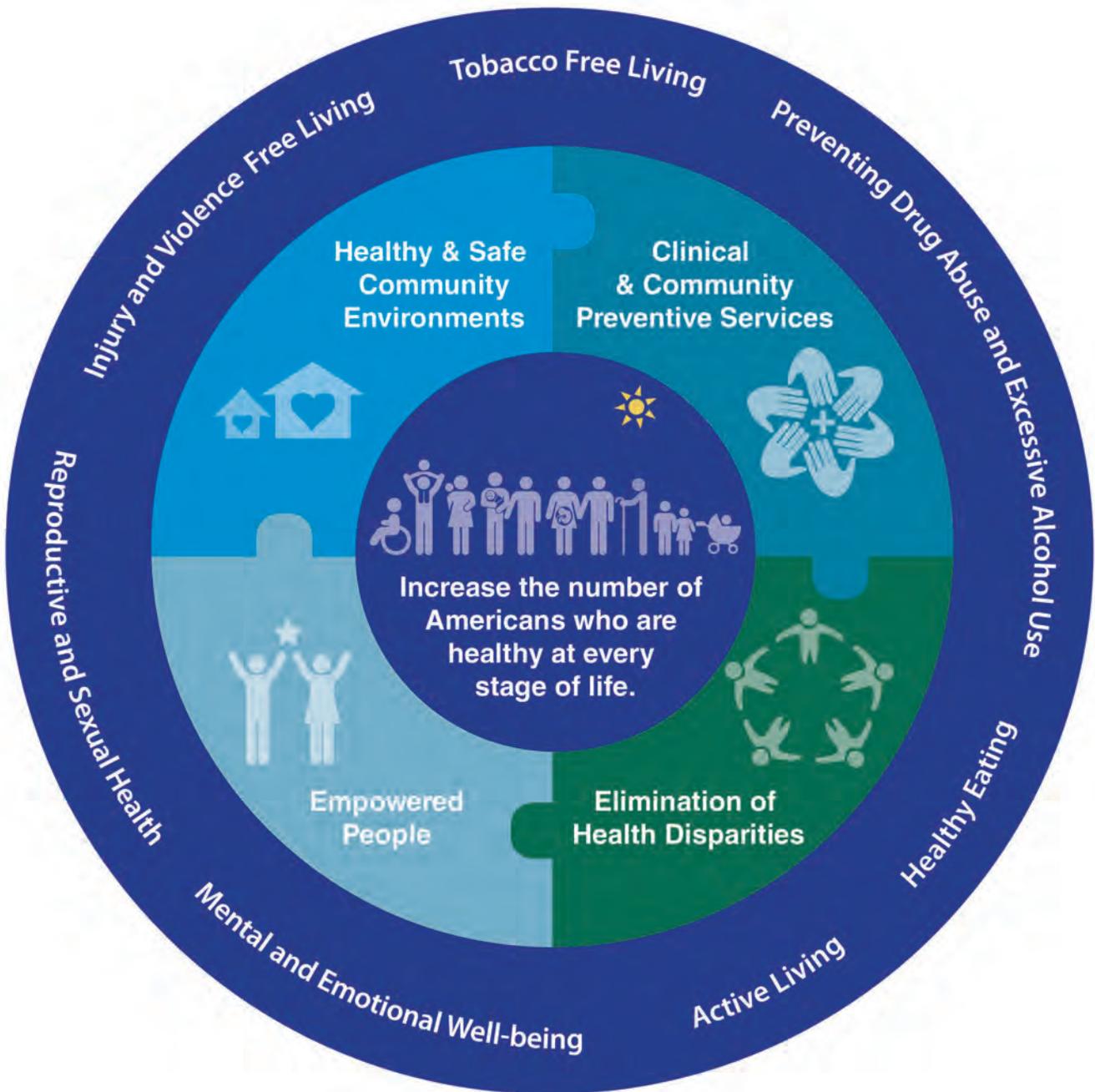
5600 Fishers Lane
Room 18-66
Rockville, MD 20857
email: prevention.council@hhs.gov

Suggested citation:

National Prevention Council, *National Prevention Strategy*, Washington, DC:
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2011.

National Prevention Strategy

America's Plan for Better Health and Wellness



June 16, 2011

Message from the Chair of the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council

As U.S. Surgeon General and Chair of the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council (National Prevention Council), I am honored to present the nation's first ever National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy (National Prevention Strategy). This strategy is a critical component of the Affordable Care Act, and it provides an opportunity for us to become a more healthy and fit nation.

The National Prevention Council comprises 17 heads of departments, agencies, and offices across the Federal government who are committed to promoting prevention and wellness. The Council provides the leadership necessary to engage not only the federal government but a diverse array of stakeholders, from state and local policy makers, to business leaders, to individuals, their families and communities, to champion the policies and programs needed to ensure the health of Americans prospers. With guidance from the public and the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health, the National Prevention Council developed this Strategy.

The National Prevention Strategy will move us from a system of sick care to one based on wellness and prevention. It builds upon the state-of-the-art clinical services we have in this country and the remarkable progress that has been made toward understanding how to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities through prevention.

The National Prevention Strategy encourages partnerships among Federal, state, tribal, local, and territorial governments; business, industry, and other private sector partners; philanthropic organizations; community and faith-based organizations; and everyday Americans to improve health through prevention. For the first time in the history of our nation, we have developed a cross-sector, integrated national strategy that identifies priorities for improving the health of Americans. Through these partnerships, the National Prevention Strategy will improve America's health by helping to create healthy and safe communities, expand clinical and community-based preventive services, empower people to make healthy choices, and eliminate health disparities.

We know that preventing disease before it starts is critical to helping people live longer, healthier lives and keeping health care costs down. Poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and alcohol misuse are just some of the challenges we face. We also know that many of the strongest predictors of health and well-being fall outside of the health care setting. Our housing, transportation, education, workplaces, and environment are major elements that impact the physical and mental health of Americans. This is why the National Prevention Strategy helps us understand how to weave prevention into the fabric of our everyday lives.

The National Prevention Council members and I are fully committed to implementing the National Prevention Strategy. We look forward to continuing our dialogue with all stakeholders as we strive to ensure that programs and policies effectively help us accomplish our vision of a healthy and fit nation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Regina Benjamin MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Regina M. Benjamin, MD,
Surgeon General
Chair of the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council

National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council

Members

- Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin, Council Chair
- Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Department of Health and Human Services
- Secretary Tom Vilsack, Department of Agriculture
- Secretary Arne Duncan, Department of Education
- Chairman Jon Leibowitz, Federal Trade Commission
- Secretary Ray LaHood, Department of Transportation
- Secretary Hilda L. Solis, Department of Labor
- Secretary Janet A. Napolitano, Department of Homeland Security
- Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, Environmental Protection Agency
- Director R. Gil Kerlikowske, Office of National Drug Control Policy
- Director Melody Barnes, Domestic Policy Council
- Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk, Department of the Interior
- Acting Chief Executive Officer Robert Velasco II, Corporation for National and Community Service
- Secretary Robert M. Gates, Department of Defense
- Secretary Shaun Donovan, Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., Department of Justice
- Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, Department of Veterans Affairs
- Director Jacob J. Lew, Office of Management and Budget

Table of Contents

<i>Message from the Chair of the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council</i>	3
<i>National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council</i>	4
<i>Table of Contents</i>	5
<i>Introduction</i>	6
<i>National Leadership</i>	8
<i>Partners in Prevention</i>	9
<i>Strategic Directions and Priorities</i>	11
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	
<i>Healthy and Safe Community Environments</i>	14
<i>Clinical and Community Preventive Services</i>	18
<i>Empowered People</i>	22
<i>Elimination of Health Disparities</i>	25
<i>Priorities</i>	
<i>Tobacco Free Living</i>	28
<i>Preventing Drug Abuse and Excessive Alcohol Use</i>	31
<i>Healthy Eating</i>	34
<i>Active Living</i>	38
<i>Injury and Violence Free Living</i>	41
<i>Reproductive and Sexual Health</i>	44
<i>Mental and Emotional Well-being</i>	48
<i>Appendices</i>	
<i>Appendix 1: Economic Benefits of Preventing Disease</i>	51
<i>Appendix 2: National Prevention Strategy Indicators</i>	52
<i>Appendix 3: Stakeholder Outreach and Input</i>	61
<i>Appendix 4: Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health</i>	62
<i>Appendix 5: Justification for Evidence-Based Recommendations</i>	63
<i>Appendix 6: References for the Key Documents</i>	82
<i>Appendix 7: End Notes</i>	87

Introduction

The strength and ingenuity of America's people and communities have driven America's success. A healthy and fit nation is vital to that strength and is the bedrock of the productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship essential for our future. Healthy people can enjoy their lives, go to work, contribute to their communities, learn, and support their families and friends. A healthy nation is able to educate its people, create and sustain a thriving economy, defend itself, and remain prepared for emergencies.

The Affordable Care Act, landmark health legislation passed in 2010, created the National Prevention Council and called for the development of the National Prevention Strategy to realize the benefits of prevention for all Americans' health. The National Prevention Strategy is critical to the prevention focus of the Affordable Care Act and builds on the law's efforts to lower health care costs, improve the quality of care, and provide coverage options for the uninsured.

Preventing disease and injuries is key to improving America's health. When we invest in prevention, the benefits are broadly shared. Children grow up in communities, homes, and families that nurture their healthy development, and people are productive and healthy, both inside and outside the workplace. Businesses benefit because a healthier workforce reduces long-term health care costs and increases stability and productivity. Furthermore, communities that offer a healthy, productive, stable workforce can be more attractive places for families to live and for businesses to locate.

Although America provides some of the world's best health care and spent over \$2.5 trillion for health in 2009, the U.S. still ranks below many countries in life expectancy, infant mortality, and many other indicators of healthy life.¹ Most of our nation's pressing health problems can be prevented. Eating healthfully and engaging in regular physical activity, avoiding tobacco, excessive alcohol use, and other drug abuse, using seat belts, and receiving preventive services and vaccinations are just a few of the ways people can stay healthy. Health is more than merely the absence of disease; it is physical, mental, and social well-being.² Investments in prevention complement and support treatment and care. Prevention policies and programs can be cost-effective, reduce health care costs, and improve productivity (Appendix 1). The National Prevention Strategy's core value is that Americans can live longer and healthier through prevention.

Many of the strongest predictors of health and well-being fall outside of the health care setting. Social, economic, and environmental factors all influence health.³ People with a quality education, stable employment, safe homes and neighborhoods, and access to high quality preventive services tend to be healthier throughout their lives and live longer. When organizations, whether they are governmental, private, or nonprofit, succeed in meeting these basic needs, people are more likely to exercise, eat healthy foods, and seek preventive health services. Meeting

basic needs and providing information about personal health and health care can empower people to make healthy choices, laying a foundation for lifelong wellness.

Preventing disease requires more than providing people with information to make healthy choices. While knowledge is critical, communities must reinforce and support health, for example, by making healthy choices easy and affordable. We will succeed in creating healthy community environments when the air and water are clean and safe; when housing is safe and affordable; when transportation and community infrastructure provide people with the opportunity to be active and safe; when schools serve children healthy food and provide quality physical education; and when businesses* provide healthy and safe working conditions and access to comprehensive wellness programs. When all sectors (e.g., housing, transportation, labor, education, defense) promote prevention-oriented environments and policies, they all contribute to health.

The National Prevention Strategy builds on the fact that lifelong health starts at birth and continues throughout all stages of life. Prevention begins with planning and having a healthy pregnancy, develops into good eating and fitness habits in childhood, is supported by preventive services at all stages of life, and promotes the ability to remain active, independent, and involved in one's community as we age. Students who are healthy and fit come to school ready to learn; employees who are free from mental and physical conditions take fewer sick days, are more productive, and help strengthen the economy; and older adults who remain physically and mentally active are more likely to live independently.⁴

To ensure that all Americans share in the benefits of prevention, the National Prevention Strategy includes an important focus on those who are disproportionately burdened by poor health. In the United States, significant health disparities exist and these disparities are closely linked with social, economic, and environmental disadvantage (e.g., lack of access to quality affordable health care, healthy food, safe opportunities for physical activity, and educational and employment opportunities).

* Consistent with existing laws

The National Prevention Strategy

The National Prevention Strategy aims to guide our nation in the most effective and achievable means for improving health and well-being. The Strategy prioritizes prevention by integrating recommendations and actions across multiple settings to improve health and save lives.

The National Prevention Strategy's vision is Working together to improve the health and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities by moving the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness.

This Strategy envisions a prevention-oriented society where all sectors recognize the value of health for individuals, families, and society and work together to achieve better health for all Americans..

The National Prevention Strategy's overarching goal is Increase the number of Americans who are healthy at every stage of life.

This Strategy focuses on both increasing the length of people's lives and ensuring that people's lives are healthy and productive. Currently Americans can expect to live 78 years, but only 69 of these years would be spent in good health.⁵ Implementing the National Prevention Strategy can increase both the length and quality of life. To monitor progress on this goal, the Council will track and report measures of the length and quality of life at key life stages (Appendix 2 for baselines and targets). To realize this vision and achieve this goal, the Strategy identifies four Strategic Directions and seven targeted Priorities. The Strategic Directions provide a strong foundation for all of our nation's prevention efforts and include core recommendations necessary to build a prevention-oriented society. The Strategic Directions are

- **Healthy and Safe Community Environments:** Create, sustain, and recognize communities that promote health and wellness through prevention.
- **Clinical and Community Preventive Services:** Ensure that prevention-focused health care and community prevention efforts are available, integrated, and mutually reinforcing.
- **Empowered People:** Support people in making healthy choices.
- **Elimination of Health Disparities:** Eliminate disparities, improving the quality of life for all Americans.

Within this framework, the Priorities provide evidence-based recommendations that are most likely to reduce the burden of the

leading causes of preventable death and major illness. The seven Priorities are

- **Tobacco Free Living**
- **Preventing Drug Abuse and Excessive Alcohol Use**
- **Healthy Eating**
- **Active Living**
- **Injury and Violence Free Living**
- **Reproductive and Sexual Health**
- **Mental and Emotional Well-Being**

Moving Forward

National leadership is critical to implementing this Strategy. This leadership includes aligning and focusing Federal prevention efforts. However, the Federal government will not be successful acting alone. Partners in prevention from all sectors in American society are needed for the Strategy to succeed. All of us must act together, implementing the Strategic Directions and Priorities, so that all Americans can live longer and healthier at every stage of life.

