

Message from the Secretary

Healthy People 2010 provides our Nation with the wide range of public health opportunities that exist in the first decade of the 21st century. With 467 objectives in 28 focus areas, Healthy People 2010 will be a tremendously valuable asset to health planners, medical practitioners, educators, elected officials, and all of us who work to improve health. Healthy People 2010 reflects the very best in public health planning—it is comprehensive, it was created by a broad coalition of experts from many sectors, it has been designed to measure progress over time, and, most important, it clearly lays out a series of objectives to bring better health to all people in this country.

Achieving the vision of “Healthy People in Healthy Communities” represents an opportunity for individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices for themselves and their families. It challenges clinicians to put prevention into their practices. It requires communities and businesses to support health-promoting policies in schools, worksites, and other settings. It calls for scientists to pursue new research. Above all, it demands that all of us work together, using both traditional and innovative approaches, to help the American public achieve the 10-year targets defined by Healthy People 2010.

The 20th century brought remarkable and unprecedented improvements in the lives of the people of the United States. We saw the infant mortality rate plummet and life expectancy increase by 30 years. While we recognize that most of the advances came from prevention efforts, we also saw almost unimaginable improvements in medical technologies and health care. The challenge for the 21st century is twofold. First, we must ensure that this rate of advancement continues unabated. Second, we must make certain that all Americans benefit from advancements in quality of life, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, income, educational level, or geographic location. These challenges are substantial, but with the objectives defined by Healthy People 2010, they are achievable.

I wholeheartedly commend Healthy People 2010, and I challenge all of us to work together to achieve its ambitious and important vision.



Donna E. Shalala
Secretary of Health and Human Services