

PARTNERS IN PREVENTION

AHRQ Pub. No. 04-IP005

February 2004

Each year, hundreds of thousands of Americans die prematurely as a result of diseases that often are preventable, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and HIV.¹ Individual behaviors often contribute to these diseases and to other causes of death. These behaviors include tobacco use, lack of physical activity, poor eating habits, substance abuse, and violence.

Individuals, communities, clinicians, health systems, and policymakers can contribute to preventing disease and to improving the health of the Nation. Creating such a broad constituency in prevention involves the widespread dissemination and application of information, based on scientific evidence, about which prevention efforts work to improve health and the quality of life.

Among the government agencies dedicated to disseminating such information is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and entities within HHS: the Office of the Secretary of HHS, the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Steps to a HealthierUS was launched in 2003 by the Office of the Secretary of HHS. *Steps* is an initiative dedicated to improving the Nation's health by bringing policymakers, the

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health, education, and business communities, and the public together to establish model programs and policies that foster healthy behavior changes and encourage healthier lifestyle choices. ODPHP, through the national initiative *Healthy People* that involves all agencies within HHS, sets national goals for increasing the quality and years of healthy life. AHRQ, through the *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services and Put Prevention into Practice*, informs clinicians about the appropriate role of preventive services in primary health care and informs the public about the individual's role in staying healthy. The CDC, through the *Guide to Community Preventive Services*, focuses on recommendations for delivering preventive health services at the community level. These different yet complementary Federal prevention efforts are the subject of this *Fact Sheet*.

¹ McGinnis JM. Actual causes of death in the United States. *JAMA* Nov. 10, 1993; 18: 2207.



Steps to a HealthierUS

The *Steps* initiative envisions a healthy, strong U.S. population supported by a health care system in which diseases are prevented when possible, controlled when necessary, and treated when appropriate. *Steps to a HealthierUS* focuses attention on preventing overweight and obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke, asthma, tobacco use, and cancer. More information about *Steps to a HealthierUS* is available at www.healthierus.gov/steps.

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Healthy People

Healthy People has, since 1979, identified the most significant preventable threats to health and established prevention goals and objectives to address those threats. *Healthy People* has focused public and private sector efforts to promote health and prevent disease and is widely used by States and communities, professional organizations, and those who are concerned about particular threats to health.

Healthy People 2010. *Healthy People 2010: Objectives for Improving Health*, the first set of 10-year targets for the 21st century, was released in January 2000. Its underlying premise is that the health of the community and the health of the Nation are profoundly influenced by the collective attitudes and behaviors of individuals. The foundation of *Healthy People 2010* is evidence-based prevention research and national data from more than 190 surveillance and data systems.

Healthy People 2010 outlines a comprehensive, nationwide health promotion and disease prevention agenda. This agenda is designed to serve as a guide to increasing the quality and years of healthy life and to eliminating health disparities.

Healthy People 2010 focuses on diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and respiratory diseases; public health concerns such as food safety, environmental health, the public health infrastructure, and medical product safety; and individual behaviors that increase the risk for disease and premature death, such as tobacco use, violence, substance abuse, and high-risk sexual behavior. *Healthy People 2010* identifies 467 specific health promotion and disease prevention objectives in 28 focus areas. It is the product of an extensive cooperative national process involving both the public and the private sectors, including the Healthy People Consortium, which by the end of the 20th century included some 350 national organizations and 250 State public health, mental health, substance abuse, and environmental agencies.

For more information about *Healthy People 2010*, visit the ODPHP Web site (www.health.gov/healthypeople), call 800-367-4725, or fax your request to 301-468-3028.

Guide to Clinical Preventive Services

AHRQ convenes the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), an independent panel of experts in primary health care and prevention first established in 1984. The mission of the USPSTF is to conduct comprehensive assessments of a wide range of preventive services—including screening tests, counseling, immunizations, and preventive medications—and to make recommendations about which services should be provided routinely as part of primary health care. The evidence-based recommendations of the USPSTF have been used by a diverse audience interested in clinical prevention, including:

- Clinicians and professional societies.
- Health plans, insurers, and policymakers.
- Students, trainees, health educators, and researchers.

The current USPSTF updates previous recommendations and addresses new topics. Among the dozens of recommendations

released topic by topic since 2001 in medical journals, on the AHRQ Web site, and in the *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services, Third Edition: Periodic Updates* include mammography screening, depression screening, hormone replacement therapy, prostate cancer screening, colorectal cancer screening, and counseling for a healthy diet. To view individual recommendations as they are released, visit the AHRQ Web site (www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstfix.htm), or call the AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse at 800-358-9295.

Put Prevention Into Practice (PIIP)

PIIP is a program sponsored by AHRQ to increase the appropriate use of clinical preventive services, such as screening tests, chemoprevention (the use of medications to prevent disease), and counseling. PIIP is based on evidence-based recommendations of the USPSTF. PIIP tools enable health care providers to determine which services their patients should receive and make it easier for patients to keep track of their preventive care.

PIIP materials include:

- *The Step-by-Step Guide to Delivering Clinical Preventive Services*. This manual demonstrates the many ways in which clinicians and office staff can make the delivery of clinical preventive services a part of every patient's visit.
- Materials for clinical office staff, including preventive care flow sheets, reminder postcards, and prevention timeline posters.
- Pocket-sized guides for health care consumers, including *The Pocket Guide to Good Health for Adults*, *The Pocket Guide to Staying Healthy at 50+*, and *The Pocket Guide to Good Health for Children* (all available in English and Spanish).

For PIIP materials online and for ordering information, visit the AHRQ Web site (www.ahrq.gov/ppip), or call the AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse at 800-358-9295.

Guide to Community Preventive Services

The CDC *Guide to Community Preventive Services* provides public health decision-makers with evidence-based recommendations regarding population-based interventions to promote health and to prevent disease, injury, disability, and premature death. Development of the *Guide to Community Preventive Services*, led by the independent Task Force on Community Preventive Services, makes recommendations based on systematic reviews of topics in three general areas: changing risk behaviors; reducing diseases, injuries, and impairments; and addressing environmental and ecosystem challenges. The *Community Guide* is part of the family of Federal public health initiatives that includes *Healthy People 2010* and the *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services*.

The recommendations in the *Guide to Community Preventive Services* are released topic by topic and include recommendations on preventing tobacco use, cancer, diabetes, and vaccine-preventable diseases.

For more information and to view individual chapters as they become available, visit the CDC Web site (www.thecommunityguide.org), or call 770-488-8189.

Conclusion

The resources and coordinated effort that HHS dedicates to preventing disease and premature death underscores the government's commitment to keeping people healthy so they can live longer, more productive lives. Making this commitment a reality requires the ongoing contributions of researchers, stakeholders, businesses, communities, health care professionals, and other groups. The combined efforts of *Steps to a Healthier US*, *Healthy People 2010*, the AHRQ *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services* and *Put Prevention Into Practice*, and the CDC *Guide to Community Preventive Services* are the vehicles that will take prevention from research to clinical practice, into the community, and into all of our lives.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Service
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

www.ahrq.gov

AHRQ Pub. No. 04-IP005
Revised February 2004