

**Message From James S. Marks, MD, MPH
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As part of CDC's Futures Initiative, we have learned that chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and arthritis are a top concern for Americans. Also alarming are rising health care costs, an aging population, and climbing rates of obesity. At CDC, our mission is to promote health and quality of life. This includes stemming the devastating effects of some of the leading killers in the United States. It is a fight that we in the public health community must continue to wage every day, in every corner of our world.

And we are not alone in this fight. Together, with state and community organizations, faith-based groups, businesses, and many others who are committed to this cause, we are making a difference. Each year, we highlight exemplary state programs to show the various ways that public health professionals are addressing the epidemic of chronic disease. Some of these programs are in their early stages, while others have produced promising results with dramatic and far-reaching implications.

CDC funds a wide range of programs—for example, the Northwest Tribal Cancer Control Project, which is building the next generation of Native American cancer control specialists in three Pacific Northwest states, and the Nashville project, an exciting program that mobilizes many facets of the community to tackle heart disease and diabetes in Tennessee. CDC not only provides funding but also works with states to help them carry out these highly effective science-based interventions. At CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, we hope these exemplary programs will serve as a model for other states. We believe strongly that programs like these can boost the health of our citizens, provide a good health value, and slow the increases in medical care costs.

All of us must be resolved in our commitment to build awareness about these important issues, ultimately to ensure a better quality of life for everyone. We encourage you to join us in the fight against chronic disease, and we thank all of our partners for making these programs a success.

Wishing you a healthy 2004,

