

CDC: Why we do what we do



For 31 years, Ronney Lindsey has made an impact on people's health. His career began as a disease intervention specialist for the Memphis-Shelby County Health Department in Tennessee.

Ronney was among the early pioneers of HIV prevention in 1981. "HIV showed up as a health concern about a year after I started in public health," said Ronney. "It completely changed sexually transmitted disease (STD) science and programs. It changed the way I would work with patients in the coming years to address what soon became a worldwide epidemic."

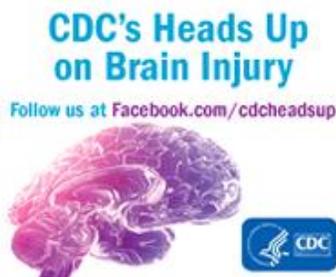
Since his early work in disease intervention and HIV prevention, Ronney's passion for disease prevention continues as he works to protect people from needless illnesses and deaths due to tobacco use. Today, Ronney is the deputy director for the Office on Smoking and Health, where he helps provide resources to state health departments and other grantees funded to carry out their tobacco control program.

"The opportunity to see the challenges firsthand at the state and local levels and actually engage in program efforts that make a difference in people's daily lives still excites me about what I do," Ronney explained.

Ronney's story exemplifies the heart of CDC efforts; protecting and saving lives through prevention. CDC works to support people in making healthy choices to change and improve lives here and around the world. CDC is building on 65 years of public health achievements that have likely saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

States taking action

Since 2009, 32 states have passed variations of "return-to-play" laws, to protect students from concussions while participating in contact sports. Massachusetts is a leader among states in protecting its student athletes. Massachusetts promotes CDC's "Heads Up" program which provides online training and educational material to coaches and others working with athletes. In June 2010, the state passed a law that includes return-to-play provisions requiring those who work in youth sports to have concussion training. To learn more about concussions and other traumatic brain injuries, visit www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury.



Communities taking action

Through "Communities Putting Prevention to Work", CDC is supporting 50 communities across the country to help stop two of the leading preventable causes of premature death and disability—obesity and tobacco use.

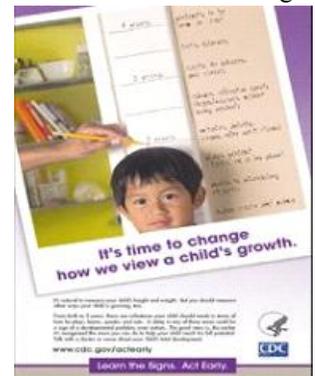
For Pam Slater-Price, chairwoman of the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors, "these CDC-sponsored programs are important to supporting our county's vision of a healthy, safe, and thriving community for all children and families."

As a result, 27 communities are working with local school systems to offer healthier food choices for students through strategies such as using produce grown by local farmers that improve nutrition in schools. In just one example, the San Diego school district is now offering 130,000 students healthier meals by serving more locally-produced fruits and vegetables.

People taking action

Michele Presley, regional coordinator for the SoonerStart Early Intervention Program in Oklahoma, oversees programs that support parents of children who are diagnosed with a developmental delay. Michele thinks CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early" is a great resource to share with parents and families. "We know that the sooner we can start working with a child and the family as a whole, the better the results," Michele says.

CDC's program "Learn the Signs. Act Early" helps parents learn about childhood development, including early warning signs of autism and other developmental disorders, and encourages screening and assistance. Through programs like this one, autism spectrum disorders are being diagnosed early, which can benefit treatment. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly.



The answer to why CDC does what we do is clear in the hundreds of stories like these from all over the world. But the true question is "Why must CDC *continue* to do what we do?" The answer is to make a difference in our nation's health and improve lives.

For information about CDC and our work on saving lives and protecting people, visit www.cdc.gov/24-7.

CDC 24/7: Saving lives, protecting people, saving money through prevention