

## ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

### WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurobehavioral disorder that affects almost 4 million school-aged children and can last into adulthood. The symptoms characterized with ADHD are unusually high and chronic levels of inattention, impulsivity/hyperactivity, or both. Relationships with peers and family members and performance at school or work may significantly be impaired if untreated. Studies also show that ADHD patients tend to have higher injury and healthcare use rates. Many children with ADHD have other impairing behavioral or learning problems. Adolescents and adults who have ADHD and another serious mental health condition have shown in recent studies to participate in illegal substances, risky behavior, and/or criminal activities more often than children who do not suffer from ADHD.

The scientifically supported treatment for ADHD is multimodal, using both medication and behavioral therapies in combination. Controversies over the wide use and safety of medication treatments have increased over the last decades, and many questions still remain unanswered about the specific risks and benefits of medication therapies in the long-term.

### WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

- Sites in Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Virginia were awarded cooperative agreements to conduct community-based research on ADHD, which included population-based studies of prevalence, risk factors, coexisting conditions, and community treatment.
- The Federal Interagency Working Group on Child Mental Health (publishers of *America's Children*) and CDC have collaborated with other federal agencies to elicit heightened awareness about mental health conditions affecting children.
- CDC funded Children and Adults with Hyperactivity-Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD) to establish the National Resource Center on ADHD.
- CDC designed and implemented a study methodology for conducting the community-based research in three locations in the United States.
- CDC published a peer-reviewed journal article on ADHD in children and associations with maternal mental health status using a national data set.

### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- Complete data collection for community-based ADHD studies and begin data analysis in collaboration with grantees.
- Continue to work with partners to promote data collection and to apply epidemiologic methodology to the study of ADHD.
- Strengthen collaborations with federal and nonfederal partners.
- Sustain the development and distribution of ADHD health education and outreach materials.
- Work with CHADD to further develop the National Resource Center on ADHD.