

STEPS TO A HEALTHIER U.S.

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- In the United States, chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and asthma, take a huge health and financial toll, with 7 out of 10 deaths caused by a chronic disease and more than 75% of the total healthcare budget spent on these diseases.
- Obesity rates have increased by more than 60% among adults in the last 10 years, doubled among children, and tripled among adolescents since 1980.
- Self-reported diabetes has increased by 50% since 1990.
- More than 31 million people in the United States have diagnosed asthma.
- The cost of obesity in the United States was \$117 billion in 2000; in 2002, average medical expenditures for a person with diabetes were \$13,243, that is 2.4 times greater than the cost for a person without diabetes; and the estimated cost of asthma was \$14.5 billion in 2000.
- Underlying these serious conditions are risk factors such as physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use; all of these can be modified years before they contribute to illness and death.

Steps to a Healthier U.S. is a 5-year initiative that combines the strengths and resources of the Department of Health and Human Services agencies and programs to improve the lives of Americans through innovative, community-based programs that are proven effective in preventing and controlling chronic disease. With funds from CDC's Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion appropriations, CDC supports states, cities, and tribal entities to implement chronic disease prevention efforts focused on reducing the burden of diabetes, overweight, obesity, and asthma and addressing three related risk factors—physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

In 2003, CDC supported 4 states representing 15 small cities or rural communities, 1 tribal consortium, and 7 large cities. These 23 communities will implement community action plans that build on existing local, state, and federal programming efforts related to obesity, diabetes, asthma, and their risk factors. It will also include a special focus on populations with disproportionate burden of disease and disparities in access to preventive services. Organized community, environmental, educational, media, and policy interventions will be implemented in school, community, healthcare, and workplace settings.

Example of Program in Action

The *Philadelphia Steps* program will support local, governmental, and community initiatives that address crime and safety in areas where people exercise. New Orleans will collaborate with farmers markets, produce sellers, and community gardens to increase neighborhood accessibility of fruits and vegetables. Seattle and King County, Washington, will promote environmental changes to encourage physical activity such as a bike-to-school program and point-of-decision prompts to encourage people to use the stairs instead of elevators at workplaces.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC will continue to support and evaluate community efforts to reduce health disparities and promote quality healthcare and prevention services in obesity, diabetes, and asthma. CDC will focus on increasing physical activity and good nutrition, and reducing tobacco use.

For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/program

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