

A Letter from the CDC & the Arthritis Foundation



Dear Colleague,

A decade ago, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Arthritis Foundation launched *The National Arthritis Action Plan: A Public Health Strategy*, a landmark document that put arthritis on the public health map and laid out a plan for marshalling the nation's resources to confront the greatest single cause of chronic pain and disability among Americans.

It is with great pride that 10 years later, our partnership still strong, we come together in collaboration with a large and diverse group of stakeholder organizations to announce the 2010 publication of *A National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis*. This call to action focuses on the most common form of arthritis and points the way forward by building upon the lessons learned over the past decade of our collaborative effort to delay the onset or reduce the progression of all forms of arthritis.

At a time when the nation is on the cusp of initiating major health care reforms amidst greater recognition of the adverse contribution that chronic disease makes to escalating health care costs, we must take bold and concerted action to prevent and reduce the impact of all chronic illnesses. Osteoarthritis affects an estimated 27 million Americans, promises to become even more widespread as Baby Boomers age, and is widely prevalent. Successful efforts to address the problem of osteoarthritis promise to deliver benefits not only to people with this serious condition, but also to people who have the management of their other chronic diseases complicated by co-occurring osteoarthritis, and to our nation as a whole.

Since *The National Arthritis Action Plan* was introduced in 1999, we have learned a great deal about what can be done to reduce disability and improve the quality of life of people with osteoarthritis. We have also learned a great deal about how to deliver interventions that work.

The recommendations presented in *A National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis* provide an opportunity for us to work together to alter the trajectory of this disease so the millions of Americans who struggle with this painful and important public health problem can live fuller and more independent lives.

We commend this report to you and applaud your interest in working to address this critical public health challenge.

Wayne Giles, MD, MS
Director, Division of Adult and Community Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

John H. Klippel, MD
President and CEO
Arthritis Foundation