

# Taking on the Nation's Leading Killers



## What's at Stake

**Every 40 seconds, an adult dies from a heart attack, stroke, or related disease.** Heart disease and stroke, the first and fourth leading causes of death for Americans, are among the most widespread and costly health problems facing our nation today. Nearly 800,000 people die in the United States each year from cardiovascular diseases (CVD), including heart disease and stroke—that's 1 in every 3 deaths.

Furthermore, the economic toll of CVD is high. The total CVD costs in the United States exceed \$320 billion each year. Treatment of these diseases accounts for about \$1 of every \$6 spent on health care in this country. Lost productivity (because of premature death due to CVD) is estimated to cost the nation more than \$124.5 billion annually.

**There is good news: Prevention saves lives and reduces disability.**

Many of the risk factors for CVD are modifiable, meaning that lifestyle changes can reduce a person's risk significantly. Thanks in part to the prevention efforts of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), overall death rates for heart disease and stroke have decreased in the United States in recent decades.

## CDC Takes Action

Since 1998, CDC has been a leader in investing in strategies and programs to address heart disease and stroke prevention. With \$155 million for heart disease and stroke prevention in Fiscal Year 2015, CDC supports all 50 states and the District of Columbia to conduct heart disease and stroke prevention programs:

Launched in 2011, **Million Hearts®** brings together communities, health care professionals, health systems, nonprofit organizations, federal agencies, and private-sector partners to improve care and empower Americans to make healthier choices. Million Hearts® is a national, public-private initiative of the Department of Health and Human Services to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. CDC leads many of the communications, partnership development, research, and evaluation efforts for the initiative, which is co-led by CDC and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The initiative is helping improve clinical management of the ABCS—Aspirin for those who need it, Blood pressure control, Cholesterol management, and Smoking cessation. Million Hearts® encourages community initiatives to reduce smoking and improve nutrition—areas for which effective but underused interventions exist.

**Sodium Reduction Initiative.** About 90% of Americans consume more sodium than is recommended for a healthy diet. The majority of the sodium that Americans eat comes from processed and restaurant foods. High sodium consumption raises blood pressure, and high blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. CDC is working to reduce sodium intake by promoting local, state, and national strategies; meeting with public and private stakeholders; enhancing the monitoring of sodium intake and changes in the food supply; and expanding the scientific literature on sodium. Responding to congressional language encouraging CDC to work with manufacturers and chain restaurants to reduce sodium levels in their products, the agency's work also includes garnering feedback from the food industry. CDC also funds multiple sites in the Sodium Reduction in Communities program to address sodium at the local level across various venues and environments.

**CDC translates prevention research into public health practice, with the goal of improving the nation's cardiovascular health.**



### **State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Chronic Diseases.**

CDC-funded state programs promote improvement to policies and systems in health care, worksite, school, and community settings to prevent and control chronic diseases and their risk factors, including high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity. The program targets four domains that are essential to improving the nation's health: epidemiology and surveillance; environmental approaches to better health; community-clinical linkages; and health system interventions to improve access, delivery, and usage of preventive services. Programs in all 50 states work to identify and monitor chronic diseases and to implement strategies to improve health, such as promoting team-based care, self-measured blood pressure monitoring, and increased use of health-care extenders in the community.

**WISEWOMAN Program.** CDC administers WISEWOMAN (Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for WOMen Across the Nation) programs in 21 states and tribal organizations. Through these programs, CDC prevents CVD among low-income, uninsured, or underinsured women aged 40–64 years. Women are screened for cardiovascular risk factors and referred to care, and can access lifestyle programs that target poor nutrition and physical inactivity, such as healthy cooking classes, walking clubs, and lifestyle counseling. Women who smoke are encouraged to quit and are referred to proactive quitlines or quit-smoking classes. Interventions vary from program to program, and all are designed to promote lasting, healthy lifestyle changes.

**Paul Coverdell National Acute Stroke Program.** CDC's Paul Coverdell National Acute Stroke Program funds 9 states to improve the delivery and quality of care for acute stroke patients by identifying gaps between recommended treatment guidelines and actual hospital practices. Funded states improve the care given to patients experiencing a stroke from the onset of symptoms. States work with EMS agencies to improve emergency care for suspected cases of stroke, the transition to hospital care, in hospital care, and the transition from hospital to the next care setting.

**Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke.** CDC's Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke is an online mapping application that allows users to explore county-level mortality and hospitalization rates in the context of social environmental conditions and available health services for the entire nation. CDC launched the Interactive Atlas in May 2012 and has seen traffic on the order of 100 visits per day from across the United States and 94 countries.

**Scientific Publications.** CDC staff publish highly regarded scientific papers each year. These include seven *Vital Signs* reports, three Public Health Grand Rounds presentations, and more than 60 publications in 2014.



### **Stay Connected**

CDC's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention provides public health leadership to improve cardiovascular health for all Americans, reduce the burden of these devastating diseases, and eliminate disparities associated with heart health.

**For more information** visit [www.cdc.gov/dhdsp](http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp). Learn more about Million Hearts® at <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov>.



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