

Message From the Director

Over the course of my career I've witnessed the progress, power, and untapped potential of public health. I draw inspiration from the quote by Bill Foege—a hero and former CDC director—who believes that nothing is beyond public health's sphere of influence. His legendary leadership in the defeat of smallpox proved that public health strategies and resourcefulness could eliminate an infectious disease for the first time.



Beginning in 2014, at the request of the director, CDC developed and implemented a strategy to improve the agency's public health data surveillance capabilities over 3 to 5 years. I welcomed the opportunity to advance an agency priority and to arrive at a vision of public health surveillance for the 21st century. The directive responded to requests from stakeholders—including Congress, state public health leaders, and federal advisory committees—asking for a strategy to transform and modernize CDC's surveillance systems and approaches. I was advised not to do everything, but rather to do targeted work to show progress and build trust. So that is what we did.

This report is a summary of highlighted results from our work to improve surveillance.

It is impossible to capture all we've done with partnerships, innovation, and interoperability in data systems through this important work. We do know, though, that with the help of a network of more than 3,000 agencies at the federal and state, local, territorial, and tribal levels, we have moved the dial from 2014 to today.

For this progress to continue, however, CDC must go beyond this initial effort and work more broadly as an agency to confront challenges and embrace opportunities that arise as partnerships, processes, data, and technology progress. I hope you will join me in navigating our future with strategies and solutions that are newer, faster, smarter, and better than what we know today.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chesley Richards". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chesley Richards, MD, MPH, FACP
CDC Deputy Director, Public Health Scientific Services