

Winnable Battles

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is a “winnable battle”?

“Winnable battles” describe public health priorities where CDC and public health can make significant progress in a relatively short timeframe – generally within one to four years. To date, CDC has identified the following domestic Winnable Battles with a substantial focus on prevention in the following areas:

- Healthcare-associated infections
- HIV
- Motor vehicle injuries
- Nutrition, physical activity, obesity and food safety
- Teen pregnancy
- Tobacco

CDC also has made a commitment to prevention around the world with the following global Winnable Battles:

- Mother-to-child transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis globally
- Global immunization, including polio eradication
- Lymphatic filariasis in the Americas
- Motor vehicle injuries
- Tobacco

Why has CDC chosen to focus on these particular health areas when there are so many pressing health issues?

These areas were selected as the initial Winnable Battles because they present the following opportunities:

- They address public health priorities that have a large-scale impact on health.
- There are evidence-based interventions that exist to address the issue and that can be broadly implemented.
- Intensive focus and efforts can have a significant impact in a relatively short period of time.

What about other important health issues that are not reflected in this list?

The mission of CDC remains the same – to protect health and promote quality of life through the prevention and control of disease, injury and disability. CDC staff will continue and expand their important work across a wide range of public health issues with a focus on achieving broad health impacts and the elimination of health disparities. Additional information on the range of CDC’s work across public health can be found at www.cdc.gov.

Has a list of priorities like this ever been released before by CDC?

It is not unusual for CDC to set public health priorities that can be addressed in a meaningful way during a clearly defined timeframe. These priorities are often established in support of Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and White House initiatives. CDC’s priorities are often based on the scope of the health problem, the ability to have significant health impact, and the ability to address health costs.



Will each area have a “battle plan”?

CDC has developed internal plans that outline priority activities to support each of these health issues. These plans include actionable steps within the areas of research, surveillance, program delivery and evaluation, policy and communication that can help make significant progress in these areas. CDC staff refine the plans continually based on strategy meetings, external opportunities, and discussions within CDC and with our public health partners.

What does CDC propose to do to address these issues?

CDC has identified strategies and established milestones and metrics to ensure significant progress is made in all the Winnable Battle areas. Each area has developed a clear set of strategies and targets that are rooted in CDC’s strategic priorities:

- Strengthen the public health system
- Strengthen collaboration between public health and health care to improve the health of all Americans
- Strengthen health security at home and abroad

The Winnable Battles also support related federal priorities and initiatives and will be achieved by working closely with CDC’s public health partners.

What will constitute a “win”?

From improving teen driver safety by implementing stronger graduated driver licensing to advancing sodium reduction strategies, each Winnable Battle has its own specific metrics in place to measure progress against outlined goals. Ultimately, a win will occur as we make measurable health impact and progress in each of these areas.

Does CDC plan to re-direct its budget to these priority areas?

CDC’s intent is for the Winnable Battle initiative to bring additional attention to these critical health issues and rally diverse resources and partnerships to accelerate measurable health impact. Limited discretionary funds, as available, may be directed to advancing progress in these areas; however, CDC does not plan to reprogram resources to fund Winnable Battles.

Does CDC plan to identify additional Winnable Battles?

As CDC makes progress toward addressing each Winnable Battle, these priorities will evolve and new priorities may be added, taking into account the Winnable Battle framework and keeping within CDC’s budget.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/winnablebattles.