

CDC Works for You



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In 1986, Stephanie Zaza, M.D., M.P.H, entered medical school with plans to become a surgeon. But late in her senior year, she participated in the Epidemiology Elective Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). She never looked back.

During the seven week elective, Dr. Zaza was part of a CDC team investigating several cruise ship outbreaks. She learned firsthand how CDC works to protect people. Dr. Zaza never expected that those weeks spent investigating outbreaks would be a life-changing experience.

Today, Dr. Zaza is a captain in the U.S. Public Health Service and Director of CDC's Epidemiology and Analysis Program Office. "I was fortunate to have a great training opportunity that taught me the critical elements of epidemiology, and also, instilled in me the fundamentals of public health and the important mission of saving lives and protecting people."

For more than half a century, the CDC has been working 24/7 to prevent and control diseases, injuries, disabilities, workplace hazards, and other public health problems associated with natural disasters and bioterrorism attacks. A global leader in public health research and investigations, CDC's work creates programs that improve health and reduce negative economic consequences.

CDC has helped save billions of dollars in health costs and increased the quality and length of American lives. These important achievements have been fulfilled in the areas of vaccine-preventable diseases, by preventing and controlling infectious diseases, and by helping to reduce deaths associated with chronic illnesses such as cancer and heart disease. CDC's ability to quickly and effectively respond to public health emergencies ensures that the agency will be called upon to help during natural disasters (e.g., Hurricane Katrina), with new infectious disease outbreaks like H1N1, and bioterrorism threats like the 2001 anthrax attacks.

While CDC is proud of these accomplishments, the milestones also serve as daily reminders that the agency must continue to take the lead in finding ways to help every person maintain good health. CDC is also keenly aware of the economic challenges we are all facing, particularly families and elders. That is why the nation's prevention agency is wisely investing

time and money into disease prevention activities that help to significantly lower healthcare costs for all Americans.

"We are strongly committed to our fiscal responsibility to the American people. This does not mean we need to short-change public health," said CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. "The very essence of what CDC does is based on a sustained, working commitment to save lives, protect people from health threats, and save money."

How does CDC work for you? Here are some examples.

- CDC-sponsored prevention programs in communities and workplace settings are aimed at lowering obesity among Americans, which will help reduce the \$147 billion in annual health care costs associated with obesity.
- Each year, CDC releases its recommendations for vaccine-preventable diseases among children. By keeping our children immunized, we save nearly \$14 billion in direct costs and \$69 billion in total societal costs.
- Food regulators and industry leaders use CDC data about what foods have caused illness to improve food handling and production standards for foods that could be contaminated by *E. coli*. These improvements likely contributed to the number of *E. coli* O157 infections in the United States being nearly cut in half since 1997.
- CDC's contributions toward folic acid fortification and awareness campaigns to prevent neural tube defects have resulted in \$4.7 billion in direct cost savings.
- CDC's programs to prevent lead poisoning in children are estimated to save \$18.6 billion over 10 years.
- CDC helped promote and evaluate a quit smoking program in Massachusetts that led to a 26 percent drop in smoking among Medicaid users in the first 18 months of the program.

The savings from preventing disease only skims the surface of the tremendous work CDC does for you every day. Investments in public health and prevention clearly reap significant rewards. CDC's scientific findings and recommendations are much more than just data and statistics. This essential information which guides public health actions to improve and protect lives, is routinely used in communities, and shared with other federal agencies, public health partners, and experts throughout the world. Simply put, CDC is committed to finding cost-effective ways to make the healthy choice the easy choice for people.

To find out what CDC is doing for you in your state go to:

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/FundingProfiles/FundingProfilesRIA/>

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