

Foreword

The ability to quantify and assess progress on health objectives is at the heart of the Healthy People initiative. Guided by two broadly defined goals—increasing years and quality of life and eliminating disparities in health among population groups—the core of Healthy People is a comprehensive set of objectives with specific targets that are numerically set, tracked, and evaluated.

Tracking Healthy People 2010 is a unique document and represents an important contribution to the Healthy People process. It is a comprehensive, authoritative guidebook on the statistics used for Healthy People—in effect the analytic framework for the program. Never before has the broad Healthy People community had this type of resource. This guidebook will assist in ensuring greater accuracy and comparability in the data produced for, and used by, Healthy People 2010 programs at the local, State, and national levels.

The earlier Healthy People initiatives built a legacy of considerable statistical and data management expertise and served as a catalyst for developing and promoting data resources at the national, State, and local levels. However, those earlier efforts lacked the important “data manual” at the start of the process to guide data collection and analysis. As Healthy People 2010 is launched, the data manual is ready. We have developed it to be useful to those who have highly varied experience. It will enable new members to join the coalition and immediately begin to produce and use the data, obtaining the necessary background information in an efficient and effective manner.

Healthy People has helped to set the health data agenda for the Nation. When Healthy People 2000 began, there were almost 100 objectives without baseline data. At the end of the decade just a few remained without data. Similarly, Healthy People 2010 has identified 139 developmental objectives, which are currently without national baseline data. These objectives are so important they have been identified as priorities for data collection. They are included in Healthy People 2010, illustrating the dynamic nature of the data process and the ongoing effort to provide data support for Healthy People.

Healthy People 2010 is a significant advance in the efforts to prevent disease and promote good health in America. Its statistical companion, *Tracking Healthy People 2010*, will greatly enhance our ability to monitor progress in achieving the Healthy People 2010 objectives.



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