



## FOREWORD

The *Healthy People 2010 Midcourse Review* presents an assessment of the Nation's progress toward increasing the quality and years of healthy life and eliminating health disparities for all Americans, halfway through the first decade of the 21st century. For three decades, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has established and monitored national health objectives addressing a broad range of current health issues, which provide a framework to help individuals and communities take actions to improve health.

At the heart of Healthy People 2010 are its science-based, data-driven objectives that enable progress and trends to be tracked. By defining national health objectives with measurable targets, we can assess the inroads we have made at the midpoint of the decade against the 10-year end goals. As we measure our Nation's health by the length and quality of life and work aggressively to eliminate health disparities, this report provides our midcourse assessment through January 2005. The current data reflect promise and caution: our Nation's health is improving overall, but health disparities remain virtually unchanged. Nearly 60 percent of the objectives that can be tracked either met or moved toward their targets, and 20 percent moved away from their targets. The remaining objectives were unchanged or showed mixed progress. Importantly, the challenges that have impeded progress are addressed in the *Midcourse Review*.

Recognizing the ever-changing dynamic of our environment, HHS worked with Federal agencies and experts to acknowledge new science, data, and trends and get recommendations on how best to incorporate this information into Healthy People 2010. An extensive vetting process, as well as public input, proved helpful in updating Healthy People 2010. As a result, Healthy People 2010 will retain its veracity, utility, and relevancy through the decade's end.

I want to thank those who have worked on Healthy People 2010 over the years and especially on the *Midcourse Review*. As we head toward the conclusion of the decade, I encourage all of us to double our efforts and continue to work together, as there is nothing more rewarding than knowing we contributed to the health and well-being of all Americans.

John O. Agwunobi  
Assistant Secretary for Health

