

# A Public Health Action Plan to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke



Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke

American Heart Association

100 YEARS OF  
1915-2015



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

# **A Public Health Action Plan to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

We at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are committed to improving the health of America. With the release of *A Public Health Action Plan to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke*, we will tackle one of the most formidable public health challenges of this century—reducing the burden of heart disease and stroke.

Heart disease and stroke are among the nation's leading causes of death and disability, projected to cost more than \$351 billion in 2003. Heart disease and stroke can affect anyone without regard to age, race, ethnicity, sex, or income level. And as our population ages, these largely preventable conditions are projected to increase.

This nation has the tools to substantially reduce the devastating impact that heart disease and stroke have on individuals, their families, and the nation's economy. We can take significant steps toward a heart-healthy and stroke-free America through several actions. These include early and continuous health education that focuses on prevention and healthy lifestyle choices; medical services that provide the most effective drugs and therapies without disparity; and environmental policies in schools, work sites, and communities that promote good nutrition, regular physical activity, and abstinence from smoking.

The *Action Plan* offers a new promise of success. Quite simply, this plan gives health practitioners and policy makers a framework for developing a health care system that equally supports treatment and prevention. This plan is a collaborative effort designed to guide the nation in taking action, strengthening capacity, evaluating impact, advancing policy, and engaging in partnerships to reverse the epidemic of heart disease and stroke.

I thank the many public and private health, social service, faith, and community professionals who pooled their talents to develop the *Action Plan*—our landmark, long-term guide for improving the nation's heart and stroke health. But a plan is not enough. Your personal commitment is essential to accomplishing this massive national effort. I call on all Americans to join me and to learn what you can do to make a difference.

Tommy G. Thompson  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS OF CDC AND NIH

*A Public Health Action Plan to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke* is a call to action for tackling one of our nation's foremost challenges—to prevent and control chronic diseases.

To meet the challenge, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are charged with providing leadership to reduce heart disease and stroke, using *Healthy People 2010* objectives as their guide. The CDC and the NIH gratefully acknowledge the many individuals from such areas as public health practice, academia, and voluntary health organizations, whose dedicated efforts have produced the *Action Plan*. By implementing this plan through collaborations with these and other partners, we can make the nation's public health system more effective in protecting the health and enhancing the daily lives of all Americans.

Our national goal for preventing and controlling heart disease and stroke requires prevention, detection, and treatment of risk factors; early identification and treatment of heart attacks and strokes; and prevention of recurrent cardiovascular events. The *Action Plan* presents a framework for public health action that addresses each of these requirements, from preventing risk factors to assuring accessible, high-quality care for patients with these conditions. The success of this comprehensive public health strategy will also contribute to meeting the overarching goals of *Healthy People 2010*, which are to increase quality and years of healthy life and to eliminate health disparities.

Our greatest challenges often represent our greatest opportunities. The challenge is formidable—turning the tide on our nation's leading causes of death and major contributors to disability and dependency. We must not underestimate the commitment needed. By making this commitment and fully implementing the *Action Plan*, the public health community, along with present and future partners, will improve our nation's health. We invite each of you to join us in making this plan a reality.

Julie Louise Gerberding, MD, MPH  
Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Director, National Institutes of Health



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