

## National Prevention Strategy

# HEALTHY *and* SAFE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS

Health and wellness are influenced by the places in which people live, learn, work, and play. Communities, including homes, schools, public spaces, and work sites, can be transformed to support well-being and make healthy choices easy and affordable. Healthy and safe community environments include those with clean air and water, affordable and secure housing, sustainable and economically vital neighborhoods, and supportive structures (e.g., violence free places to be active).

### ACTIONS: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL

- ▶ Coordinate investments in transportation, housing, environmental protection, and community infrastructure to promote sustainable and healthy communities.
- ▶ Enhance capacity of state, tribal, local, and territorial governments to create healthy, livable, and sustainable communities (e.g., increase access to healthy food and opportunities for physical activity, revitalize brownfields, enhance alternative transportation options, develop green facilities and buildings).
- ▶ Support standards to reduce pollution and environmental exposure to ensure that all communities are protected from environmental and health hazards.
- ▶ Support healthy housing while addressing unsafe housing conditions and health-related hazards, including injury hazards, asthma triggers, and lead-based paint hazards.
- ▶ Increase availability and use of prevention research to identify effective environmental, policy and systems that reduce chronic diseases, promote safety, and eliminate health disparities.
- ▶ Use housing development subsidies to promote mixed-income neighborhoods and access to safe and healthy housing.
- ▶ Support state, tribal, local, and territorial partners to enhance epidemiology and laboratory capacity, health information technology, and performance improvement.
- ▶ Support state, tribal, local, and territorial partners in strategic health security planning efforts for pandemics, biological and chemical attacks, incidents affecting food and agriculture, natural disasters, and other catastrophic events.
- ▶ Support effective public safety measures, such as community-based anti-crime and anti-gang initiatives to facilitate physical activity and prevent injury and violence.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improve quality of air, land, and water.
2. Design and promote affordable, accessible, safe, and healthy housing.
3. Strengthen state, tribal, local, and territorial public health departments to provide essential services.
4. Integrate health criteria into decision making, where appropriate, across multiple sectors.
5. Enhance cross-sector collaboration in community planning and design to promote health and safety.
6. Expand and increase access to information technology and integrated data systems to promote cross-sector information exchange.
7. Identify and implement strategies that are proven to work and conduct research where evidence is lacking.
8. Maintain a skilled, cross-trained, and diverse prevention workforce.



## ACTIONS: PARTNERS CAN

### *Individuals and Families*

- ▶ Use alternative transportation (e.g., biking, walking, public transportation, car and vanpooling).
- ▶ Conduct home assessments and modifications (e.g., installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, testing for lead, checking for mold and radon).
- ▶ Purchase energy efficient products, support local vendors, and recycle.

### *Community, Non-Profit, and Faith-Based Organizations*

- ▶ Convene diverse partners and promote strong cross-sector participation in planning, implementing, and evaluating community health efforts.
- ▶ Implement processes to ensure that people are actively engaged in decisions that affect health.

### *Early Learning Centers, Schools, Colleges, and Universities*

- ▶ Integrate appropriate core public health competencies into relevant curricula (e.g., nursing, medicine, dentistry, allied health, pharmacy, social work, education) and train professionals to collaborate across sectors to promote health and wellness.
- ▶ Include training on assessing health impact within fields related to community planning and development (e.g., urban planning, architecture and design, transportation, civil engineering, agriculture) and encourage innovation in designing livable, sustainable communities.
- ▶ Implement policies and practices that promote healthy and safe environments (e.g., improving indoor air quality, addressing mold problems, reducing exposure to pesticides and lead, ensuring that drinking water sources are free from bacteria and other toxins, implementing and enforcing tobacco-free policies).

### *Health Care Systems, Insurers, and Clinicians*

- ▶ Partner with state, tribal, local, and territorial governments, business leaders, and community-based organizations to conduct comprehensive community health needs assessments and develop community health improvement plans.
- ▶ Support integration of prevention and public health skills into health care professional training and cross-train health care practitioners to implement prevention strategies.

- ▶ Increase the use of certified electronic health records to identify populations at risk and develop policies and programs.

### *Businesses and Employers*

- ▶ Ensure that homes and workplaces are healthy, including eliminating safety hazards (e.g., trip hazards, unsafe stairs), ensuring that buildings are free of water intrusion, indoor environmental pollutants (e.g., radon, mold, tobacco smoke), and pests, and performing regular maintenance of heating and cooling systems.
- ▶ Adopt practices to increase physical activity and reduce pollution (e.g., workplace flexibility, rideshare and vanpool programs, park-and-ride incentives, travel demand management initiatives, telecommuting options).
- ▶ Identify and implement green building siting, design, construction, operations, and maintenance solutions that over time will improve the environment and health.
- ▶ Adhere to best practices to promote safety and health, including participatory approaches to hazard identification and remediation as well as supervisory and worker training.

### *State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Governments*

- ▶ Facilitate collaboration among diverse sectors (e.g., planning, housing, transportation, energy, education, environmental regulation, agriculture, business associations, labor organizations, health, and public health) when making decisions likely to have a significant effect on health.
- ▶ Include health criteria as a component of decision making (e.g., policy making, land use, and transportation planning).
- ▶ Conduct comprehensive community health needs assessments and develop state and community health improvement plans.
- ▶ Promote the use of interoperable systems to support data-driven prevention decisions and implement evidence-based prevention policies and programs, such as those listed in the Guide to Community Preventive Services.
- ▶ Strengthen and enforce housing and sanitary code requirements and ensure rapid remediation or alternative housing options.
- ▶ Participate in national voluntary accreditation of health departments.

 More information can be found at:

*Website:*

[www.HealthCare.gov/nationalpreventioncouncil](http://www.HealthCare.gov/nationalpreventioncouncil)

*Email:*

[prevention.council@hhs.gov](mailto:prevention.council@hhs.gov)

*Twitter:*

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Healthy & Safe  
Community  
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Clinical &  
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Preventive Services



Empowered  
People



Elimination  
of Health  
Disparities

