

## National Prevention Strategy

# EMPOWERED PEOPLE



Although policies and programs can make healthy options available, people still have the responsibility to make healthy choices. People are empowered when they have the knowledge, ability, resources, and motivation to identify and make healthy choices. When people are empowered, they are able to take an active role in improving their health, support their families and friends in making healthy choices, and lead community change.

Information alone is often not enough to change behavior—communities, workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods can support people in making and sustaining healthy choices. Providing tools and information, making healthy choices easy and affordable, and improving the social environment and context in which decisions are made all support people in making healthy choices.

### ACTIONS: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL

- ▶ Identify and address barriers to the dissemination and use of reliable health information.
- ▶ Use plain language when writing health information for the public in accordance with the Plain Writing Act.
- ▶ Support research and evaluation studies consider how health literacy might affect other issues (e.g., patient safety, emergency preparedness, health care costs).
- ▶ Work to reduce false or misleading claims about the health benefits of products and services.
- ▶ Support research and programs that help people make healthy choices (e.g., understand how choices should be presented).



### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide people with tools and information to make healthy choices.
2. Promote positive social interactions and support healthy decision making.
3. Engage and empower people and communities to plan and implement prevention policies and programs.
4. Improve education and employment opportunities.

*Decision making is a complex process, influenced by personal, cultural, social, economic, and environmental factors, including individuals' ability to meet their daily needs, the opinions and behaviors of their peers, and their own knowledge and motivation.*



## ACTIONS: PARTNERS CAN

### *Individuals and Families*

- ▶ Actively participate in personal and community prevention efforts.
- ▶ Participate in developing health information and provide feedback about the types of health information that are most useful and effective.
- ▶ Provide clinicians with relevant information (e.g., health history, symptoms, medications, allergies), ask questions and take notes during appointments, learn more about diagnoses or conditions, and follow up with recommended appointments.

### *Community, Nonprofit, and Faith-Based Organizations*

- ▶ Empower individuals and their families to develop and participate in health prevention and health promotion programs through neighborhood associations, labor unions, volunteer/service projects, or community coalitions.
- ▶ Identify and help connect people to key resources (e.g., for health care, education, safe playgrounds).
- ▶ Support and expand continuing and adult education programs (e.g., English language instruction, computer skills, health literacy training).

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

- ▶ Provide input, guidance, and technical assistance to State, tribal, local, and Territorial health departments in assessing health impacts and conducting comprehensive health improvement planning.
- ▶ Incorporate health education into coursework (e.g., by embedding health-related tasks, skills, and examples into lesson plans).

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

- ▶ Use proven methods of checking and confirming patient understanding of health promotion and disease prevention (e.g., teach-back method).
- ▶ Involve consumers in planning, developing, implementing, disseminating, and evaluating health and safety information.
- ▶ Use alternative communication methods and tools (e.g., mobile phone applications, personal health records, credible health websites) to support more traditional written and oral communication.
- ▶ Refer patients to adult education and English-language instruction programs to help enhance understanding of health promotion and disease prevention messages.

### *Businesses and Employers*

- ▶ Implement work-site health initiatives in combination with illness and injury prevention policies and programs that empower employees to act on health and safety concerns.
- ▶ Use media (e.g., television, Internet, social networking) to promote health.

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

- ▶ Create healthy environments that support people's ability to make healthy choices (e.g., smoke-free buildings, attractive stairwells, cafeterias with healthy options).
- ▶ Offer accurate, accessible, and actionable health information in diverse settings and programs.

 Find more information at:

*Website:*

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