

The Healthier America Project: A Blueprint for A Healthier America

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Trust for America's Health

- A non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority.

Public Health in the 21st Century

- Broader responsibility ...less “line authority” ...and less funding.
 - Traditional roles
 - Preparedness/emergency response
 - Chronic diseases
 - Social determinants
- Era of greater skepticism about government and demand for accountability and transparency

End Game: The Blueprint

- In 441 days a new Administration takes office.
- The blueprint is meant to articulate a comprehensive agenda for governmental public health that the new President taking office in January 2009 can implement with the next Congress.
- TFAH and its partners will define, in relatively detailed terms, the federal policies, programs, and financing needed to assure that our public health system is ready to confront 21st century public health challenges.
- Between now and January 20, 2009 – educate policy makers and would-be policy makers.

Vision

- America should strive to be the healthiest nation in the world. Every American should have the opportunity to be as healthy as he or she can be. Every community should be safe from threats to its health. And all individuals and families should have a high level of health, health care, and public health services, regardless of whom they are or where they live.

Initial Steps: Vision Documents

- “Our Vision for a Healthier America”
 - To date, more than 105 organizations have signed onto this two-pager that lays out broad themes about the need for greater “Principles of Prevention” in public health.

- “A Healthier America: A New Vision and Agenda”
 - A background paper to the vision document, this is based on a Spring 2007 consensus process with more than 35 national organizations participating. Topics include: public health structure, finance, and accountability; chronic disease; environmental health; infectious disease; and emergency preparedness.

How Healthy is Your State?

- Data on disease prevalence
- Data on federal funding by state
- Data on state public health spending
- Findings and recommendations from TFAH reports on obesity and preparedness

Upcoming: *A Healthier America - The State of Our Nation's Health* & HEALTHY USA Issue Briefs

- *A Healthier America – The State of Our Nation's Health* will feature state-by-state health and funding statistics.
- The HEALTHY USA issue briefs will highlight 10 key issues addressed by the project and will contain key facts and policy recommendations. The briefs address the following topics:
 - **H**ealthy workplaces
 - **E**mergency response
 - **A**vian flu and infectious disease
 - **L**owering disease rates
 - **T**ackling health disparities
 - **H**olding federal, state, and local health departments accountable
 - **Y**outh nutrition and fitness
 - **U**tilizing technological advances to keep the food supply safe
 - **S**eniors
 - **A**cting to protect air, water, and food and minimize chemical exposures

Financing

- What is the current level of public health spending?
- What level of funding does public health need?
- What is the shared responsibility for funding public health?
- What is the Return on Investment for public health
- What is a reliable funding stream for public health?
- **How is an investment in community preventive services (not just clinical preventive services) critical to achieving health care reform?**

Accountability

- Currently there is little accountability for federal public health funds. However, America must have a public health system that *ensures results and is accountable to the American people, where investments made lead to real, demonstrable improvements to the health of Americans.*
 - Where you live shouldn't determine how well you are protected.
- If we are to ask for a greater investment – what should we receive in return?
 - Performance measurement
 - Accreditation: Structure? Process? Outcomes?
 - Other accountability issues
 - Health outcomes vs. programmatic outcomes
 - Transparency

Structure

- The Federal Government must *play a leadership role and serve as a catalyst for change, driving fundamental change and bold initiatives*. Currently, structural issues do not make this possible, and change is clearly needed. TFAH will convene a “leadership group” of former government officials to explore systematic improvements that can be made.
 - Who is in charge of public health?
 - How can we create greater responsiveness to public health across the government?
 - Who should be at the table when decisions are made?
 - Examples: Social determinants; obesity; pandemic flu

Workforce

- Governmental public health, particularly at the state and local level, continues to experience a workforce shortage. We have an *over-stretched public health workforce, which, due to chronic underfunding, struggles to meet routine public health needs and remains, in most localities, ill-prepared to respond to major health disasters.*
- Broader conception of workforce – within public health and cross training others about public health.

On the Web

- TFAH: www.healthyamericans.org
- Healthier America Project:
<http://healthyamericans.org/healthieramerica>