



## **A Blueprint for Healthier America**

*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 who they are or where they live.*

Trust for America's Health (TFAH) has undertaken the Healthier America Project to address the gaps in the current systems for protecting the health of the nation. TFAH is convening leading health experts and organizations to discuss how to effectively modernize the public health system to meet today's challenges.

The goal is to develop a "Blueprint" of policy options for revitalizing the public health system to present to the next President, Administration, and Congress. The consensus-building process will incorporate suggestions from a wide range of public health stakeholders and will highlight how prevention and public health are central to the well being of families, communities, workplace productivity, U.S. competitiveness, and national security. Specific policy areas will include: funding, structure and leadership, workforce, accountability, and relationship to health care reform.

The project is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The California Endowment, and other philanthropies.

### **A Vision for a Healthier America**

- *Our Vision for a Healthier America:* More than 115 organizations have signed onto a vision statement articulating the need to make disease and injury prevention the centerpiece of our national strategy for improving the nation's health.  
(<http://healthyamericans.org/policy/files/VisionHealthierAmerica.pdf>)
- *A Healthier America: A New Vision and Agenda:* More than 35 experts and national organizations participated in the first stage of consensus building to define the need and scope for a policy agenda to modernize public health.  
(<http://healthyamericans.org/healthieramerica/WorkingPaper092407.pdf>)
- *A Healthier America: The State of Our Nation's Health:* TFAH has developed an online resource of state-by-state information that includes disease rates, federal funding by state, data on state-level public health spending and other featured health facts.  
([www.healthyamericans.org/healthieramerica](http://www.healthyamericans.org/healthieramerica))
- *A Healthier America: 10 Priorities for Prevention:* TFAH has developed a set of issue briefs on 10 key components of a National Prevention Strategy and the need for cross-cutting accountability throughout the public health system. Areas of focus include: promoting disease prevention, combating the obesity epidemic, preventing tobacco use and exposure, preventing

and controlling infectious diseases, preparing for health emergencies and potential bioterrorism attacks, recognizing the relationship between health and U.S. economic competitiveness, safeguarding the nation's food supply, planning for the changing health care needs of seniors, improving the health of low-income and minority communities, and reducing health threats. ([www.healthyamericans.org/healthieramerica](http://www.healthyamericans.org/healthieramerica))

## **Key Elements of the Blueprint for a Healthier America**

After a series of consensus-building and expert review processes, the Healthier America Blueprint will be made available during the course of the year, with the full document completed by late fall of 2008 to present to the incoming Administration and Congress. The Blueprint will contain sections on:

- *Financing Public Health:* This will include an economic case for increased investments in public health to provide the incoming Administration and Congress with a specific dollar amount and funding mechanism for the nation's public health enterprise.
  - TFAH has partnered with the New York Academy of Medicine to convene experts to inform, review, and develop estimates for the current total governmental investment in public health and what level of investment would be required to support a modernized system. This effort will also examine options for potential revenue streams to support a sustained investment in public health and examine how government funding must be a shared responsibility at the federal, state, and local levels.
  - TFAH is working with the Urban Institute and Prevention Institute to produce an economic model to demonstrate the benefits of prevention, including projecting savings by third-party payers.
- *Public Health Structure and Leadership:* This will include a range of options for creating the optimal structure necessary to improve the performance and delivery of public health programs and services across government. Public health leadership at the federal level will be an important component of these policy options, as will the importance of public-private roles and partnerships. Recommendations will reflect suggestions from former high-ranking public health officials, Members of Congress, and other opinion leaders who have been convened to assess potential policy options.
- *Accountability.* This will examine how to improve accountability across the public health system, so Americans know what is being done to protect their health, how healthy the country and their communities are, and how effectively their tax dollars are being used.
- *Workforce:* This will include recommendations from public health and workforce experts for ways to alleviate the current workforce crisis, including how to recruit and retain the next generation of public health professionals.
- *How Public Health Relates to Health Care Reform:* This will review the importance of looking at the health system in its totality, to understand how and why prevention -- keeping people well and avoiding unnecessary illness and injury -- should be central to health care reform discussions, with a goal of healthier and productive living, and economic well-being.