



Trust for America's Health Applauds CDC for Awarding New Health Tracking Grants

Funds Crucial to Improving Chronic Disease Prevention in the U.S.

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Washington, September 17, 2003 – Trust for America's Health (TFAH), a non-profit, non-partisan public health organization and a leading proponent of nationwide health tracking, commends the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the award of new health tracking grants to ten states and cities. The new CDC grants will expand efforts to track chronic diseases, including cancer, asthma, birth defects, and Parkinson's, which are responsible for seven in ten deaths in the U.S.

These new grants, totaling nearly \$4.2 million, are another step forward toward allowing some states to better track chronic diseases and environmental exposures, including chemicals, toxins, and other agents, that may be linked to them. There were 33 applicants for this latest round of grants, but only 10 received awards due to funding constraints.

The 2003 CDC grants were awarded to: California, City of New York, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin.

"We applaud CDC's continued support for health tracking, which is the most important thing we can do as a country to better understand and prevent the diseases that most Americans die from," said Shelley Hearne, TFAH's Executive Director. "These grants will help communities and health officials stop health threats in their tracks."

A comprehensive nationwide health tracking network, which is supported by more than 80 national organizations, would cost an estimated \$275 million – a small fraction of the more than \$750 billion that treating chronic disease currently costs the country. Congress has begun to fund a nationwide health tracking network, by appropriating \$17.5 million in FY 2002 and \$28 million in FY 2003.

A nationwide health tracking network could also serve as an early warning system in the event of a biological or chemical attack. "A robust integrated health tracking network will not only alert health officials to increases and patterns of diseases like asthma," said Hearne, "it could also pinpoint a surge in illnesses that might indicate a biological or chemical attack had occurred."

More information about the grants and about health tracking is available at TFAH's web site, www.healthyamericans.org.