

**The old saying “What you don’t know can’t hurt you” belies the premise and the promise of teaching preventive medicine.** Teachers of preventive medicine have a special opportunity to research, communicate and instruct on the most current evidence about preventive measures. Increasingly, the state of the science is being determined through the use of research synthesis. Which in turn produces the components necessary to practice evidence-based medicine and its population-based counterpart, evidence-based public health.

The *Guide to Community Preventive Services* (Community Guide), supported by CDC under the direction of an independent Task Force, provides a new set of systematic reviews that can be used by teachers, in their role as vanguards of preventive medicine, to move the field of prevention forward:

### **Top 5 Reasons Why the Community Guide is Relevant Right Now**

- Increasing focus on evidence-based medicine and public health
- Increasing chronic disease burden necessitates population-based strategies focusing on prevention, not treatment (proactive vs. reactive)
- Even effective clinical services are not delivered to the degree they should be, and health care system-level interventions are needed
- Increasingly limited resources for public health means that what remains must be applied in the most efficient way possible
- Over 100 evidence-based findings have been issued to date – **the findings are “user ready”**

### **3 Ways Teachers of Preventive Medicine Can Use Community Guide Findings**

- *As part of a curriculum or as self-study materials.* Through instruction or course materials, encourage students to become familiar with the Community Guide as a standard reference for decision making in population-based health, especially resource allocation. In medical schools, health care system-level findings can be taught along with Clinical Guide recommendations, as ways to improve practice. Encourage students to do more of what works, and to engage in research to fill the gaps in our knowledge.
- *In discussions with colleagues.* Mention the Community Guide findings in research articles, or presentations.
- *In proposals for additional resources.* Foundations and other funders are more likely to support applied research for an intervention with demonstrated effectiveness that needs to be tried locally, or basic research for an intervention where the Task Force found “insufficient evidence” to make a determination of effectiveness.

### **2 Resources for More Information**

- [www.thecommunityguide.org](http://www.thecommunityguide.org) has all Community Guide publications as well as one page summaries on each intervention recommended to date (look under each topic area). Starting this spring, slides sets will be available for use in teaching modules or self-study materials.
- [communityguide@cdc.gov](mailto:communityguide@cdc.gov) an e-mail address that will allow you to ask questions about future reviews, request hardcopies of published materials and other issues.