It is a pleasure to present the initial products of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services (Task Force), which began its work in 1996 under the auspices of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The Task Force is charged with developing recommendations for the use of community-based health promotion and disease prevention interventions based on systematic reviews of the available scientific evidence of their effectiveness. This Guide to Community Preventive Services: Systematic Reviews and Evidence-Based Recommendations (Guide) will provide a landmark reference for public health, health care provider, academic, community planning and advocacy, and research audiences to select effective interventions for their communities.

The work of this Task Force follows in the footsteps of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force which developed and continues to update the Guide to Clinical Preventive Services. Together, these two Guides provide recommendations that span the requirements of our health system: clinical (i.e., individual) prevention interventions, clinical system interventions, interventions implemented and provided in community settings (e.g., schools, worksites, community organizations), and interventions applied to entire communities (e.g., laws, regulations, enforcement, mass media, environmental changes).

The articles presented in this supplement describe the Task Force and its mission, the process used to determine the table of contents for the Guide; the methods used to conduct the systematic reviews of evidence of effectiveness and economic evaluations of interventions, and the first completed chapter for the Guide, "Vaccine Preventable Diseases: Improving Vaccination Coverage in Children, Adolescents and Adults." The presentation of these pieces signifies the transition of the Task Force from a planning and methods development phase to one of production and release of recommendations. As each chapter is completed, it will be released to the public for immediate use.

Development of the methods used for conducting the systematic reviews and translating the evidence into recommendations was made possible by the dedication of sustaining staffing and financial resources at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Task Force and CDC staff are provided with additional personnel and financial support from all of the DHHS agencies, from agencies in other Federal departments, from major health organizations and foundations, from state and local health departments, from managed care and other health care delivery organizations, from academic centers, and from advocacy organizations. This collaborative mechanism was deliberately instituted to assure that the approach taken in each chapter, that the interventions selected for review, and that the reviews of evidence, are conducted in such a manner that the resulting reviews and recommendations are maximally meaningful and useful to the broad audiences expected to use the Guide. I commend the Task Force for this productive collaboration and the example it sets for all of us as we work to improve health.

As a nation, we have set challenging goals for improving the health of our citizenry, summarized and presented as Healthy People 2010. By applying the most effective interventions at all levels of our health system, those recommended in the Guide to Community Preventive Services and the Guide to Clinical Preventive Services, we will surely move toward a healthier nation and world. Along with the rest of you, I look forward to the release of additional recommendations from the Task Force over the next two years.

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