



August 19, 2004

The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Ann M. Veneman  
Secretary of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Whitten Bldg., Room 200A  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretaries Thompson and Veneman,

On behalf of the entire 2005 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, I am very pleased to submit the "Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005."

In your charge to our Committee you asked that we take a different approach from that of previous Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committees. Rather than just considering how the 2000 Dietary Guidelines should be changed, you asked that we conduct an evidence-based review of diet and health. Thus, we initially posed over 40 specific questions related to dietary guidance. We then thoroughly reviewed the scientific literature pertaining to those questions, analyzed national data sets, sought additional information from invited experts, and deliberated on the results. After dropping some questions because of incomplete or inconclusive data, we wrote conclusive statements and a comprehensive rationale for 34 of the original questions. This evidence-based analysis of the science formed the basis for the 9 major messages that the Committee believes should be conveyed in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines of Americans. Although this approach was challenging and demanding for the Committee and Staff, we believe that the scientific documentation for our major messages is done more systematically and meticulously than that of previous Advisory Committees. Our process did not eliminate the need for scientific judgment in resolving issues characterized by conflicting information. However, the Committee considered such issues with care, and came to sound consensus on all questions.

During the Committee's deliberations an overall theme for our report emerged. Collectively, available scientific data show that Americans need to select a quality diet *while* staying within their calorie requirements to achieve optimum health. Because of sedentary lifestyles and poor food choices, many Americans exceed their caloric needs without meeting their nutrient requirements. This not only causes obesity and related diseases, but it also leads to malnutrition. Specific recommendations are provided within the report to improve diet quality without exceeding caloric needs. Major changes in the food habits and lifestyles of Americans are required to achieve this goal. The Committee recommends that your respective Departments, charged with the responsibility for the health and

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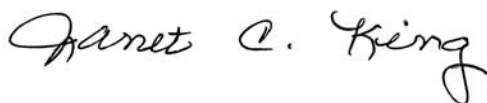
nutrition of the nation, initiate a national effort to reverse our escalating trend towards poor nourishment and health in a land of plenty. This requires many changes throughout our Society. Most specifically, we must explicitly address the extraordinary health disparities documented among our most economically disadvantaged in comparison to our most economically advantaged. Improved access to nutrient-rich foods at home, schools, work-places, and restaurants, opportunities for physical activity in all neighborhoods, schools, and work-places, and widespread education regarding the impact of individual choices are examples of changes we must effectuate .

On behalf of the entire Committee, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to serve our fellow citizens in this way. Although the charge to our Committee seemed daunting at times, we learned a tremendous amount from serving and benefited personally from the process. We appreciate your trust in us to accomplish this important task of making a contribution to the health of all Americans. I especially wish to thank you for assembling such an outstanding Committee with which to work on this endeavor. Every member made a unique contribution, and all committed themselves to the process. We truly enjoyed the camaraderie of working together on such an important mission.

I want to emphasize that this report could not have been completed without the excellent, diligent work of the Staff you provided. They were extremely dedicated and put in many long days and week-ends assisting the Committee. The hard work and extensive contributions of Carol Suitor need special recognition. Her guidance and assistance on how to present our information in a useful, readable manner were invaluable.

The Committee looks forward to the subsequent documents and discussion this report will generate. We believe that we have provided a strong foundation for that dialogue and work. We are very interested in the future dissemination of this information. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of my colleagues should you wish to discuss this report with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet C. King". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Janet C. King, Ph.D.  
Chair, 2005 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

Senior Scientist and  
Professor, University of California, Berkeley and Davis