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Statement

By

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Of the

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The Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health

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This was a first! There never had been before, in the history of the Public Health Service or any other agency of the United States government, a report on nutrition and health. This was put together by the folks at the Office of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention with the help of a great many nutritional and health experts around the country. It was a landmark report in the effort of the Public Health Service to improve the health of the American people. For the first time we presented our consensus on the state of knowledge of the link between diet and a broad range of health issues. The report particularly places emphasis on the role of diet and prevention of chronic diseases that are leading causes of death and disability in America. It also defines ways in which we can change our diets to reduce the risk for these diseases. And finally the report reveals clearly that the health of Americans could be improved by changing their diet to one that contains less fat.

The report focuses on the change from our main concern about nutrition in yesteryear compared to our concern today when we have an abundant food supply that has made it possible for folks to avoid nutritional deficiency diseases. Our problem now is over consumption of certain dietary components especially the excess intake of dietary fat and it's relationship to risk for chronic disease such as coronary heart disease, some types of cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, strokes, and obesity. I discussed the preparation of the report and gave tribute to the nearly 200 who contributed to the review, then outlined the 4 principal conclusions of this report found on page 3.

There followed implications for dietary guidance and education including the need for improved education of the public, improved use of nutrition labels to help consumers, more and better education in nutrition for physicians and others in the health professions.

In the area of nutrition programs and services the report's findings emphasized the importance of identification and removal of barriers to optimal health and nutritional status among special groups in the population, the incorporation of nutrition services into health care programs for Americans of all ages, the need for increased availability of

foods and food products that are low in fat, yet consistent with the other dietary recommendations of this report, and the need for adherence of all food service programs to the report's recommendations.

Finally, the report's conclusions point to the need for improved surveillance of nutritional status, especially among high-risk groups, and expanded research investigations into the relationships between dietary factors and health.

I then introduced Dr. J. Michael McGinnis, Assistant Surgeon General and Chairman of the Department's Nutrition Policy Board to present the specific recommendations of this important report. Dr. McGinnis' statement follows my own.