



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

At the turn of the new millennium, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) set its sights on the health of our Nation and the decade ahead. There was a unique opportunity to raise the stakes, challenge ourselves to do more, and work together to chart a course for the next 10 years that would improve the quality and years of life for all Americans, mindful of the needs of those less able to do for themselves.

Ambitious in scope yet grounded in the reflection of past assessments and the promise of a healthier tomorrow, our vision culminated in Healthy People 2010, which documents and tracks the Nation's disease prevention and health promotion objectives. At this juncture, there is no denying the value of goal-setting, the power of information, the objectivity of data, and the ability of analysis to help us understand and revisit, as necessary, our priorities and actions. With the Midcourse Review of Healthy People 2010, we have the benefit of examining in depth 28 public health focus areas. We have a chance to highlight accomplishments and learn from the inroads our Nation has made, and reflect and redirect attention to our shortcomings.

I am happy to report that society as a whole is experiencing an improved health status, especially in the delivery of services. For instance, many vaccination rates have met or exceeded targets, and access to diabetes care has increased; furthermore, tobacco use is declining, and the workplace is safer with fewer work-related injuries and deaths. These advances are tangible and worthy of appreciation. At the same time, health disparities continue to pose a challenge, with gaps that remain despite staunch efforts to close them. Although diabetes treatment is improving along with increased detection, the number of cases is on the rise. Despite enhanced awareness and efforts, overweight and obesity are increasing, and data indicate we are not getting enough physical activity. Significant work remains.

This 5-year marker allows us to assess data trends and to consider new science and available data in order to move forward more effectively. Midcourse adjustments ensure that Healthy People 2010 remains current, accurate, and relevant through the year 2010. To that end, our success relies on the dedication, conviction, and steadfast efforts that transcend sectors, uniting government, policy, education, business, and communities around a common goal of promoting healthy behavior and preventing disease. It is incumbent on us to provide the leadership, innovation, and perseverance to pave the way in building a healthier Nation, step by step, community by community, reaching all Americans.

I believe that we will continue to make great, healthy strides and, come 2010, our collective contributions will make a measurable difference in the health and well-being of our Nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael O. Leavitt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Michael O. Leavitt