

# Surgeon General's Perspectives

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW SURGEON GENERAL

I am honored to serve as your nation's Surgeon General. I thank President Barack Obama for the opportunity to serve, Congress for its unanimous support, and previous Surgeons General who have walked before me.

Each day, Americans are faced with many challenging choices about their health. As "America's doctor," my goal is to be an advocate for my patients—the 300 million Americans—to be their doctor, to answer their questions, and to help them make healthy decisions. As the nation makes changes for the betterment of individual and public health, I pledge my continued support and encouragement along the way. I am also especially excited to empower America's children to develop lifelong healthy habits as they grow into adulthood.

The road ahead will be challenging, but with your help we can make real and lasting progress. Today, chronic diseases account for nearly seven out of 10 deaths and almost 75% of our nation's health-care costs. Although these diseases including heart disease and cancer are among the most common problems,

the good news is that many of these diseases can be prevented. As such, prevention will be a focus of my work as Surgeon General.

Prevention has served as the backbone of our public health system since its inception. In the early 1900s, when infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia ran rampant, it was widespread preventive measures such as immunizations and improved sanitation that stopped the spread of disease and saved lives. While disease patterns and epidemics have evolved over the years, the solution—prevention—remains the key to helping all Americans enjoy longer, healthier lives.

When faced with difficult challenges, my experiences have taught me that success stems from perseverance. As dedicated and compassionate professionals, I will call upon you to advance the art and science of medicine and strengthen the reach and impact of our public health system. Together, we can and shall create a healthier nation.



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