



Friends of NCBDDD

In Support of the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

The Relationship between Disability and Public Health

“There is an increasing understanding that public health has the responsibility to promote the health and improve the quality of life of persons who already experience a disability. People with disabilities represent a substantial portion of the target population of many public health activities -- from diabetes management to tobacco cessation to emergency preparedness.”

Drum, C.E., Krahn, G.L., Bersani, H., Jr. *Disability and Public Health, Washington, DC. American Public Health Association Press, (2009).*

The mission of CDC involves “collaborating to create the expertise and information that people and communities need to protect their health – through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Adults with disabilities experience higher rates of preventable conditions at younger ages and participate in fewer health promoting behaviors than the general population.

- Individuals with disabilities have higher rates of obesity (31% vs. 20%), smoking (31% vs. 22%) and physical inactivity (22% vs. 12%) than the general population.
- One of three adults with an intellectual disability has five or more chronic health conditions
- Young people with complex health conditions constitute 15-20% of the population (CSHCN survey, 2007) and experience disparities in important functional outcomes like school, employment, and independent living arrangements, and do less well than typical children.

Preventable conditions contribute to disproportionately higher health care costs for people with disabilities.

- Disability-associated health care expenditures totaled \$397.8 billion (27% of all health care expenditures) in 2006 alone.
- Preventive approaches that address the specific needs of people with disabilities can reduce morbidity, mortality, and health care expenditures in individuals with disabilities and can improve employment outcomes.
- Health promotion programs have effectively decreased preventable conditions by 25% and reduced health care utilizations and costs.

People with disabilities have less access to health promotion programs and preventive services than the general population. People with disabilities:

- Experience multiple barriers to participation in health promotion programs.



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- Are 2.5 times more likely to experience cost as a barrier to necessary medical care;
- Receive preventive services (e.g., mammograms, immunizations) at consistently lower rates.

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE CDC, NCBDDD, DHDD IS INTEGRATING DISABILITY INTO THE OVERALL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENDA?

- Improving outcomes for infants with hearing loss by supporting 53 states and territories to collect and manage data on newborn hearing screening, follow-up evaluations, and enrollment in early intervention services.
- Measuring rates of select childhood conditions, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Tourette syndrome, and muscular dystrophy, to improve programs and policies for children and adults with those conditions.
- Reducing early childhood developmental delays by implementing an evidence-based parenting program, Legacy for Children™, through Early Head Start programs in selected communities.
- Educating health care providers on disabling conditions like intellectual disabilities, Tourette syndrome, muscular dystrophy, and spina bifida, to improve health care services provided to children and adults with those conditions.
- Promoting health, health care access, and emergency preparedness for people with disabilities by funding and assisting a network of 16 state disability and health programs.
- Funding and assisting a network of public health practice and resource centers for paralysis, limb loss, ADHD, physical activity to empower people to know more about their condition and to improve their health.
- Conducting research on how to improve health of people with different conditions such as intellectual disabilities, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy and Fragile X syndrome.
- Educating a broad network of funded and non-funded health and patient organizations to meet the evolving needs of children and adults with disabilities by integrating disability into their public health agenda.

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