

**Report 59:** The National Prevention Strategy: Integrating Environmental Health Research to Focus on Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

**Convener:** Dr. William Stokes

**Brief History:** The National Prevention Strategy was released by the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council on June 16, 2011. The National Prevention Council consists of the heads of 17 departments, agencies, and offices across the Federal government and is chaired by the U.S. Surgeon General. The Strategy is a cross-sector integrated national strategy that identifies priorities for improving the health of Americans. The of The Strategy's vision is "Working together to improve the health and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities by moving the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness." The overarching goal to increase the number of Americans who are healthy at every stage of life.

To realize the vision and achieve this goal, the Strategy identifies four Strategic Directions and seven targeted priorities. Healthy and Safe Community Environments is one of the four strategic directions. The Strategy recognizes that clean air and water, safe foods, and safe homes, schools, and workplaces are necessary to support good health and prevent disease and injuries. The Strategy recognizes that research is necessary to understand the extent of exposures to environmental hazards, the risks of these hazards, the impact of exposures on health, and to identify how to reduce exposures, especially among vulnerable populations (e.g. , infants, children, the elderly).

**Discussion Highlights:**

1. The need to evaluate the level of evidence needed to take regulatory and public health policy actions
2. The necessity of early involvement of all stakeholders in environmental health research.
3. How do we evaluate the impact of NTP and NIEHS research and reports, such as changes in NHANES biomonitoring levels?
4. There are multiple levels of prevention: Primary ( prevent exposures), secondary (chemoprevention), tertiary(medical treatment)
5. The definition of lifestyle choices is overly broad and often inclusive of environmental exposures; these need to be identified and more appropriately addressed in prevention strategies and research
6. Other discussion points are summarized in recommendations

**Recommendations:**

1. Incorporate "Prevention Science" into the mission statement of NIEHS
2. NIEHS should be the hub/coordinator for NIH prevention research
3. NIEHS should develop a strategic (high impact) research program focused on prevention science ( i.e., RFAs, PAs)
4. NIEHS should develop research programs to support the National Prevention Strategy to address the Strategic Priority for healthy and safe community environments (homes, schools, workplace)
5. NIEHS should, as a component of prevention science, measure the effectiveness of prevention strategies to demonstrate their value
6. NIEHS should adopt public health research goals aimed at preventing major diseases and conditions related to environmental exposures
7. NIEHS should review the lessons learned from 50 years of public health advances and effective interventions (e.g., removing lead from gasoline and paint) that focus on environment, and apply these to current environmental health issues
8. NIEHS should expand and enhance translational communications on prevention and effective interventions for a broad audience: affected communities, policymakers, clinicians, journalists, the general public. NIEHS should partner with NLM and others to accomplish this.
9. NIEHS should expand research to identify toxic exposures associated with adverse effects, and research on how to reduce/avoid exposures and to promote health and prevention
10. NIEHS should enhance interagency partnerships to support the National Prevention Strategy
11. NIEHS should Continue to focus on developing, validating, and gaining regulatory acceptance of improved safety testing methods that can be used as prevention tools to more accurately identify hazards *before* humans are exposed to such substances
12. NIEHS should improve environmental health literacy for the public, healthcare providers, and others
13. NIEHS should address issues raised in the President's 2010 Cancer Panel Report: *Cancer and the Environment: What We Can Do Now*, during the NIEHS strategic planning process

**Discussion Participants:**

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