

# Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (or CDC) is a United States federal agency under the Department of Health and Human Services headquartered in Greater Atlanta, Georgia. The CDC's mission is: collaborating to create the expertise, information, and tools that people and communities need to protect their health—through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats. The CDC works to protect public health and safety by providing information to enhance health decisions, and it promotes health through partnerships with state health departments and other organizations. The CDC focuses national attention on developing and applying disease prevention and control, environmental health, occupational safety and health, health promotion, injury prevention and education activities designed to improve the health of the people of the United States.

The CDC was founded in 1942 during World War II as the Office of National Defense Malaria Control Activities. The new agency was a branch of the US Public Health Service, and Atlanta was chosen as the location because malaria was endemic to the Southern United States. The agency changed its name to the Communicable Disease Center in 1946. The mission of CDC expanded beyond its original focus on malaria to include sexually transmitted diseases when the Venereal Disease Division of the US Public Health Service (PHS) was transferred to the CDC in 1957. Shortly thereafter, Tuberculosis Control was transferred (in 1960) to the CDC from PHS, and then in 1963 the Immunization program was established. The organization became the National Communicable Disease Center (NCDC) effective July 1, 1967. The organization was renamed the Center for Disease Control (CDC) on June 24, 1970, and Centers for Disease Control effective October 14, 1980. Effective on October 27, 1992, an act of the United States Congress appended the words “and Prevention” to the name; however, Congress

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directed that the initials CDC be retained because of its name recognition. The CDC operates under the Department of Health and Human Services umbrella.

The CDC is organized into several component organizations. These include the Office of the Director; Center for Global Health; the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health; the Office of Infectious Disease; the Office of Noncommunicable Disease, Injury and Environmental Health; the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response; the Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support; and the Office of Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services.

Under the Office of Infectious Disease are the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases; the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases; and the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. The Office of Noncommunicable Diseases, Injury and Environmental Health is comprised of the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. The Office of Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services contains the Laboratory Science Policy and Practice Program Office, the Public Health Information and Technology Program Office, the Public Health Informatics and Technology Program Office; the Public Health Surveillance Program Office, the Epidemiology and Analysis Program Office, the Scientific Education and the Professional Development Program Office, and the National Center for Health Statistics.

The CDC seeks to accomplish its mission by working with partners throughout the nation and the world to monitor health; detect and investigate health problems; conduct research to enhance prevention; develop and advocate sound public health policies; implement prevention strategies; promote healthy behaviors; foster safe and healthful environments and; provide leadership and training. Each of the CDC's component organizations undertake these activities in conducting specific programs.

Currently the CDC focus has broadened to include chronic diseases, disabilities, injury control, workplace hazards, environmental health threats, and terrorism preparedness. CDC combats emerging diseases and other health risks, including birth defects, West Nile virus, obesity, avian, swine, and pandemic flu, *E. coli*, and bioterrorism, to name a few. The CDC funds research and prevention programs relating to HIV/AIDS and issues periodic reports that detail the incidence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the United States as a whole, in specific subpopulations that are particularly impacted by the disease, and in the international arena. Mental health providers whose clients are at risk of HIV infection may find these reports helpful in providing their clients with HIV prevention information.

*Related Topics:* Prevention strategies.

## **Suggested Resources**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *CDC organization*. Retrieved January 20, 2012 from <http://www.cdc.gov/about/organization/cio.htm>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Vision, mission, core values, and pledge*. Retrieved January 30, 2012 from <http://www.cdc.gov/about/organization/mission.htm>