

DHHS-conducted or sponsored research involving human subjects; (4) maintains, promulgates, and updates educational guidance materials and quality improvement activities and materials related to protection of human research subjects; (5) conducts public outreach and education or information programs to promote and enhance public awareness of the activities of OHRP and human subject protections; and (6) provides staff support to the Human Subjects Research Subcommittee, Committee on Science, National Science and Technology Council.

VI. Amend Part L, subpart 5 by deleting it in its entirety.

G. Effective Date: The foregoing amendments to the organization and functions of the Office for Human Research Protections are effective immediately.

Dated: October 14, 2003.

Cristina V. Beato,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Health.

[FR Doc. 03-26627 Filed 10-21-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4150-36-P

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Partners Invited To Participate in Steps to a HealthierUS

AGENCY: Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Secretary.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) seeks to work with other public and private sector organizations to support a new Federal initiative to promote better health for all Americans. This initiative is called *Steps to a HealthierUS* and is part of the President's HealthierUS Initiative to help Americans live longer, better, and healthier lives. This *Steps Partnership* initiative is not a grant or contract award program and each partner will be responsible for supporting its own activities. Working together, it is intended that these partnerships will provide innovative opportunities to promote healthier living and successfully promote the principles and efforts of the *Steps* initiative. More information about *Steps* is available at: <http://www.healthierus.gov/steps/>. Partnerships are not limited to any existing list of priority projects.

DATES: Comments expressing or affirming an interest in the *Steps to a HealthierUS Partnerships* initiative will be most useful if received within three months of the publication of this notice. Contact identification information to

permit further discussion and consideration of ideas of mutual interest may be sent to either the street address or the email address set out in the next paragraph.

ADDRESSES: Expressions of interest, comments and questions may be sent to the following email address, StepsPartnerships@osophs.dhhs.gov, or by regular mail with contact information, as appropriate, to: Steps to a HealthierUS Partnerships, c/o Office of Public Health & Science, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue SW, Room 738G, Washington DC 20201.

Organization representatives may also call the following information line: 1(800) 631-0926. Callers will be directed to appropriate agency officials or to other collaborating partners with similar or complementary interests for further discussions.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: HHS is the United States government's principal agency for promoting and protecting the health of all Americans. HHS manages many programs, covering a broad spectrum of health promotion and disease prevention services and activities. Leaders in the business community, State and local government officials, tribes and tribal entities and charitable, faith-based, and community organizations have expressed an interest in partnering with the Department to promote healthy choices and behaviors. The Secretary welcomes this interest. With this notice, the Secretary outlines opportunities for these and other entities to partner with HHS, in order to address health promotion and chronic disease prevention and control activities. The *Steps* program will be carried out consistent with HHS's broad statutory authorities found in 42 U.S.C. 238, 241, 280e-11, 280h-280h-3, and 300u-300u-3 and, in some cases, pursuant to more particular, pertinent Public Health Service Act provisions or other HHS program statutes.

In recent years, the public has become more aware of the burden of illness and death caused by chronic diseases such as asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and stroke—and of the connection between these chronic diseases and lifestyle choices involving tobacco use, improper diet, and lack of exercise. Despite this new understanding and awareness, more than 1.7 million Americans die of a chronic disease each year, accounting for about 70% of all U.S. deaths. In addition, more than 175 million Americans live with chronic conditions, with millions of new cases diagnosed each year. These serious diseases are

often treatable, but not generally curable. Thus, the Secretary believes it is important and timely for the Nation to increase prevention efforts to fight chronic disease.

The *Steps to a HealthierUS* initiative focuses on *both* health promotion and chronic disease prevention and control through the following activities:

1. Community-based education programs highlighting steps that can be taken to prevent or reduce the incidence of chronic diseases;
2. Health promoting programs and environments in school, worksite, faith-based and community-based settings;
3. Improved access to preventive, diagnostic and treatment services;
4. The elimination of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic-based health disparities;
5. Improved delivery of evidence-based clinical preventive services and chronic disease management; and
6. Evaluation of chronic disease prevention and health promotion interventions.

Introduction

Federal health promotion and chronic disease prevention goals cannot be achieved without

(a) Change in individual behavioral practices and change in organizational cultures and actions, both based on increased knowledge and understanding;

(b) Optimal utilization of preventive or treatment services; along with

(c) Improvement in prevention, diagnostic, and treatment technologies and systems.

HHS has limited resources with which to achieve implementation of large-scale nationwide changes. Moreover, to achieve such societal changes, the involvement of both public and private organizations is necessary. For efforts of this magnitude, the Department periodically invites outside organizations to join in carrying out activities of mutual interest to achieve shared objectives. These partnerships are voluntary. The parties work together to carry out their respective, consistent missions for the common good.

Collaboration With Public and Private Sector Organizations

In order to implement the *Steps* nationwide initiative, HHS is interested in establishing partnerships with private corporations and other entities, including charitable, faith-based, and community organizations, as well as with State and local governments, that can help extend the program's reach to all Americans. In accordance with each entity's particular strengths and