

abilities, partnerships will be established; each partner will be responsible for providing the resources necessary to carry out specified activities of mutual interest.

As partners with HHS, both public and private sector organizations can bring their respective ideas and expertise, administrative capabilities, and production and material resources, that are consistent with the goals of the *Steps* initiative, to, for example:

(a) Share in the development of educational health information and its distribution to employees or to the public, *e.g.*, promoting healthy lifestyles to prevent chronic diseases, programs aimed at improving consumers' understanding of how proper dietary choices and physical activity can improve health and prevent obesity and other chronic diseases or providing practical guidance and information on how to obtain diagnostic and treatment services. Public education efforts could include Web-site and software development, work with local or national media, and sponsorship of health promotion events, each activity generally enhancing consumer understanding of health information related to health promoting behaviors and chronic disease prevention and control;

(b) Foster the creation and maintenance of effective health and wellness and physical activity programs that provide clear measurable results;

(c) Participate in the development of health professional educational activities, including conference co-sponsorship or co-publication and dissemination of professional educational materials, such as reports of proceedings and any resulting recommendations; and

(d) Conduct or support chronic disease prevention research, or undertake scientific testing and evaluation of commercial products related to the *Steps* initiative, such as interactive computer software and media tools.

Partnership agreements will make clear that there will be no Federal endorsement of commercial products or of particular companies. HHS will have a right to review the use of Department logos and statements related to *Steps* on such materials and products to ensure that they are suitable for the initiative and that government neutrality with respect to commercial products is maintained. When the *Steps* logo is approved for use on commercial materials or products that promote healthier lifestyles or foster other *Steps* objectives and are incorporated in *Steps* initiative activities, a disclaimer will be

required to be printed on, or affixed to commercial partner materials and products indicating that the use of the logo does not imply any Federal endorsement or warranty of a particular commercial product or of other products of a particular company.

Evaluation Criteria

After engaging in exploratory discussions of potential partnerships and partnership activities with respondents, the following considerations will be used by HHS officials, as appropriate and relevant, to determine whether HHS will engage in partnership activities with particular entities and the scope of those activities.

1. Are the activities proposed by the offering entity likely to provide a substantial public health benefit, consistent with HHS goals and the *Steps to a HealthierUS* Initiative?

2. Does the proposed partnership's potential for public health benefit outweigh any potential negative impact on the agency and its ability to accomplish its missions? What adjustments if any, would make the proposal acceptable?

3. Is there an identifiable and appropriate role for HHS?

4. Does the outside entity have the expertise and capacity to carry out its proposed activities?

5. Has the outside entity demonstrated a willingness to work collaboratively with other public and private sector organizations to achieve the stated *Steps to a HealthierUS* goals or to advance related efforts, activities, or initiatives?

Given the *Steps* Initiative's objectives, entities who have similar goals and consistent interests, appropriate expertise and resources, and would like to pursue chronic disease prevention and health promotion activities within their own organizations, or on a broader scale, in collaboration with the Department, are encouraged to reply to this notice. Working together, it is intended that these partnerships will provide innovative opportunities to promote healthier living.

Dated: October 16, 2003.

Cristina V. Beato,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Health.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Meeting of the National Advisory Council for Healthcare Research and Quality

AGENCY: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 10(a) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, this notice announces a meeting of the National Advisory Council for Healthcare Research and Quality.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Friday, November 7, 2003, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is open to the public.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Hubert H. Humphrey Building, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), 200 Independence Avenue, Room 800, Washington, DC 20201.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Anne Lebbon, Coordinator of the Advisory Council, at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 540 Gaither Road, Rockville, Maryland, 20850, (301) 427-1215. For press-related information, please contact Karen Migdail at (301) 427-1855.

If sign language interpretation or other reasonable accommodation for a disability is needed, please contact Mr. Donald L. Inniss, Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Program, Program Support Center, on (301) 443-1144 no later than October 31, 2003.

Agenda, roster, and minutes are available from Ms. Bonnie Campbell, Committee Management Officer, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 540 Gaither Road, Rockville, Maryland, 20850. Her phone number is (301) 427-1554. Minutes will be available after November 21, 2003.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Purpose

Section 921 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 299c) established the National Advisory Council for Healthcare Research and Quality. In accordance with its statutory mandate, the Council is to advise the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Director, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), on matters related to actions of the Agency to enhance the quality, improve the outcomes, reduce the costs of health care services, improve access to such services through scientific