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## CDC: the Nation's Prevention Agency

On October 27, 1992, CDC's name was changed to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (with "CDC" still to be used as the acronym). This change was enacted by Congress, as part of the Preventive Health Amendments of 1992, to recognize CDC's leadership role in the prevention of disease, injury, and disability. In enacting this change, Congress also specified that the agency continue to use the acronym "CDC" because of its recognition within the public health community and among the public.

CDC's new name reflects the evolution of its mission since 1946 as an agency that provides science-based assistance to state and local health departments in the control and prevention of disease, injury, and disability. In 1946, the Communicable Disease Center was created from the Office of Malaria Control in War Areas, an agency that had been established in 1942 to limit the impact of malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases on U.S. military personnel training in the southeastern United States (1,2). The change in name in 1946 reflected an assignment of responsibility for assisting states with the control of a broader range of communicable diseases.

In 1970, CDC was renamed the Center for Disease Control to reflect responsibilities for noncommunicable disease problems. The scope of mission expanded rapidly to include programs in areas such as occupational and environmental health, family planning and reproductive health, and chronic diseases. A major reorganization of CDC in 1980, and its renaming to the Centers for Disease Control, emphasized the importance of health promotion and education in the agency's mission. During the 1980s, CDC redoubled efforts to reduce the impact of smoking-related diseases, injuries, and other problems, while facing the new challenge of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome epidemic. Recent milestones in CDC's evolution include the creation of centers for chronic disease prevention and health promotion and for injury prevention and control. The National Center for Health Statistics has also recently joined CDC. These changes underscore CDC's commitment to the prevention of disease, injury, and disability.

Reported by: Office of the Director, and Office of the Director, Epidemiology Program Office, CDC.

### References

1. Etheridge EW. Sentinel for health: a history of the Centers for Disease Control. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1992.

2. Foege WH. Centers for Disease Control. J Public Health Policy 1981;2:8-18.

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