



Addressing the Challenges of Noncommunicable Diseases

*“Noncommunicable diseases have emerged as growing health problems for countries in every corner of the globe.”
- U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius*

GLOBAL DISEASE BURDEN

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung diseases, and diabetes, represent an urgent and growing global public health emergency. NCDs, in addition to other chronic diseases such as stroke, are a critical challenge for countries all around the world and at every stage in development.

Today in the United States, NCDs account for 70 percent of deaths, limit the activities of tens of millions more Americans, and cost our economy billions each year. Worldwide, NCDs kill over 35 million people each year, representing nearly two-thirds of the world's deaths. More than 80% of these deaths are in low- and middle-income countries, where health systems are not equipped to deal with the increasing disease burden associated with these afflictions.

MAJOR NCDs AND RISK FACTORS

Cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes are the NCDs responsible for the greatest number of deaths worldwide. The four major behavioral risk factors (tobacco usage, alcohol abuse, inactivity, and unhealthy diet), an aging world population, and other variables will contribute to a projected 15% increase in deaths from NCDs from 2010 to 2020.

Four major NCD risk factors:

- **Tobacco use**
- **Inactivity**
- **Alcohol abuse**
- **Unhealthy diet**

MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

The rising tide of noncommunicable diseases warrants strengthened action and increased focus from the international community. In light of this reality, the UN will host a high-level summit on the margins of this year's UN General Assembly to discuss how best the global community can address the growing threat of NCDs. The summit will bring together health and policy leaders from the U.S. and other governments, as well as international organizations such as World Health Organization to discuss strategies for prevention, control, and accessible treatment of noncommunicable diseases around the world.

U.S. INVOLVEMENT

The United States is active in its efforts both domestically and globally to address the threat of noncommunicable diseases.

The many innovative and collaborative efforts underway include a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and the Pan-American Health Organization designed to reduce the burden of diabetes for persons with type II diabetes in Central America (The Central American Diabetes Initiative), and the CDC's Field Epidemiology Training Program, a joint effort with Ministries of Health to develop skilled public health capacity in China, Colombia, Jordan, Tanzania, and Thailand.