



The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

On behalf of the entire 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee, we are very pleased to submit the *2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report*.

Our Committee was charged with reviewing the scientific literature on physical activity and health. The *2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report* provides a detailed summary of the disease prevention and health promotion benefits of a more physically active America that is firmly established by the latest scientific evidence. It builds on and significantly expands the scientific evidence summarized in the first *Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Report, 2008*. The Committee judged the 2008 Scientific Report to be an excellent document and used it as the foundation for the current report. It is clear, however, that the expansion of knowledge about the relationships between physical activity and health during the past 10 years has provided evidence of even more health benefits, demonstrated greater flexibility about how to achieve those benefits, and shown that a more physically active American population can be facilitated in a wide variety of ways.

The Scientific Report demonstrates that, across the full age spectrum, regular physical activity provides a variety of benefits that help us feel better, sleep better, and perform daily tasks more easily. The report also demonstrates that some benefits happen immediately. A single bout of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity can improve that night's sleep, reduce anxiety symptoms, improve cognition, reduce blood pressure, and improve insulin sensitivity on the day that it is performed. Most of these improvements become even larger with the regular performance of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.

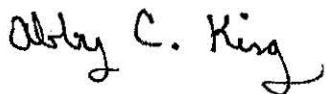
The newly documented health benefits also include reduced risk of excessive weight gain in adults, children, and pregnant women; improved cognitive function and a reduced risk of dementia; and reduced risk of cancer of the bladder, endometrium, esophagus, kidney, lung, and stomach. The report demonstrates, for the first time, physical activity-related health benefits for children ages 3 to 5 years. In addition, for the large number of adults who already have a chronic disease or condition such as osteoarthritis, hypertension, or type 2 diabetes, a reduced risk of developing a new chronic condition and reduced risk of progression of the condition they already have, plus improvements in quality of life and physical function.

Given Americans' low rates of participation in physical activity and high prevalence of chronic diseases and associated disabilities, this report is particularly timely. It provides the necessary foundation for the Department to revise the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. Strong federal guidelines, policies, and programs on physical activity should be an essential component of any comprehensive disease prevention and health promotion strategy for Americans. Included in this report is a summary of evidence-based physical activity promotion interventions that hold promise for improving the nation's physical activity levels.

On behalf of the entire Committee, we thank you for the opportunity to support the prevention priorities of the Department. Over the past 20 months, the Committee members and consultants worked exceptionally long and hard to conduct the extensive scientific review that made this report possible. Despite this task being added to their usual busy schedules, they met tight deadlines, provided insight and education to one another, and unselfishly worked to develop a consensus report. Thus, we wish to thank you for assembling a Committee of outstanding professionals who are knowledgeable, dedicated, and highly productive. Committee members are committed to the broad dissemination of this report and the ensuing guidelines. Please do not hesitate to contact us or any of the Committee members if we can be of further service.

It is important to emphasize that this report could not have been completed without the outstanding support of all the HHS staff who assisted us throughout the entire process. We are very grateful for their substantial assistance throughout the process. Their excellent logistical and management support in all aspects of the Committee's work was essential. Special recognition goes to Lieutenant Commander Katrina Piercy of the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and Captain Richard Troiano of the National Cancer Institute for their tireless dedication to the coordination, and ultimate completion, of this project. This report greatly benefits from the expert editing provided by Anne Brown Rodgers, who helped us present information that is useful and readable, and from the rigorous literature review work overseen by Bonny Bloodgood at ICF.

Sincerely,



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