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FOREWORD

Injury in the U.S. is endemic. Nationally, and in **every state** in the U.S., injury is the leading cause of death during the first three decades of life. More than 148,000 people died from injuries and violence in 2000; injuries and violence are the fourth leading killer in the U.S. This document, *Making a Difference: State Injury and Violence Prevention Programs*, presents examples of how state health departments are achieving impressive results preventing injuries and violence among their populations.

Millions of Americans also are injured and survive, only to be disabled, live with chronic pain or experience a profound change in lifestyle. More than 30 million people are treated for injuries in U.S. emergency departments each year; injuries account for over 35 percent of emergency department visits annually. Injuries cost an estimated \$260 billion annually.

These injuries – car crashes, falls, homicides, and other violent deaths, for example – are so common that they're often viewed as inevitable, as accidents. But when a public health approach is applied to the problems of injury and violence, these events can be predicted and, in most cases, prevented. In fact, each day, state health department injury and violence prevention programs utilize scientific methods like those used to prevent infectious and chronic disease in order to reduce injuries and save tens of thousands of lives.

Although only one prevention and impact example is presented for each state, collectively the examples illustrate the diversity of the issues faced by state health departments in preventing injury and violence, and show the equally multi-faceted responses that state programs have to this major public health problem.

It is important to note that the capacity of state injury and violence prevention programs differs significantly from state to state. Staff size and the types of injuries or violence addressed are just two examples of this variance. Funding levels and competing priorities often affect a state's capacity to most effectively respond to injury and violence.

The state activities described in this report make it clear: state injury and violence prevention programs save lives and money, and contribute significantly to the public's health and safety. We thank the many dedicated public health professionals who contributed to the development of this report, and hope you will find this report both useful and compelling.

Sincerely,

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