

New study on US health an urgent call to action

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(Medical Xpress)—The American Heart Association today says a new study, "The State of U.S. Health, 1990-2010: Burdens of Diseases, Injuries and Risk Factors" released in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* is a wake-up call for our nation.

The study reinforces that Americans are living longer but not necessarily healthier. It also stressed that while the United States continues to spend more on health care, our [health outcomes](#) are persistently behind other countries. The researchers pointed to [poor diet](#) and inadequate physical activity that leads to obesity and other [risk factors](#) as two key reasons why Americans are lagging globally.

"How much clearer does the evidence need to be? As a nation, we need healthier behavior, and we need to make it possible for all Americans to get there," said American Heart Association President Mariel Jessup, M.D. "We have it within our power to create a world that's free of heart disease and stroke. But everyone has a role and responsibility to make this happen – policymakers, [health care professionals](#) and the public."

The American Heart Association has established a 2020 impact goal that seeks to improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent, while reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20 percent. To achieve this goal, the association is focused on strategies from an individual to a global level. For example, through the association's [Life's Simple Seven](#) program individuals can find the tools they need to get their health factors under control, to increase exercise

levels and adopt a better diet - improving their [cardiovascular health](#) and greatly reducing the chance that they will suffer a heart attack or stroke. The association is also involved in the Million Hearts federal initiative to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. As a stakeholder in global health, the association is following up on the 2011 United Nations Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) to ensure these diseases remain central to the strategic plans of world governments and support the World Health Assembly's goal of reducing NCD-related deaths 25 percent by 2025.

"Obesity is not only a problem for our nation, it's a global epidemic," says American Heart Association CEO Nancy Brown. "We must start with our children – the future of this country.

That's why the association has undertaken a first of its kind effort – Voices for Healthy Kids – in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to reverse childhood obesity in the U.S."

Provided by American Heart Association

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