

# FOREWORD

This report, Maryland's first Health Improvement Plan (HIP), was developed to promote the public health agenda for Maryland as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century begins. It is a consensus document, formulated with input from health care consumers, providers, and other advocates in the public and private sectors around the state. A detailed list of contributors is provided in the Appendix.

Although this Plan includes a broad array of topics of public health concern, it is not an exhaustive list. Rather it examines and presents recommendations for a focused list of priorities, linked to the priority areas included in the national Healthy People 2010 report. A variety of quantitative and qualitative methods were used by focus groups convened to select the topics discussed in this Plan.

Priority subjects in 17 different focus areas are presented at the state level in this report. A similar array of priority subjects are presented from each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City with at least one topic from each jurisdiction. However, there are many additional areas of priority concern in these jurisdictions and statewide. The table on page 6 provides a summary listing of state and local priorities discussed in this HIP. Additionally, this table includes areas of priority concern which the local jurisdictions identified in their annual health plans, as well as others that were identified within the plan development process for the modules included in this Plan.

Data used to select these priority areas were primarily from 1997 to 1998. As new assessments are completed with updated facts and figures, these priorities may change. Consequently, every effort will be made to revise the HIP, at regular intervals, to reflect the changing needs of Maryland communities and its residents.

In addition to contributing one or more modules to this report, several local health departments have also published their own Health Improvement Plans or other strategic planning documents. These reports provide a more detailed discussion of local priorities and the process used to identify them.