



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

Dear Maryland Partners,

In some way, diabetes affects every Marylander. You may have diabetes or know someone who does. You may have lost a loved one to complications from the disease. You may be a parent seeking to adopt healthy food and activity habits. You may be a health care or program provider in the community treating or helping people with diabetes. You may be an employer concerned about how diabetes affects productivity and health insurance costs. Or you may be a taxpayer considering how to reduce the diabetes burden to our State's vitality and economy. Regardless of where you live in our State, diabetes takes a toll, but it is a disease we can prevent or mitigate.

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in Maryland. According to the federal government, the number of US adults diagnosed with diabetes has more than doubled in the past 20 years. And in Maryland, over a third of all adults have prediabetes, the condition that often leads to diabetes.

There are many reasons for all Marylanders to get involved against this preventable disease. To that end, the Maryland Department of Health and others have created the State's inaugural 2019-2024 Diabetes Action Plan. The Plan provides information on the disease burden in Maryland, and best practices for the State and its partners to implement to prevent and manage diabetes. It will serve as the State's guide by which we will set specific goals and measure our successes. These actions address all Marylanders:

- People who are at a healthy weight, to prevent the onset of overweight and obesity;
- People who are overweight and obese, to achieve a healthy weight;
- People with prediabetes and gestational diabetes, to participate in prevention programs to halt disease progression; and
- People with diabetes, to get the care they need to control their disease and enjoy optimum health.

Informed by extensive input and comment from many partners, the strategies in this Plan are far-reaching. We are grateful for the enthusiastic support which was offered by so many as we developed this Plan. Success in defeating diabetes requires broad and strong collaboration between communities, organizations, businesses, local governments and individuals across the State. We encourage you to use the Plan to identify steps you can take to prevent and manage diabetes. And, most importantly, let us know how you think your group or community can get involved.

This is our shared call to action: to take steps today to build a Healthy Maryland for ourselves and for future generations. We look forward to working with you to improve the health of all Marylanders.

Yours in good health,

Robert R. Neall  
Secretary

Frances B. Phillips, RN, MHA  
Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services