

The following nine criteria should be taken into consideration when commenting on the proposed or suggesting additional objectives.

- The result to be achieved should be **important and understandable to a broad audience** and support the Healthy People 2020 goals.
- Objectives should be **prevention oriented and should address health improvements** that can be achieved through population-based and individual actions, and systems-based, environmental, health-service, or policy interventions.
- Objectives should **drive actions that will work toward the achievement of the proposed targets** (defined as quantitative values to be achieved by the year 2020).
- Objectives should be **useful and reflect issues of national importance**. Federal agencies, states, localities, non-governmental organizations, and the public and private sectors should be able to use objectives to target efforts in schools, communities, work sites, health practices, and other environments.
- Objectives should be **measurable and should address a range of issues**, such as: behavior and health outcomes; availability of, access to, and content of behavioral and health service interventions; socio-environmental conditions; and community capacity – directed toward improving health outcomes and quality of life across the life span. (Community capacity is defined as the ability of a community to plan, implement, and evaluate health strategies.)
- **Continuity and comparability** of measured phenomena from year to year are important, thus, when appropriate, retention of objectives from previous Healthy People iterations is encouraged. However, in instances where objectives and/or measures have proven ill-suited to the purpose or are inadequate, new improved objectives should be developed. Whether or not an objective has met its target in a previous Healthy People iteration should not be the sole basis for retaining or archiving an objective.
- The objectives should be **supported by the best available scientific evidence**. The objective selection and review processes should be flexible enough to allow revisions to objectives in order to reflect major updates or new knowledge.
- Objectives should **address population disparities**. These include populations categorized by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, disability status, sexual orientation, and geographic location. For particular health issues, additional special populations should be addressed, based on an examination of the available evidence on vulnerability, health status, and disparate care.
- Healthy People 2020, like past versions, is heavily data driven. **Valid, reliable, nationally representative data and data systems** should be used for Healthy People 2020 objectives. Each objective must have 1) a data source, or potential data source, identified, 2) baseline data and 3) assurance of at least one additional data point throughout the decade.