

ACSM Recommendations: Healthy People 2020 Objectives

*As presented by Angela Smith, M.D., FACSM
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ACSM applauds the intent and process of Healthy People 2020 and is pleased to offer the following comments.

ACSM agrees with the Objectives relating to Physical Activity and Fitness.

Regarding PAF HP2020-1:

“Reduce the proportion of adults who engage in no leisure-time physical activity.”

We propose rewording as a positive statement, consistent in style with the other objectives. For example:

“Increase the proportion of adults who engage in at least some leisure-time physical activity.”

Regarding PAF HP2020-6 and PAF HP2020-7 (also relating to OA HP2020):

We propose adding an objective relating to older adults. For example:

“Increase the proportion of older adults (age 65 and older) who meet current Federal physical activity guidelines for aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and balance activity.

- a. Increase the proportion of older adults who engage in at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both.
- b. Increase the proportion of older adults who do muscle-strengthening activities that are of moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.
- c. Increase the proportion of older adults who do exercises that maintain or improve balance, especially those who are at risk of falling.

NOTE: The following Guidelines are just for older adults:

- When older adults cannot do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week because of chronic conditions, they should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow.
- Older adults should do exercises that maintain or improve balance if they are at risk of falling.
- Older adults should determine their level of effort for physical activity relative to their level of fitness.
- Older adults with chronic conditions should understand whether and how their conditions affect their ability to do regular physical activity safely.

Regarding PAF HP2020-14:

“Increase the proportion of physician office visits for chronic health diseases or conditions that include counseling or education relating to exercise.”

We propose that such counseling or education be conducted by a qualified professional with appropriate training and certification.

Further, we recommend an additional Objective regarding similar services for healthy patients:

“Increase the proportion of physician office visits by healthy individuals that include counseling or education relating to exercise.”

The same recommendation regarding training and certification of those conducting exercise training and education apply to this recommendation.

Summary:

We applaud the overarching goals to create the social and physical environments that promote good health for all, across all life stages, without disparities, especially those that promote the multiple parameters of fitness related to physical activity – including aerobic fitness, muscle strength, bone health, flexibility, agility and balance.