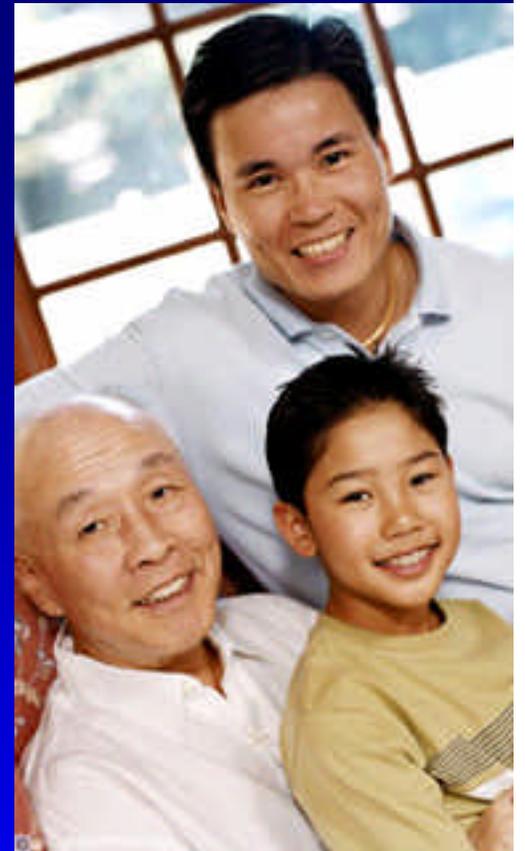


THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY HISTORY IN HEALTH



Alan E. Guttmacher, M.D.

SACGHS

October 11, 2004

In the “Age of Genomics,” Why Family History?

- Most diseases are due to interactions of multiple genes and environmental factors.
- Almost every patient has available today, a free, personalized tool that captures many of these interactions and can serve as the cornerstone for individualized disease prevention.
- This valuable, free, and well-proven tool is the family history.

In the “Age of Genomics,” Why Family History?

- Although we will gain important new genomic tools, family history will remain highly relevant for years.
- Family history helps predict risk for such varied health concerns as heart disease, colorectal cancer, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, osteoporosis, atopy or asthma, type 2 diabetes, suicide, etc.
- Yet, many people are unaware of relatives’ medical histories, and many health professionals underutilize this information in advising patients on how to maintain good health.

Family History Changes Population Screening Guidelines

- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Thyroid Disease
- Thromboembolism
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Coronary Artery Disease
- Dyslipidemia
- Breast Cancer
- Colon Cancer
- Prostate Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Hip Dysplasia
- Iron Def Anemia
- Osteoporosis
- Cardiomyopathy

Family History Changes Management of Common Disease

- Coronary Heart Disease
- Hypertension
- Heart Failure
- Emphysema & COPD
- Syncope
- Pancreatitis
- Diabetes
- Thromboembolism
- Thyroid Cancer
- Breast Cancer
- Colon Cancer
- Urticaria
- Developmental Delay
- Pancreatitis

If Family History Is So Useful, Why Don't Health Professionals Use It More Consistently and Effectively?

- 1) Underestimation by clinicians of the utility of the family history
 - Requires better teaching and more pervasive role modeling of effective use of the family history
- 2) Insufficient time in the clinic to obtain, organize, and analyze family history info
 - Requires creative approaches to the family history that demand less practitioner time

But Do People Care About Family History?

- Soon to be published data suggest that Americans believe that family history is important in health.
- But, it also suggests that relatively few people have actually ever collected health information from relatives to develop a family health history.

So, What Can We Do?



So, What Can We Do?



So, What Can We Do?



The Surgeon General's American Family Health Initiative



Goals of the Surgeon General's American Family Health Initiative

- **Increase the American public's awareness of the importance of family history in health;**
- **Give the American public tools to gather, understand, evaluate, and use family history to improve their health;**
- **Increase the awareness of health professionals about the importance of family history;**
- **Give health professionals tools to gather, evaluate, and use family history information; and to communicate with their patients about family history;**
- **Increase genomics and health literacy;**
- **Prepare both the American public and their health professionals for the coming era in which genomics will be an integral part of regular health care.**

So, What Can We Do?



My **Family Health** Portrait

A tool from the U.S. Surgeon General



Welcome to Your Family Health Portrait

Your Family Health Portrait allows you to create a personalized family health history based on information you provide about you and your family's experience with the leading diseases.

Your Family Health Portrait should only be used in consultation with a healthcare professional. It can be a valuable tool for discussion, risk assessment, and medical advice.

New Users Start Here ▶

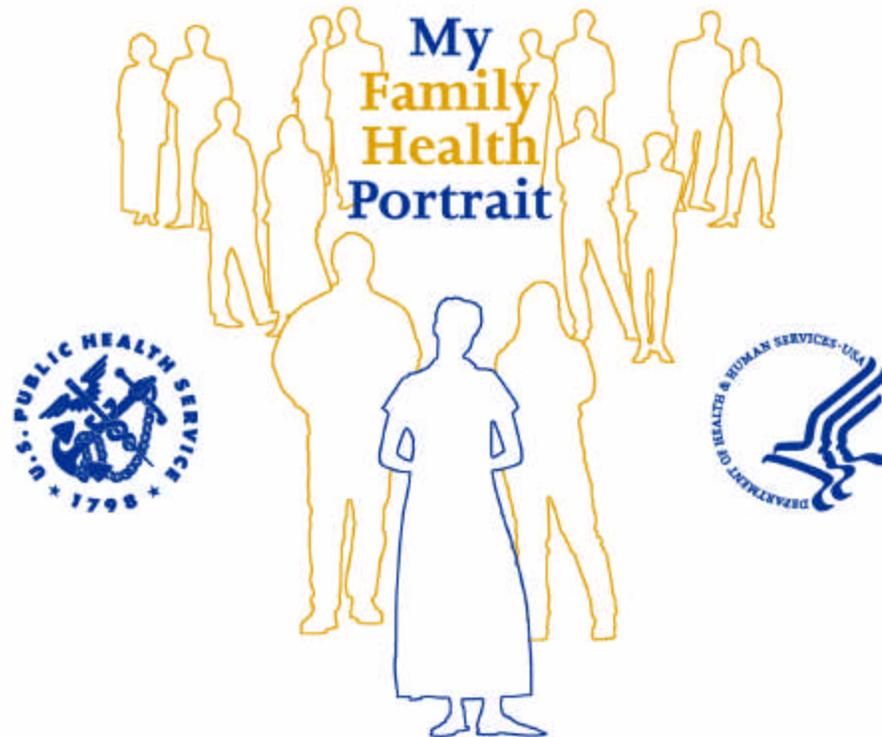
Returning Users ▶

Information you provide is stored on your computer's hard drive and is only as secure as that drive. Please take appropriate precautions to protect sensitive information. For general questions about security and privacy, [click here.](#)

The Surgeon General's American Family Health Initiative

- **November 8, 2004**
 - **Formal announcement of the Initiative**
 - **Release of My Family Health Portrait**

U.S. Surgeon General's American Family Health Initiative

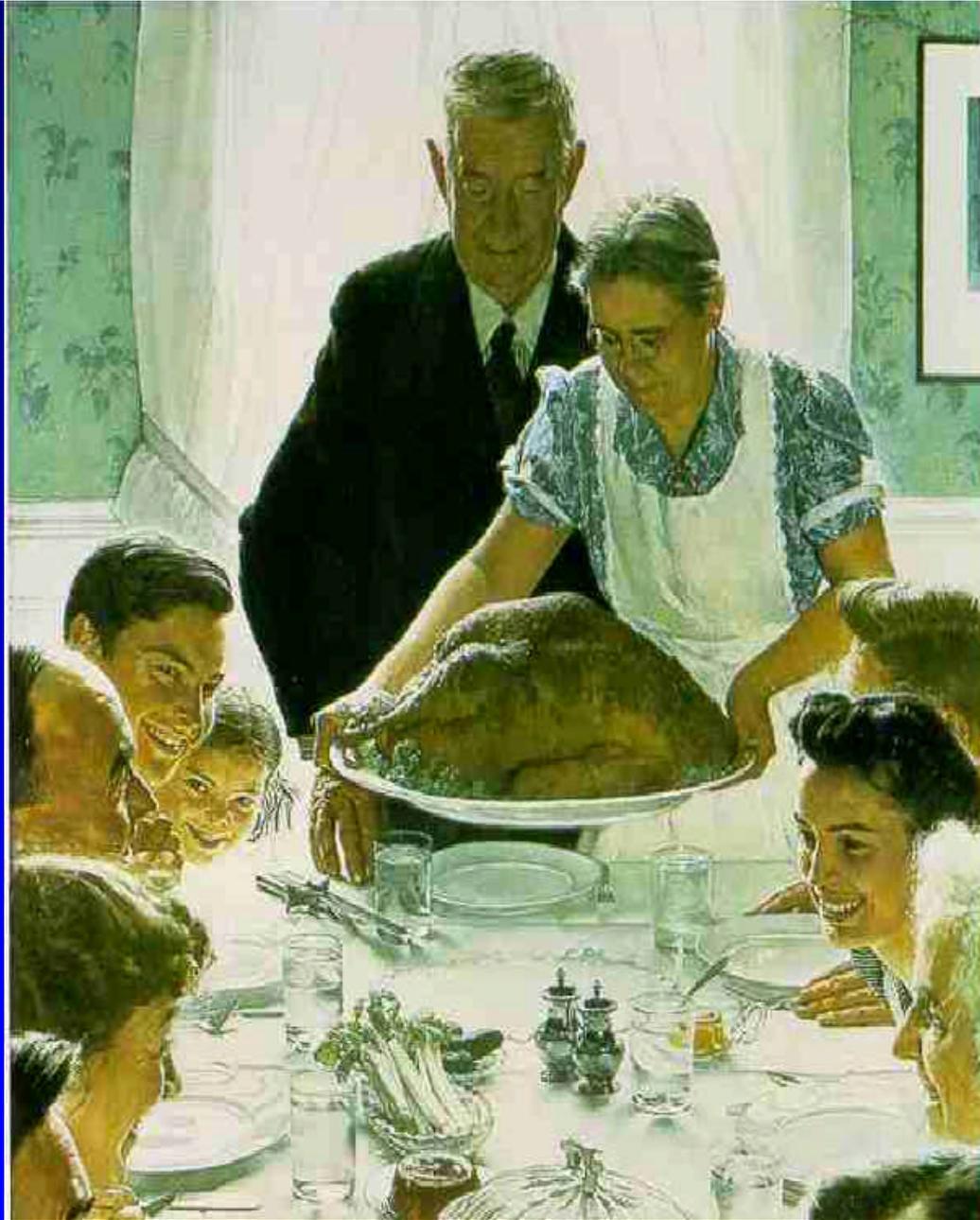


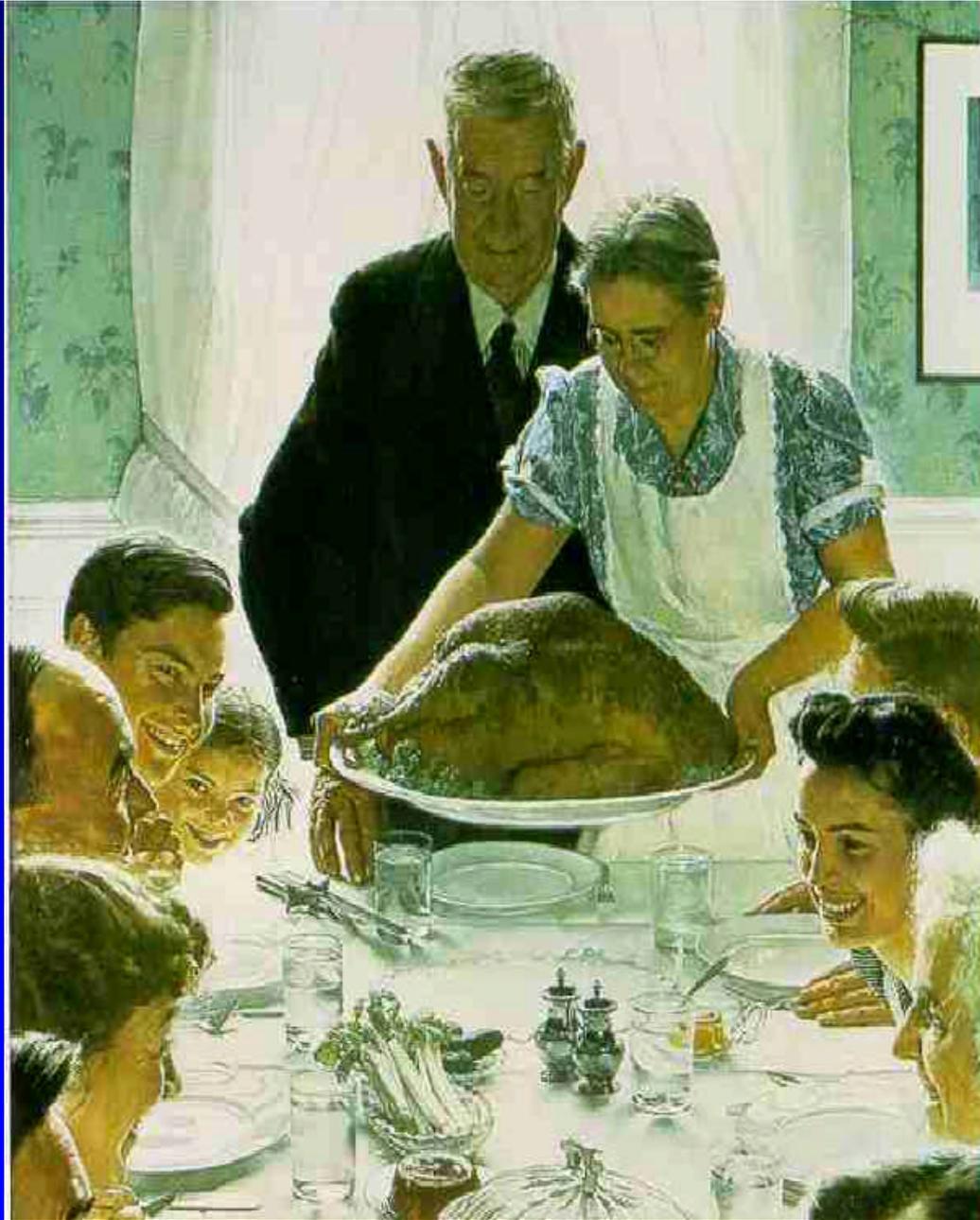
Press Conference
National Press Club
529 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC

Monday, November 8, 2004, 10:00 AM

The Surgeon General's American Family Health Initiative

- **November 8, 2004**
 - **Formal announcement of the Initiative**
 - **Release of My Family Health Portrait**
- **Thanksgiving Day, 2004**
 - **First Annual National Family History Day**





Now that we've finished the family history, let's eat!