

Director

Karen Hacker, MD, MPH

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Dr. Hacker leads CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, setting the strategic direction for the center's portfolio, which focuses on surveillance and epidemiology, policy improvements, health care system collaboration, and links between community and clinical services.



Karen Hacker, MD, MPH, is the director of CDC's [National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion](#) (NCCDPHP), a position she assumed in August 2019. NCCDPHP has an annual budget of more than \$1.4 billion and more than 1,000 staff members dedicated to preventing chronic diseases and promoting health across the life span.

Dr. Hacker leads an executive team that sets the strategic direction for the center’s portfolio, which focuses on:

- Surveillance and epidemiology to move data into action.

- Policy improvements to support health and healthy behaviors.
- Health care system collaboration to strengthen delivery of preventive services.
- Links between community and clinical services to improve self-management of chronic conditions and enhance quality of life.

From 2013 to 2019, Dr. Hacker served as director of the Allegheny County Health Department in Pennsylvania, where she was responsible for 1.2 million residents in 130 municipalities, including Pittsburgh. Under her leadership, the department achieved national public health accreditation in 2017. Dr. Hacker also launched the Live Well Allegheny initiative, aimed at reducing cigarette smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.

Previously, Dr. Hacker was the senior medical director for Public and Community Health at the Cambridge Health Alliance in Massachusetts. Between 2002 and 2013, she held a variety of leadership roles at the Cambridge Public Health Department and the Institute for Community Health (both part of the Cambridge Health Alliance).

Dr. Hacker served as Interim chief public health officer (2006 to 2007) and medical director for the Cambridge Public Health Departments (2004 to 2013) and as executive director of the Institute for Community Health (2002 to 2013). She also spent several years working for the Boston Public Health Commission, with a focus on adolescent health, serving as division director for Child and Adolescent Health (1999 to 2002), director of Adolescent and School Services (1992 to 1999), and director of Adolescent Services (1989 to 1992).

As an expert in community-based participatory research (CBPR), Dr. Hacker served as the director of the CBPR program of the Harvard Clinical and Translational Science Award Initiative (Harvard Catalyst). She wrote *Community-Based Participatory Action Research*, a widely used academic text, and taught a course on the topic at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. As the executive director of the Institute for Community Health, she designed, led, and published on numerous community participatory health projects. She has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles on a wide variety of topics, including chronic disease, adolescent health and school-based health centers, obesity, substance use, and health policy.

Dr. Hacker received her BA from Yale University, her MD from Northwestern University School of Medicine, and her MPH with honors from Boston University School of Public Health. She completed her internship and residency training in primary care internal medicine at Boston City Hospital, followed by an adolescent medicine fellowship at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles. She is board-certified in internal medicine and has served as an associate professor at Harvard Medical School (2010 to 2015) and at Harvard School of Public Health (2012 to 2015), and a visiting professor in the Graduate School of Public Health and clinical professor in the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. She is currently an adjunct professor at the Emory School of Medicine and at Morehouse School of Medicine.

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