

December, 1997

Dear Friends of Public Health:

The Virginia Department of Health is pleased to provide you with this copy of *Healthy Virginia Communities, A Report on Year 2000 Health Status and Risk Reduction Indicators* for the Commonwealth of Virginia and Health Districts. It is a document designed to help you and other interested citizens identify and understand some of the key health-related issues that confront the citizens of our State as we approach the turn of the century.

With the rapid changes in the health care field that our society is experiencing, there is a growing need for useful information. Our agency is in the forefront of a developing nationwide effort among states to ensure that our citizens have access to data that can help them make better and more informed decisions about the quality of their lives. *Healthy Virginia Communities* is intended to objectively assess where we stand on some important issues, and to enable us to measure our progress in comparison to others across the State, as well as at the national level.

You will note as you read the report that we have purposefully presented the information in a way that relates it to both the public and private sectors. We strongly believe that it will require the best collaborative efforts of all of us working together to successfully address and resolve the problems that face us collectively. It is toward this end that I commend this publication to your review and utilization.

Thank you for your interest in helping us ensure that we do have healthy Virginia communities.

Sincerely,

Randolph L. Gordon, M.D., M.P.H.
State Health Commissioner