

# PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY FOR PREVENTING VIOLENCE

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**Prologue:** In October 1985 Surgeon General C. Everett Koop convened his *Workshop on Violence and Public Health*, which signaled public health's entry into the field of violence prevention. Koop called on public health professionals to "repond constructively to the ugly facts of interpersonal violence." During the past decade the involvement of the Department of Health and Human Services in violence prevention research and programs has expanded, culminating in the formation of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control in 1991 as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Despite much progress, however, stark reminders surface daily in the news media that much remains to be done. President Clinton, introducing his health reform plan to Congress 22 September 1992, invoked "the outrageous costs of violence in this country" as an area his administration is committed to addressing. "The problem of violence in America did not appear overnight," this paper states, "nor will it disappear suddenly. A sustained and coordinated effort . . . will be necessary at all levels of society to address this complex and deeply rooted problem." The authors either are or have been affiliated with the new National Center for Injury Prevention and Control in Atlanta. James Mercy is acting director of the center's Division of Violence Prevention. Mark Rosenberg is acting associate director for public health practice at the center. Ken Powell is acting associate director for science in the Division of Violence Prevention and leads the division's Youth Violence Prevention Team. At the time this paper was written, Claire Broome was acting director of the center. William Roper, who was director of the CDC when the violence prevention program achieved national prominence, is now president of the Prudential Center for Health Care Research.