Greetings from the Council on Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention! I write to you greatly energized, having just returned from the AHA’s Scientific Sessions 2010 in Chicago. I am pleased to report that our Council has much to celebrate and much to accomplish. We were thrilled to hear a heavy emphasis on epidemiology and both primordial and primary prevention in the opening comments by AHA President Dr. Ralph Sacco and CEO Nancy Brown. These Scientific Sessions have highlighted the AHA 2020 Goal, “To improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent, while reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20 percent.” It has not escaped our notice that this goal is firmly grounded in 50 years of research by so many members of our own Council and our sister NPAM Council. Our own Dr. Donald Lloyd-Jones received the association’s Chairman’s Award for the major leadership role he played in the creation of metrics for the 2020 goal and for his leadership in writing the 2020 Impact Goal (Lloyd-Jones DM, et al. Circulation. 2010;121:586-613; http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20089546). We were also thrilled that several distinguished members of our Council received very high recognition in Chicago, including Dr. Michael Criqui (former chair of our Council), who received the AHA Distinguished Scientist Award, and Dr. Joanne Manson, who received the AHA Population Research Prize. Additionally we were inspired by the outstanding Lewis A. Conner Memorial Lecture delivered by Larry Appel and the superb Ancel Keys Lecture delivered by Dr. Philip Greenland.

A few other highlights of Scientific Sessions 2010:

- Our Early Career Committee played a major leadership role in creation of the very successful Early Career Symposium the Saturday before Sessions, and many senior members of our Council were presenters. I have heard overwhelmingly positive feedback about the symposium, which we hope to repeat.

- Our Council was also thrilled to receive another set of highly competitive and outstanding abstracts presented for the Elizabeth Barrett-Connor Award for Young Investigators. This year’s awardee was Dr. Sachin Gupta, who presented an abstract titled, “Fitness and reclassification of risk for cardiovascular disease mortality.” Congratulations to Dr. Gupta as well as the other outstanding presenters Dr. An Pan, Dr. Jemma Hopewell, Dr. Jennifer Anderson and Dr. Anuradha Lala.

- The new Behavior Change for Improving Health Factors Committee held its inaugural meeting, chaired by Dr. Judy Ockene of NPAM and co-chaired by Dr. Bonnie Spring of our Council. This committee will advise the AHA on behavioral approaches to move people towards the optimal health metrics underlying the 2020 Impact Goals.

- The AHA has announced its intention to start an open-access journal. More details will be available in coming months, but this may serve as a great venue for us to publish our best science. Additionally, to highlight the emphasis on the AHA 2020 Goals, our immediate past chair, Mary Cushman, as well as Barry Franklin, immediate past chair of NPAM, have edited a prevention-themed series of papers that will begin to appear in Circulation.

Congratulations to the Fall Program Committee chaired by Marian Limacher for their wonderful work in planning Scientific Sessions 2010. Planning is actively underway for Scientific Sessions 2011, for which “prevention” will be a central theme.
We are very excited about the upcoming 2011 Spring Scientific Sessions of the Councils of Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention/Nutrition, Physical Activity and Metabolism, to be held at the Marriott Marquis Atlanta, March 22–25. We have received a large number of high quality abstracts and there will be several exciting special programs in the agenda. Please find more information on our Council website: americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1247. SAVE THE DATE!

Our Council is at a very exciting point in its history of more than 50 years. Decades of prior research by giants in our field and in our Council have established the key role for modifying traditional risk factors — the basis for our 2020 Impact Goals. At the same time our future is clearly leading us towards new and wide-ranging scientific methods and disciplines, from outcomes and policy research to the search for new biomarker and imaging strategies for prediction and prevention, genetic/genomic epidemiology and international cardiovascular health. Collaboration and networking have become essential components to our science. To identify and implement strategies by which our Council might leverage the AHA focus on the 2020 Impact Goals, our Leadership Committee plans to hold a strategic planning meeting at the end of the Spring Scientific Sessions.

Finally, a couple of reminders: First, we encourage you to nominate active members of our Council to become AHA fellows. Second, we want our members to be involved in Council activities. This can be facilitated using the online involvement form. Finally, if you have any questions or would like to provide feedback to me, please do not hesitate to contact me.