The passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) in March 2010 represents a significant turning point in the evolution of health care law and policy in the United States. While most of the media and scholarly attention given to the ACA has correctly focused on its complex health insurance provisions and the constitutional wrangling over the legitimacy of federal power in mandating that everyone have health insurance, the legislation sets in motion a wide range of programs that also signify a moderate but important regulatory shift in the role of the federal government in public health. Taken together, a range of ACA provisions designed to expand insurance coverage, cost controls, and target prevention have the potential to improve population-level health outcomes across all income groups. If properly implemented, these provisions could alleviate some of the burdens imposed on the public’s health by insufficient availability of health insurance and inadequate access to health care.