



The Need For Prevention-Centered Health Reform

With health care costs representing an ever-growing portion of GDP and with nearly one in six Americans not having health insurance, it is not surprising that health care reform efforts typically focus on financing of health insurance coverage and access to care. Often neglected in the national debate over health reform, however, is the fundamental issue of how to invest our resources in ways that achieve the ultimate goal of the health system – optimal health for all Americans. This means prevention.

Investing in prevention means improving the quality and quantity of both **clinical preventive services** and **community preventive services**. **Clinical preventive services** are delivered in a medical setting by a healthcare professional. **Community preventive services** are policies, programs, and services that aim to improve the health of the entire population or specific sub-populations. Investing wisely in both types of prevention is essential for addressing the leading preventable causes of disease and death, namely, tobacco use, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and alcohol and drug abuse.

Partnership for Prevention encourages policy makers to make prevention the cornerstone of America's health system. Ensuring that a reformed health system incorporates the following prevention policy principles would have an enormous impact on the health of the American people.

Clinical preventive services should be a basic benefit of proposed health financing reform. Financing mechanisms should:

- Make high-value clinical preventive services accessible to all.
- Encourage patients to use preventive services.
- Offer incentives to healthcare providers to deliver clinical preventive services.
- Reward employers for their active engagement in employee health promotion.

Community preventive services should be an integral part of health financing reform. Policies and financing mechanisms should:

- Create healthy environments and promote healthy lifestyles.
- Offer incentives to organizations that influence the health of populations to deliver community preventive services.
- Encourage Americans to give greater attention to prevention in their own lives.

Health reforms should aim to increase the impact of prevention. Financing mechanisms should:

- Increase support for research on community-based and clinical prevention.
- Support development and tracking of system performance standards related to prevention.

ABOUT PARTNERSHIP FOR PREVENTION

Partnership for Prevention aims to increase the priority of health promotion and disease prevention throughout the nation's health system. Partnership systematically studies and ranks the health impact and cost-effectiveness of preventive measures and advocates for the adoption of proven prevention practices and policies.