

REAL HEALTH REFORM STARTS WITH PREVENTION

» EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Visit www.prevent.org to view the full report and to obtain more information on how to increase the priority of prevention in national health reform.

A HEALTH SYSTEM THAT COSTS TOO MUCH AND DELIVERS TOO LITTLE

The United States far exceeds every nation in the world in health care spending, yet has a health system that is outperformed by 36 countries. The time is right to transform our approach to health and health care. Only by addressing the preventable conditions that lead to poor health and high health care costs can we achieve lasting solutions to the problems that ail our health system. By doing this, we can make America the healthiest nation in the world and we can make our health system a model for others to follow.

PREVENTION WORKS... AND IS COST-EFFECTIVE

The underlying drivers of poor health and high health care costs include conditions within the economic, social, and physical environments that often make it difficult for people to make healthy choices. These conditions often foster behaviors – including, for example, tobacco use, poor diet, physical inactivity, and alcohol consumption – that lead to dire health consequences. Yet a wide variety of services, programs, and policies – both at the population level and in one-on-one patient interactions in clinical settings – have been proven to be effective both in promoting health and preventing disease. What's more, many of these interventions are highly cost-effective.

WHAT CONGRESS CAN DO

Partnership for Prevention has developed a series of recommendations that aims to assist the 111th Congress in incorporating effective health promotion and disease prevention policies into a reformed health system.

Increase the delivery of proven clinical preventive services.

Partnership recommends that Congress:

- » Provide coverage in federally-sponsored health insurance programs for recommended preventive services and create incentives for Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program to cover cost-effective preventive services.
- » Increase reimbursement in government-sponsored health insurance programs for delivering cost-effective preventive services and offer first-dollar coverage of the services to consumers.
- » Provide incentives to health care providers for achieving high delivery rates for recommended services and to employers for establishing workplace health promotion programs and policies.

Increase the delivery of community preventive services (i.e., policies, programs, and services aimed at the entire population or specific sub-populations).

Partnership recommends that Congress:

- » Create a discrete, sustainable funding source to support state and local core public health activities and provide incentives for states to meet specified public health objectives.

- » Establish a Public Health Advisory Commission to recommend population-level strategies for achieving key national health objectives, how to allocate core public health funds, and ways to hold public health agencies accountable for achieving national health objectives.
- » Require that state and local recipients of public health funding use evidence-based programs and policies in all areas where they exist.
- » Support consumer education initiatives encouraging individuals to adopt healthy behaviors.

Increase knowledge about the effectiveness and delivery of preventive services.

Partnership recommends that Congress:

- » Expand support of research on effective clinical and community preventive services and on the potential health effects of policies and programs that fall outside of the health sphere (e.g., transportation, agriculture, and land use).
- » Invest in data systems to monitor progress toward achieving national health objectives and toward reducing disparities in access to preventive services among racial and ethnic minorities.



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