

Taking Action to Support Community Prevention and Equity in Health Reform



Dialogue4Health Web Forum

Larry Cohen, MSW
Executive Director, Prevention Institute

December 10, 2009

Prevention
Putting prevention
at the center of
Institute
community well-being

Overarching Strategy

- ◆ Sustain the momentum for health reform generally
- ◆ Continue building momentum for community prevention – spread the word to engage all sectors
- ◆ Media barrage

Why must community prevention be a part of meaningful reform?

- ◆ Community prevention advances health and equity
- ◆ Community prevention will transform our sick-care system into a system that supports health: only with comprehensive health reform can we keep Americans healthy and free American businesses and families from skyrocketing health care costs
- ◆ Americans support prevention
- ◆ Preventing illnesses and injuries before they occur saves money

Prevention Institute Letter to President Obama



President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As health reform legislation moves forward, Prevention Institute, a national organization committed to preventing illness and injury and fostering health and equity, urges you to ensure that strong provisions for community prevention are included in the legislation. Community prevention is a fundamental component of a successful comprehensive health reform approach.

A comprehensive health framework that emphasizes prevention and wellness can significantly alleviate the social and financial costs associated with sickness and health care by keeping people from getting sick and injured *in the first place*. Community prevention enables the health care system to run more effectively by reducing the burden on emergency departments, clinical and in-patient care. A study we authored with Trust for America's Health and the Urban Institute shows that a small \$10 per capita investment in community prevention can save more than \$16 billion annually in health care costs within the first five years.

Both the Senate HELP Committee's *Affordable Health Choices Act* and the House Tri-Committee's *America's Affordable Health Choices Act* would establish Community Transformation Grants to address the community level factors that support health and equity. This program should be maintained in the bill in order to support community efforts to engage in quality prevention. The bills establish a Prevention and Public Health Fund to make sure that health reform not only improves health care access and quality but also invests in improving America's health. These bills also include the establishment of a National Prevention and Wellness Strategy, which signals high level inter-agency commitment to supporting communities that foster health and equity.

As preventable illnesses and injuries are the most significant drivers of increasing health care costs, it is essential that we reorient our health care system from an after-the-fact approach to one that focuses on keeping people healthy in the first place. As an organization engaged with numerous successful community, philanthropic, and government prevention initiatives around the country, we have seen the value and vitality of prevention and equity efforts in improving health across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines.

We urge you to communicate your support for meaningful prevention provisions, including Community Transformation Grants, a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy, and a Prevention and Public Health Fund, with Congressional leadership.

Sincerely,
Prevention Institute
Oakland, California

221 Oak Street Oakland, CA 94607 510.444.7788 fax 510.668.1280 www.preventioninstitute.org

“As preventable illnesses and injuries are the most significant drivers of increasing health care costs, it is essential that we reorient our health care system from an after-the-fact approach to one that focuses on keeping people healthy in the first place.”

Americans support investment in public health in health reform

- ◆ 65% of Democrats and 62% of Republicans agree that a lot more emphasis should be placed on prevention. (July 2009, Lake Research Partners and Public Opinion Strategies)
- ◆ 71% of Americans favor an increased investment in disease prevention; in fact, disease prevention is one of the most popular components of health reform
- ◆ 72% favor a proposal to establish a Public Health Investment Fund that would dedicate annual funding to prevention
- ◆ 58% favor a proposal to create a National Prevention and Wellness Strategy (November 2009, Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; poll conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and Public Opinion Strategies)

Return on Investment with Prevention



\$16 Billion
Annual Savings
In 5 Years

SOURCE: Prevention for A Healthy America: Investments in Disease Prevention Yield Significant Savings, Stronger Communities, Trust for America's Health, July 2008

Media Barrage

The New York Times

To the Editor:

Paul Krugman ("Harry, Louise and Barack," column, May 11) is absolutely right: the Obama administration should always remember the self-serving profit motives of the health care industry.

But this is not 1993, and most Americans are now clamoring for health reform. The administration is not without leverage at the bargaining table; in fact, it comes with a strong hand. If industry is endorsing quality, efficiency and best of all, prevention, let's make it walk the talk.

The administration can (and should) demand that a reformed approach to health include substantial investments in prevention. This may be America's chance to create a health system that truly protects and promotes our health, old villains cannot stand in the way.

LARRY COHEN
Executive Director
Prevention Institute
Oakland, Calif., May 11, 2009

- **Newspapers:** letters to the editor, op-eds, meet with editorial boards
- **New media:** post on blogs
- **Call in to radio shows**

“This may be America’s chance to create a health system that truly protects and promotes our health.”

Federal Funding: Other Opportunities

- ◆ Stimulus (ARRA)
- ◆ Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2009 (H.R. 3090)
- ◆ Transportation Reauthorization
- ◆ Child Nutrition Reauthorization
- ◆ Preventing violence
- ◆ The next Farm Bill

Build a Movement



Photo Courtesy of http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/91.4/images/hall_fig01b.jpg

Next Steps

- ◆ Call your Senators – U.S. Capitol Switchboard:
(202) 224-3121

- ◆ Write letters to your Senators – personalized letters are the most helpful
 - Keep it concise and constructive
 - Highlight examples of successful community prevention efforts in your community

- ◆ Establish a presence in the media

- ◆ Visit www.preventioninstitute.org for more tools and information

Priority States

- ◆ **Indiana** (Senator Bayh)
- ◆ **Maine** (Senator Collins & Senator Snowe)
- ◆ **North Dakota** (Senator Conrad & Senator Dorgan)
- ◆ **Louisiana** (Senator Landrieu)
- ◆ **Connecticut** (Senator Lieberman)
- ◆ **Arkansas** (Senator Lincoln)
- ◆ **Missouri** (Senator McCaskill)
- ◆ **Nebraska** (Senator Nelson)
- ◆ **Ohio** (Senator Voinovich)
- ◆ **Georgia** (Senator Chambliss)
- ◆ **Oklahoma** (Senator Coburn & Senator Inhofe)
- ◆ **South Carolina** (Senator DeMint)
- ◆ **Nevada** (Senator Ensign)
- ◆ **New Hampshire** (Senator Gregg)
- ◆ **Senate Leadership:**
 - Majority Leader Harry Reid (Nevada)
 - Democratic Whip Richard Durbin (Illinois)
 - Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (Kentucky)
 - Minority Whip Jon Kyl (Arizona)