

# Building Healthier Communities by Investing in Prevention

A focus on prevention will not only improve the health of Americans, but also help to reduce health care costs and improve quality of care. Through the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the Affordable Care Act works to address factors that influence our health – housing, education, transportation, the availability of quality affordable food, and conditions in the workplace and the environment. By concentrating on the causes of chronic disease, the Affordable Care Act helps move the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on wellness and prevention.

As we work to improve the health of Americans, we must find ways to make the healthy choice in each community an easy and affordable choice. Unfortunately, in too many communities today, healthy choices are neither easy nor affordable. As a result, 7 out of 10 deaths among Americans each year are from chronic diseases, and almost 1 out of every 2 adults has at least one chronic illness. Racial and ethnic minority communities experience higher rates of obesity, cancer, diabetes, and AIDS. In particular, children are increasingly vulnerable. Today, almost one in every three children in our nation is overweight or obese which predisposes them to chronic disease. The numbers are even higher in African American and Hispanic communities, where nearly 40% of the children are overweight or obese.

The Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund is designed to expand and sustain the necessary capacity to prevent disease, detect it early, manage conditions before they become severe, and provide states and communities the resources they need to promote healthy living. In FY2010, \$500 million of the Fund was distributed to states and communities to boost prevention and public health efforts, improve health, enhance health care quality, and foster the next generation of primary health professionals. This year, building on the initial investment, new funds are dedicated to expanding on four critical priorities:

## *Community Prevention (\$298 million)*

The initiative supports prevention activities that we know will work to reduce health care costs and promote health and wellness.

- **Community and State Prevention (\$222 million).** Implement the Community Transformation Grant program and strengthen other programs to support state and community initiatives to use evidence-based interventions to prevent heart attacks, strokes, cancer and other conditions by reducing tobacco use, preventing obesity, and reducing health disparities. Launch a consolidated chronic disease prevention grant program.
- **Tobacco Prevention (\$60 million).** Implement anti-tobacco media campaigns which are proven to work to reduce tobacco use, telephone-based tobacco cessation services, and outreach programs targeting vulnerable populations, consistent with HHS' Tobacco Control Strategic Action Plan.
- **Obesity Prevention and Fitness (\$16 million).** Advance activities to improve nutrition and increase physical activity to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce obesity related conditions and costs. These activities will support the First Lady's "Let's Move!"

initiative and help implement recommendations of the President's Childhood Obesity Task Force.

*Clinical Prevention (\$182 million)*

**Access to Critical Wellness and Preventive Health Services (\$112 million).** Increase awareness of new preventive benefits made available by the Affordable Care Act. Expand immunization services and activities. Strengthen employer participation in wellness programs.

**Behavioral Health Screening and Integration with Primary Health (\$70 million).** Assist communities with the coordination and integration of primary care services into publicly-funded community mental health and other community-based behavioral health settings. Expand suicide prevention activities and screenings for substance use disorders.

*Public Health Infrastructure and Training (\$137 million)*

The allocation strengthens state and local capacity to prepare health departments to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

- **Public Health Infrastructure (\$40 million).** Support state, local, and tribal public health infrastructure to advance health promotion and disease prevention through improved information technology, workforce training, and policy development.
- **Public Health Workforce (\$45 million).** Support training of public health providers to advance preventive medicine, health promotion and disease prevention, epidemiology, and improve the access to and quality of health services in medically underserved communities.
- **Public Health Capacity (\$52 million).** Build state and local capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks through improved epidemiology and laboratory capacity. Increase investments in programs that prevent healthcare associated infections.

*Research and Tracking (\$133 million)*

The initiative supports the Affordable Care Act's expansion of coverage for community and clinical preventive services by increasing resources for guidance and evaluation of preventive services.

- **Health Care Surveillance and Planning (\$84 million).** Fund data collection and analysis to monitor the impact of the Affordable Care Act on the health of Americans. Boost the collection and analysis of environmental hazards data to protect the health of communities.
- **Prevention Research (\$49 million).** Strengthen the CDC-facilitated Community Guide by supporting the Task Force on Community Preventive Services' efforts to identify and disseminate evidence-based recommendations on important public health challenges to inform practitioners, educators, and other decision makers. Expand the development of recommendations for clinical preventive services, with enhanced transparency and public

involvement in the processes of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Fund cross cutting public health research studies.

### **Building on Other Initiatives that Promote Prevention**

The Obama Administration recognizes the importance of a broad approach to addressing the health and well-being of our communities. Other initiatives put forth by the Obama Administration to promote prevention include:

- The **President's Childhood Obesity Task Force** and the **First Lady's Let's Move! initiative** aimed at combating childhood obesity.
- The **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009** that provides \$1 billion for community-based initiatives, tobacco cessation activities, chronic disease reduction programs, and efforts to reduce healthcare-acquired infections.
- **The Affordable Care Act's National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council**, composed of senior government officials, charged with designing and implementing a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy.

To read about FY 2010 Prevention and Public Health Fund investments, visit [www.HealthCare.gov/news/factsheets/prevention02092011a](http://www.HealthCare.gov/news/factsheets/prevention02092011a).