OVERVIEW
The Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund will invest $60 million over 4 years in evidence-based community prevention activities, with the goal of reducing costly preventable health conditions. The majority of funds will be awarded through competitive grants, with the first round likely to be awarded in fall 2013.

The Trust is the first of its kind in any state in the nation and will dramatically increase available funding for community prevention activities in Massachusetts. It was passed into law in August 2012 as a part of health care cost containment legislation, known as Chapter 224.

FUNDED ACTIVITIES AND ELIGIBLE GRANTEES
The Department of Public Health (DPH), in consultation with a new Wellness and Prevention Advisory Board, will administer the funds. A minimum of 75% of funds must be spent on competitive grants to:

- Reduce rates of the state’s most costly preventable health conditions
- Reduce health disparities
- Increase healthy behaviors
- Increase the adoption of workplace-based wellness programs
- Develop a stronger evidence-base of effective prevention programs

Entities eligible for funding include: municipalities or regional collaborations of municipalities; community organizations, health care providers, or health plans working in collaboration with one or more municipalities; and regional planning agencies.

In addition to the competitive grants, up to 10% of total funds can be used to support workplace wellness.

FUNDING PRIORITIES
The funding priorities must be laid out in a yearly report from DPH and must be based on data, including:

- The most prevalent and costly preventable health conditions facing the state
- Health disparities in these conditions by race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, sexual orientation or socio-economic status
- Proven community-based or workplace-based programs to address these health conditions
Oversight and Evaluation
The funding priorities will be developed with the guidance of the Prevention and Wellness Advisory Board. The Board, appointed by the Governor in spring 2013, includes:

- State and local health officials
- Experts in health equity, health economics, and public health research
- Representatives from the health care and health insurance industries and the business community
- Representatives of community health workers and public health nurses
- Public health and consumer health associations

An outside organization must be hired to conduct an evaluation of the program after 4 years to determine its impact on health outcomes and health care costs. Based on the evaluation, a commission will recommend whether funding for the Trust should be continued beyond 4 years.

Join Us to Support the Trust
The campaign to create this historic fund was spearheaded by the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA), and was only successful because of strong leadership from a coalition of partners and widespread support from elected officials, community groups, residents, and advocacy organizations from all corners of Massachusetts — all speaking in one voice to call for real investments in public health.

As the Trust is implemented, we must continue to build support and visibility across the state, defend against any efforts to rollback or divert funds, and seek ways to expand available resources.

Join the effort. Visit www.MPHAweb.org to sign up today!

Other Public Health Elements of the Cost Containment Law
- Creates a Task Force on Behavioral Health Integration.
- Strengthens requirements for health plans to comply with mental health parity laws.
- Creates a new workplace wellness tax credit program to encourage businesses to implement qualified wellness programs.
- Creates a new Health Policy Commission that will develop standards for accountable care organizations. These standards may include:
  - The integration of public health interventions with an emphasis on social determinants of health
  - The promotion of community health workers
  - The integration of mental health and substance abuse services with primary care

To learn more about the overall law, read summaries from Health Care For All (tinyurl.com/cbcsummary224) and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation (bluecrossmafoundation.org). For more on implementation visit http://tinyurl.com/fgqwrp.