

Prevention: The Key to Healthy Families, Healthy Neighborhoods

-Support the Prevention and Cost Control Trust-
House Bill 1498, sponsored by Rep. Lewis

Why do we need prevention?

We can improve the lives of children and families by preventing chronic health conditions before they happen. We can accomplish this by funding community-based health programs, such as those that:

- Show families how to improve the air quality in their homes to reduce children's asthma symptoms
- Improve parks and sidewalks to encourage physical activity
- Make fresh, healthy foods available to students in school and create more time for physical activity during the school day
- Work in the community to reduce and prevent tobacco use



Health care costs are rising every year, forcing us to cut spending on education and many important community programs. Prevention can free up needed funds by saving nearly half a billion dollars each year in Massachusetts.

- Community-based programs have been shown to effectively prevent disease.
- A 5% reduction in chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension can save us nearly \$500 million annually, as reported in a study published in January 2011.

How will the Prevention and Cost Control Trust help our community?

The Prevention and Cost Control Trust will provide a stable source of funding for community health programs that prevent disease and cut health care costs.

- Grants will fund community-based programs that target the costliest, most preventable diseases that affect the largest number of people or burden certain communities.

Strong oversight and evaluation will ensure that funds are distributed effectively throughout the state.

- Municipalities, regional collaborations, and nonprofits that coordinate with a municipality will be eligible for grants. An Oversight Board will ensure that funds are distributed in ways that best address the most prevalent health conditions in the state.
- A surcharge of less than 1% on Health Safety Net Surcharge Payers will fund the Trust.

Join us!

Sign on to endorse the bill by contacting Maddie Ribble at 617-524-6696 x111 or MRibble@MPHAweb.org

We need a health care system, not just a sick care system.

Prevention helps families get healthy and stay healthy.

Instead of working to keep people healthy, our health care system focuses on treating people after they've gotten sick.

Three quarters of the money we spend on health care goes towards treating preventable chronic diseases – but only 4 percent of health care spending goes towards preventing people from developing these conditions in the first place.^{2, 3}



We have the tools we need to help children, families, and entire neighborhoods stay healthy.

Studies tell us that community-based health promotion programs can help people gain less weight, eat healthier and be more physically active, reduce smoking, and cut their risk of heart disease.

- Home-based programs have been proven to help kids with asthma reduce their symptoms and miss school less often. These programs send trained workers to the home to show families how to improve the air quality inside, helping kids feel better and stay healthier.
- *Shape Up Somerville: Eat Smart. Play Hard*, is a program that has helped children stay at a healthy weight, giving them a better chance at avoiding chronic disease later in life. This program provided healthier food in schools and gave kids the chance to be physically active before, during, and after the school day.
- The Greater Lawrence Family Health Center worked with the entire community to help people learn how to prevent and control diabetes through healthy eating and physical activity. Within five years, the number of patients with their diabetes under control had more than doubled.

Rising health care costs are forcing us to cut spending on education and other important programs. We'll never reduce these costs until we start keeping people healthier.

Each year, Massachusetts loses billions of dollars due to health conditions that could have been prevented, including:

- \$1.8 billion on obesity-related medical costs⁴
- \$3.72 billion on productivity losses due to asthma⁵
- \$4.3 billion on medical treatment costs for diabetes⁶
- \$17 billion on productivity losses stemming from obesity⁵

Community-based prevention can save Massachusetts half a billion dollars each year.

Reducing diabetes and hypertension by only 5% would lead to large savings in medical costs in only a few years. These diseases lead to other conditions that are expensive to treat, such as heart disease, stroke, and renal disease. By investing in community-based programs that can prevent these conditions, Massachusetts could begin saving \$450.4 million *per year* within 5 years.¹

To learn more, contact Maddie Ribble at 617-524-6696 x111 or MRibble@MPHAWeb.org.

1. Ormond B, Spillman C, Waidmann T, Caswell K, Tereshchenko B. Potential national and state medical care savings from primary disease prevention. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2011;101(1):157-164.

2. Center for Disease Control. Chronic disease: The power to prevent, a call to control. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/AAG/chronic.htm>

3. Woolf S. The big answer: Rediscovering prevention at a time of crisis in health care. *Harvard Health Policy Review*. 2006;7(2):5-20.

4. Finkelstein EA, Fiebelkorn IC, Wang G. State-level estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity. *Obes Res*. 2004;12(1):18-24.

5. Milken Institute. *An Unhealthy American: The Economic Burden of Chronic Disease*. Available at: <http://www.chronicdiseaseimpact.com/>

6. Massachusetts Department of Public Health. *Healthy Massachusetts Disease Management and Wellness: Focus on Diabetes*. Boston, MA; June 2009.

7. Massachusetts Department of Public Health. *Health of Massachusetts*. Boston, MA; April 2010.