



PREVENTION CORE MESSAGES

Every American deserves to live a long, healthy life. But we're falling short of that goal.

- Tens of millions of Americans are suffering from preventable diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.
- Today's children are in danger of becoming the first generation in American history to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents.
- Health care costs are rising and out of control.

Each of us is personally responsible for making healthy choices for ourselves and our children to prevent illness in our own lives.

There are also things we can do together – as communities – to support individuals and families who want to take personal responsibility. Prevention should begin with a strong focus on kids and schools.

- Schools should provide kids with nutritious meals, get rid of the junk food in the school vending machines, offer gym classes three or more times a week, and teach kids about the importance of diet and physical activity.
- We should also make sure that kids have access to safe places to play and exercise.

We can help kids and everyone else, too, by making healthy choices easy choices.

- We can provide accessible, safe places to walk, jog, bike, swim, take an exercise class, or play sports.
- Restaurants should include nutrition information about menu items, and everyone should have access to supermarkets or farmers' markets that sell fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Businesses should consider offering workplace wellness programs, and public places should be smoke-free.
- Communities should have well trained first responders and public health workers ready to deal with emergencies, like floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes.

The new health care law includes a National Prevention Strategy and a Prevention and Public Health Fund to support communities that wish to implement these improvements in public health.

Investing in disease prevention can dramatically lower health care costs, while improving health.

- Community-based disease prevention programs keep people out of the doctor's office and lowers family health care costs.
- Healthy, safe communities can attract employers and create jobs.
- A healthier work force is a more productive work force.
- A stronger community means stronger housing values.

Prevention efforts in our communities make it easier for each of us to take personal responsibility for our lives, save health care dollars, and improve the economy and quality of life. We can all be for that.

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