



HEALTHY LIVING: THE IMPERATIVE OF PREVENTIVE CARE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The health of people living with disabilities is greatly linked with the preventive care that they receive. Over 50 million Americans live with disabilities caused by chronic illnesses, birth defects, and physical injury, many of which are preventable. Further, studies have shown that this population is more likely to experience physical inactivity, less access to adequate health care, and poorer health overall compared to those without disabilities. Therefore, people with disabilities are at a higher risk for preventable health conditions such as injury, mental health disorders, obesity, and chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease.

In order to protect the most vulnerable, it is essential to push for policies that focus on prevention to benefit the specific needs of people living with disabilities. Opportunities to prevent secondary conditions, and participate in healthy lifestyle practices allow people with disabilities to enjoy life to the fullest.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund:

The Prevention and Public Health Fund, established by the Affordable Care Act, gives us a chance to help turn our sick care system into a health care system. In fiscal year 2012, the Prevention Fund will make \$1 billion available to communities in every state, and over the next 10 years (FY2013-FY2022) an additional \$12.5 billion will be added for proven, effective ways to keep Americans healthier and more productive. This is real money going to communities to:

- Grassroots based efforts for health education and promotion so people living with disabilities can live, learn, work, and engage actively in our communities.
- Community based programs to prevent chronic diseases and secondary conditions.
- Expand inclusive opportunities for recreation and exercise.
- Improve nutrition by assuring access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and farmers markets.
- Expand mental health, injury and violence prevention programs.
- Improve prevention services in low-income and underserved communities.

The Fund also helps state and local health departments to:

- Provide flu shots and other immunizations
- Protect our food, air, and water
- Fight infectious diseases
- Respond to natural disasters like floods and hurricanes
- Prepare for terror attacks

Moving Forward

Many organizations have already taken an active role towards protecting the Prevention and Public Health Fund as a means of improving the quality of life for all Americans. For example, the American Association on Health and Disability has joined similar groups in supporting the Fund. Disability organizations can continue to make a difference in the lives of Americans by advocating for prevention, supporting the Prevention and Public Health Fund, and helping at-risk populations receive quality and preventative health care.

Call to Action:

Please join the Trust for America's Health and nearly 800 state and national organizations in support of the Prevention and Public Health Fund. You can add your organization to the list by contacting Robyn Gougelet at rgougelet@TFAH.org