



AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY Statement of Principles on Prevention in a Transformed Health System

Prevention has long been a cornerstone of American Cancer Society policy, research and programs. We cannot reduce cancer incidence and mortality without a strong and sustained societal investment in prevention on the community, health care system and individual levels. Based on what is known today about cancer prevention and detection, as many as 60 percent of cancer deaths could be avoided every year. However, the nation's current health system is not structured to provide and promote health and wellness, in part because the health care system in this country is focused primarily on treatment of the sick. To transform this orientation, a critical requirement to achieve our mission, will require a long-term societal commitment to increase significantly the prevalence of individual and community-based prevention. Moreover, this transformation of the role of prevention should be fully integrated with any broader health care reform as the Society has set forth in its "Statement of Principles on What Constitutes Meaningful Health Insurance."

These are the pillars of prevention in a transformed health system:

1. Access for all Americans to prevention health services

- All Americans should have easy and equitable access to evidence-based prevention programs and services.
 - ✓ Prevention programs and services should be readily accessible to the public and reflect the diverse needs and cultural preferences of communities and populations.
 - ✓ Prevention services administered by providers should not be "insurable events;" rather, they should be routine services, available at little or no cost to those for whom the services are recommended.
 - ✓ Prevention outreach and education efforts should be tailored and targeted to increase the utilization of prevention services.

2. A comprehensive approach to prevention

- Society should be committed to prevention through a balanced investment at the national, state and local levels, including but not limited to the health care system. Community-groups, employers, health plans, and other non-governmental organizations, in addition to local, state and the federal governments, all have important roles to play in promoting prevention, and these efforts must be continually reinforced to achieve a long-term commitment to prevention and wellness.

- Promotion of health and supportive environments is vital to the success of wellness and prevention efforts, enabling individuals to take control over, and to improve their health and quality of life.
- ✓ Targeted education and outreach efforts are necessary for prevention efforts to be effective in diverse populations.
 - ✓ Wellness and prevention communications to the public need to be clear, unified and consistent, as well as culturally competent and sensitive to the needs of the individual or community.
 - ✓ Prevention efforts must include changes in systems – healthcare, worksites, schools, communities– that facilitate positive lifestyle changes among individuals.

3. Greater support for a full spectrum of prevention research

- The primary focus of new research should be directed to developing better means of preventing, detecting and screening cancer through basic science, and behavioral and translational research which will guide the optimal development and utilization of prevention programs and services.
- We must identify essential prevention services that are supported by evidence-based science through a transparent process or processes.
 - ✓ Methods used to determine the returns of investments in prevention must include non-economic benefits such as an improved quality of life and the avoidance of disease and consider long-term outcomes.

4. Improvements in delivery systems

- Systems, and payments and other incentives, should be structured to encourage providers and others in the health care system to deliver essential and effective prevention programs and services.
 - ✓ Tools such as reminder systems, feedback loops, quality measures, and provider accountability should be developed to encourage providers to use preventive services, where appropriate.
 - ✓ Incentives that are aimed at reducing health disparities should be a specific focus of changes in payments.
 - ✓ Health and other preventive services personnel training will need to be expanded to support and deliver necessary preventive services and programs in a variety of delivery settings.
- Prevention can be provided through a wide and growing array of settings, but to enhance their effectiveness, we recognize the need to:
 - ✓ Accelerate the development and implementation of regionally and nationally interoperative health information technology.

- ✓ Support the development and tracking of health promotion and disease prevention progress systematically through transparent measures and health outcomes.
- ✓ Systematically measure changes in health disparities.
- ✓ Explore new ways to deliver services that reflect the needs of a very diverse nation.

5. The individual has an important role in prevention

- Individuals have an important role in prevention, both in seeking to maintain good personal health and by obtaining recommended prevention services based on established guidelines for care. Government and non-governmental prevention policy should seek to provide the most appropriate clinical and community-based opportunities for individuals to obtain them.
 - ✓ Use of financial and other incentives can enhance utilization of, or eliminate barriers to, prevention services, and the effectiveness of incentives should be more fully and systematically explored by public and private organizations.
 - For those who receive prevention services through a health plan, these services should not be subject to deductibles and significant co-insurance or co-pays; rather, they should be considered routine services, available at little or no cost to those for whom the services are recommended.
 - For those who do not have access to preventive services through a health plan or other non-governmental sources, prevention services should be provided at public expense.
 - ✓ Population-based prevention efforts should be greatly expanded and tailored to meet the needs of a pluralistic society.
 - Easily accessible, coordinated technical assistance and best practices should be available for communities to design and employ programs to increase prevention of disease.