



MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH COUNCIL, INC.

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Proposal for Prevention Caucus

Mission

We are committed to the primacy of prevention, not only because it will save resources—and there is increasing scientific evidence that it will do that—but more importantly because prevention ensures the quality of our lives, the viability of our communities, and the vibrancy of our society.

In the past decade, evidence-based research has forged a robust science of prevention. Massachusetts' institutions have gathered and documented federal, philanthropic, and industrial health research in this area. We propose a Prevention Caucus that may be modeled after a similar action taken by Congress, where members of Congress have joined in a similar effort. The role of that Caucus is to continue to highlight trends data and policy initiatives that should be considered by Congress to advance the health care of the country. There is consensus in the Massachusetts Health Council's report, *Common Health for the Commonwealth: Trends in the Determinants of Health*, that there is a tremendous framework for that dialogue here in Massachusetts.

The concept is to host regular meetings of legislators with experts in prevention. This bipartisan, multisectorial Prevention Caucus, will be a vital venue for transforming science into policy and practice, reducing the disparities in the burden of illnesses among our population, and realizing our vision of a healthy, “caring commonwealth.”

Goals

1. Encourage state leaders to support and endorse statewide efforts to promote healthy behaviors, provide access to high quality health care, and create healthy communities.
2. Frame a dialogue and focus public policy within the General Court on the areas of prevention.
3. Provide key speakers in the area of prevention to the General Court, administration and Attorney General's office to promote the value of an investment in prevention to save money and lives.

The Massachusetts Prevention Caucus will be a non-partisan, bicameral group of legislators whose goal will be to raise the level of knowledge in the MA Legislature about disease prevention and health promotion. The Prevention Caucus will support the legislators in their service to their districts through the identification of preventable health conditions and problems, the promotion of evidence-based prevention strategies, measures, and programs across the public and private sector.

The Caucus will create partnerships and collaborations that will lead to a healthier Massachusetts.

The Caucus will:

- Translate and disseminate research findings and health status on preventable health problems and illnesses.
- Develop educational programs and briefings for legislators related to disease prevention and health promotion
- Monitor responses to proposed legislation that is disease preventive and health promotion oriented.
- Disseminate letters to legislators to keep them informed on important prevention issues and prevention strategies.
- Provide a continuum of perspectives regarding medical, public health, and environmental strategies for disease prevention.

For more information about the Massachusetts Health Council please visit our web site at www.mahealthcouncil.org.