

Public Health and Health Reform: A Chance for Transformation

Jeffrey Levi, PhD

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Will the federal government steer us in the right direction?

- How will the Prevention and Public Health Fund be used?
 - FY2010 challenges
 - FY 2011 will be decided before the Strategy is completed
 - Central question - Strategically promote change or plug budget gaps?
 - What will be the role of Congress?
- What will be the focus of the National Prevention Strategy?
 - Will it really reflect the concept of health in all policies

The vision

- “Typically prevention and public health initiatives are subject to unpredictable and unstable funding. This means that important interventions...often go unfunded from one year to the next. The prevention and public health fund in this bill will provide an **expanded and sustained national investment** in programs that promote physical activity, improve nutrition, and reduce tobacco use. We all appreciate that checkups and immunizations and other clinical services are important. But this bill also recognizes that **where Americans live and work and go to school also has a profound impact on our health.** This is the very first opportunity in a generation – one that may never return – to **invest in modernizing the public health system.**” (Senator Harkin, December 21, 2009, Congressional Record, pp. S13661-62.)

Consensus on main themes for Prevention and Public Health Fund

- “Investments from the Fund should be used in a manner that leverages change throughout the public health system – with a move away from a stove-piped, disease-by-disease approach to one that addresses the determinants of health in a cross-cutting manner. If these grants merely supplant existing funding, no net benefit will be achieved. These funds should be used for transformational investments, helping lead the nation into a more community-oriented, accountable approach to public health.”
 - -- signed by 90+ public health organizations.

Will community transformation grants, cut across stove-pipes?

- Building healthier, more resilient communities able to face multiple health challenges is the goal
- Funding sources should provide flexibility for the most appropriate interventions
- Community interventions aren't limited to one disease
 - Physical activity and youth
 - Obesity, depression, sexual risk, educational performance, tobacco use
 - Alcohol taxes
 - Alcoholism, motor vehicle accidents, domestic violence, STDs
- Will we address behavioral and social determinants of health as well?

Will public health adapt to the new health care system?

- Health Information Technology
 - Opportunity to rethink how surveillance is done
 - Opportunity to expedite analysis of large sets of outcome data
 - Opportunity for public health to use its surveillance and epidemiology expertise to hold the reformed system accountable
- What does surveillance mean in an era where policy and community prevention are central?
- Coverage of key preventive services
 - Mandated coverage of all USPSTF A and B recommendations
 - Mandated coverage of all ACIP immunizations
 - What does this mean for direct delivery of care by public health agencies?
 - Where is the best place to deliver this care?
- Role of health departments in holding the health care system accountable

Does the public health workforce need different or enhanced skills?

- How do we provide skills to the existing workforce that reflect the new responsibilities under health reform?
 - Building coalitions for community prevention
 - Advocating for policy and structural change
 - Convening across government agencies
 - Using new data available through HIT to better define and improve the health of communities

For further information

- www.healthyamericans.org/health-reform
- jlevi@tfah.org