



A Call for Bold Action to Support Prevention Programs and Policies To Achieve Greater Public Health and Economic Impact

Position Statement of the Society for Prevention Research Task Force on Type 2 Translational Research

*“...my administration will value science. We will make decisions
based on the facts, and we understand that facts demand bold action...”*
—President-elect Barack Obama, December 15, 2008

Our vision. The Society for Prevention Research envisions a wellness-oriented society in which evidenced-based programs and policies are continuously applied to improve the health and well being of its citizens, fostering positive human development and citizens who lead productive lives, in caring relationships with others.

Prevention science findings are clear.

- When carefully implemented, certain tested and effective or “evidence-based” programs and policies clearly prevent a wide range of problems among youth and families, promote positive youth development, and simultaneously achieve economic benefits. These programs and policies:
 - Have had significant and far reaching effects in reducing school failure; teen pregnancy; alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse; unhealthy eating; physical inactivity; delinquent behavior and violence; and other mental, emotional, behavioral and physical health problems.
 - Have shown economic impact by reducing costs in schools, the criminal justice system, social and health services.
 - Follow recent recommendations from the Office of Management and Budget that policy decisions should be based on rigorous scientific evidence.

Taking action will benefit our youth, family and communities.

- Supporting evidence-based prevention programs and policies can save lives, substantially reduce health problems, and improve the quality of citizens’ lives. Evidence-based prevention also would reduce annual health care costs, thereby saving countless millions of dollars.
 - Collectively, preventing unhealthy behaviors (e.g. tobacco smoking, alcohol and other drug use, poor diet, physical inactivity) could reduce the more than 900,000 annual deaths that are associated with these behaviors, along with chronic diseases that account for 75% of health care costs and \$1 trillion in lost productivity.
 - Many of those who could benefit from programs proven to address preventable behavioral and mental health problems could and should have improved access to them.

Timely, broader application of the results of prevention science is necessary.

- As clearly envisioned in the 2009 Institute of Medicine Report on “Preventing Mental, Emotional, and

Behavioral Disorders among Young People,” one of our nation’s priorities should be the application of prevention science findings to effective implementation of health and social policy. Especially because our nation is at a crossroads, this is critically important. Economic challenges of historic proportions, coupled with increasing demands to address growing domestic social and health issues, will require bold, courageous, and immediate actions.

- At this time of health care reform, it is critically important to apply results from prevention science to sustained, large-scale implementation of evidence-based programs and policies.

A Call to Action

The Society for Prevention Research supports a public health approach to prevent and reduce problem behaviors, including school dropout, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, delinquency and violence, unhealthy eating, physical inactivity, risky sex, and other unhealthy behaviors. **We call for support of a national public health agenda that increases access to evidence-based prevention programs that can have a lasting impact on problem behaviors, particularly among our nation’s most vulnerable youth. The Society for Prevention Research is an organization designed to effectively facilitate these essential efforts.**

- We urge the federal government to take an active role, expanding necessary resources as indicated, to identify and test new prevention programs and policies, using the highest evidentiary standards to determine effectiveness.
- We urge the federal government to take the lead in promoting the widespread adoption and use of evidence-based prevention policies and programs. This work should be led by the directors of federal agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Department of Education, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and others. It should entail a White House Office on evidence-based prevention. First and foremost, this will require the development of infrastructure to support widespread implementation of evidence-based prevention programs in communities across the country.
- We call on federal agency leaders to adopt a “braided funding” approach, combining resources across agencies, to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies for disseminating evidence-based programs and policies on a large scale.
- We believe it is critically important that the federal government increase the support for prevention research that helps to identify the most effective strategies for adoption, quality implementation, and sustainability of evidence-based prevention programs and policies.

The Society for Prevention Research is an international organization whose members include scientists, practitioners, advocates, administrators, and policy makers who are concerned with the prevention of social, physical and mental health problems and the promotion of health, safety, and well-being. The Society for Prevention Research seeks to advance science-based prevention programs and policies through empirical research.

Additional information may be found at the Society for Prevention Research web site <http://www.preventionresearch.org/>.

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