



A HEALTHY FUTURE FOR CALIFORNIA

Now is the time to forge a path toward a vibrant, healthy California.

California has an innovative edge, unparalleled natural resources, and the leadership capacity to establish a legacy of health for generations to come. Guided by a broad vision and diverse partners, we can harness our state's best thinking to create a healthy California where all residents will thrive and prosper. Securing a healthy future will require each of us to make a sustained commitment to prevention, starting today.

Preventable injuries and illnesses are costing us dearly. But there are important steps we can take now to improve health and equity in all California communities, reduce health care spending and boost California's economy. Working together, our state's leaders — the Administration, legislators and California's Health and Human Services Agency — can chart a course toward a California where fewer children get sick or injured, where businesses are not struggling under the burden of health care costs, and where communities are great places to live for people of all races, cultures and incomes.

A healthy future for California builds on these three priorities:

- I. It's time to invest in *quality* community-based prevention**
- II. Improving health and safety conditions in all of our communities—especially those that historically have been underserved—requires systems that value prevention at every stage of life**
- III. Government can function as a model and catalyst for change, stimulating best practices in prevention and bringing successful strategies to scale**

The Institute of Medicine defines community-based prevention as programs and policies that are aimed at:

- Preventing the onset of disease
- Stopping or slowing the progress of disease
- Reducing or eliminating the negative consequences of disease
- Increasing healthful behaviors that result in improvements in health and well-being
- Decreasing disparities that result in an inequitable distribution of health

I. It's time to invest in quality community-based prevention

“California voters are deeply concerned about children’s ability to eat healthy, engage in physical activity and prevent exposure to community violence.”



The old adage “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” can guide the way we think about health expenditures. If we put a down payment on prevention now, we can expect to spend less on costly, preventable illnesses and injuries in the future. Today, Californians—in the public

and private sectors—are simply spending too much time and money dealing with illnesses and injuries *after the fact*. 75% of our health care expenditures are spent on preventable chronic conditions and avoidable injuries.

When we invest in prevention, the results can be remarkable. For example, a recent study by University of California, San Francisco, researchers found that California invested \$2.4 billion into its Tobacco Control Program between 1989 and 2008. These efforts dramatically reduced smoking, saving thousands of lives and \$134 billion in reduced medical costs.¹ Another recent study found that California would reap nearly a 5-to-1 return within five years on small investments in proven prevention initiatives.²

It’s time for California to make sustained investments in quality prevention, and here are some ways to do it:

- ▶ **Establish a Prevention Fund that makes it possible to pool funds from diverse contributors to support effective prevention practices and improve community conditions.**
- ▶ **Analyze the potential health, safety and equity impacts of significant legislative and regulatory proposals and policies, when those impacts are not well-understood.**
- ▶ **Encourage the integration of health care services and prevention efforts through initiatives that aim to keep populations healthy.**
- ▶ **Incentivize businesses to invest in approaches that support community well-being.**

1. Lightwood J, Glantz SA. The effect of the California tobacco control program on smoking prevalence, cigarette consumption, and healthcare costs: 1989–2008. PLoS ONE. 2013; 8(2): e47145.
2. Levi J, Cohen L, Segal LM, Cantor J, Masters B, Phillips R, Juliano C. Prevention for a healthier California. <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/component/jlibrary/article/id-75/127.html>. Accessed May 19, 2014.
3. DiCamillo M, Field M. Voter concerns about risk factors for obesity and diabetes have eclipsed other health concerns facing California kids over the past 10 years. <http://field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/RIs2460.pdf>. Accessed on May 19, 2014.
4. Cantor J, Mikkelsen L, Simons B, Waters R. How can we pay for a healthy population? Innovative new ways to redirect funds to community prevention. <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/component/jlibrary/article/id-332/127.html>. Accessed May 19, 2014.

Establish a Prevention Fund that makes it possible to pool funds from diverse contributors to support effective prevention practices and improve community conditions.

A recent California Field Poll shows that California voters are deeply concerned about children's ability to eat healthy, engage in physical activity and prevent exposure to community violence.³ Evidence shows that community-level approaches, such as access to safe parks and open space, well-maintained infrastructure for walking and bicycling, healthy schools, breastfeeding support in hospitals and healthy food retail, are strategies that work to improve health. Businesses, healthcare providers, local health departments, advocates and community groups can get behind these approaches. Yet existing resources are limited and local investments are needed to sustain and accelerate these proven strategies. One funding model adopted by several states is a Prevention and Wellness Trust, which pools revenue to fund community-based prevention initiatives as part of a health-improvement and cost-containment strategy.⁴ Such trusts can draw from a range of funding sources such as excise taxes on unhealthy products, community benefit contributions of nonprofit hospitals or general funds available to the state.

Analyze the potential health, safety and equity impacts of significant legislative and regulatory proposals and policies, when those impacts are not well-understood.

Every day, state legislators and agency leaders make policy and funding decisions that impact health and safety. The decision-making process can be better informed by a fuller picture of how decisions will impact health, safety and California's "bottom line." Consider transportation decisions, which are not typically analyzed for impacts on pedestrian injuries or cardiovascular health, although these two factors are responsible for a majority of preventable deaths. For projects or policies where health and safety impacts are unknown, the California Health and Human Services Agency or its designees can provide useful data, models, cost estimates and projections that serve as a valuable tool for decision-making. When policymakers and agencies have a dashboard of alternatives, they can better assess which decisions will yield optimal results for California's residents and minimize any unintended or unforeseen negative health and safety consequences.

Encourage the integration of health care services and prevention efforts through initiatives that aim to keep populations healthy.

The majority of deaths and health care expenditures in California result from chronic, preventable illnesses and injuries. The Affordable Care Act has helped catalyze a conversation about how to control costs and keep people healthy and safe in the first place. We now have an opportunity to transform our health system to deliver excellent care to people who are ill or injured while also providing resources to address the underlying community conditions that cause poor health. Health care, public health, transportation and community development can work together to develop new models and systems for pooling funds, sharing savings and integrating data.

Incentivize businesses to invest in approaches that support community well-being.

All California businesses — from science, technology and health care to tourism, real estate development and industry — can contribute to the public's health and improve conditions in the communities where they are located. This commitment should not come at the cost of doing business in California. For each sector, California's state and local government can identify incentives that spur the kinds of health and safety practices that will make all communities healthier places to live and work. From assisting businesses to transition to cleaner technologies to encouraging them to locate near transit or provide affordable housing options, government can act as a key driver in helping the private sector work for the public good.

II. Improving health and safety conditions in all of our communities—especially those that historically have been underserved—requires systems that value prevention at every stage of life

“Public health and health care will only succeed in leaving behind a legacy of health if the private sector and public sector pull together to prevent illness and injury for all people, regardless of race, ethnicity or income.”



For decades, Californians up and down the state have worked to improve the health of neighborhoods, schools and workplaces. Their efforts are yielding positive results, but challenges remain. Far too many communities lack the infrastructure to protect the health and safety of all

residents. And those communities that have developed the infrastructure require support to sustain it. Every sector needs to work together, united in the vision that we can create a healthy California. Public health and health care will only succeed in leaving behind a legacy of health if the private sector and public sector — including natural resources, education, economic development, transportation and housing — pull together to prevent illness and injury for all people, regardless of race, ethnicity or income.

Here are some ways we can create a system that values prevention at every stage of life and improves health and safety in all California communities:

- ▶ **Promote inclusive decision-making and development processes that reflect the health and safety priorities of all Californians — in particular for communities marginalized based on factors such as race, ethnicity, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, immigration status or geographic location.**
- ▶ **Motivate investments in historically underserved and disadvantaged communities by:**
 - **Using set-asides within state funding programs;**
 - **Incorporating need-based criteria into state grant requests for application and application scoring criteria;**
 - **Providing technical assistance and training to build capacity to apply for funds in high-need communities; and**
 - **Developing monitoring and performance measures that will inform efforts in communities disproportionately burdened by health and safety concerns.**
- ▶ **Work to protect all communities from environmental burdens such as pollution, harmful industrial activity, waste disposal sites and climate change, and prioritize funding for communities with a high cumulative burden of environmental risks to support enforcement, mitigation and clean alternatives.**

**STATE GOVERNMENT CAN FOSTER THE INNOVATIVE
WORK OF CALIFORNIA'S CITIES AND COUNTIES BY SUPPORTING
SMART POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT:**

Create healthy food environments and food systems in which all people have access to high-quality, fresh foods; breastfeeding is supported in hospitals, community spaces and workplaces; institutions and workplaces offer healthy foods in cafeterias, concessions and vending; and firm limits are placed on the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages.

Design neighborhoods to promote health and safety by ensuring that all residents have access to clean air; and safe parks and playgrounds; all neighborhoods have a deliberate mix of housing, civic uses and commercial uses; all communities feel safe from crime and violence; and community assets like public schools, parks and open spaces are shared in ways that make them accessible to all.

Promote healthy homes by ensuring that all communities include stable housing opportunities for multiple income levels, including extremely low-, low- and middle-income families; and all housing is safe and free of harmful chemicals, molds, pests, poor indoor air quality and noise pollution.

Build and maintain a safe, affordable and efficient transportation system that supports pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users of all ages and abilities to travel efficiently between home, work, commerce and community destinations; ensures transit is affordable and flexible, particularly for low-income and transit-dependent Californians; and insists that development projects do not displace low-income residents.

Prioritize environmental health and justice so that every California community has access to clean, potable water; and enjoys protection from pollution, harmful industrial activity and waste disposal sites.

Foster schools' ability to support healthy physical, mental and social development of every child by increasing access to quality school meals and free potable water; eliminating advertising for unhealthy foods and sugar-sweetened beverages; ensuring healthy indoor and outdoor air quality around schools; providing access to high-quality physical education and unstructured physical activity; instituting non-punitive school discipline practices; and establishing a new paradigm of schools as centers of the community.



III. Government can function as a model and catalyst for change, stimulating best practices in prevention and bringing successful strategies to scale

“The state can help foster a healthier, more productive workforce and stimulate healthy business practices.”



The state can use its clout as an employer, facilities and contract manager, and investor to set the standard for prevention. By modifying organizational policies and procedures to put health and prevention first, the state can help foster a healthier, more productive workforce and stimulate healthy business

practices. For example, the evidence is clear that well-designed worksite wellness initiatives save money on health care, reduce absenteeism and promote productivity. State buildings and facilities, including state parks, should provide free and clean drinking water, accommodate breastfeeding mothers, offer healthy food and beverages to employees and visitors, and incentivize walking, biking and transit. The state also can influence its contractors’ organizational practices by including health-promoting requirements in contracts (e.g., using clean vehicles or encouraging auto-alternatives to travel to work) and by considering the effects of purchases and investments on public health (e.g., purchasing locally grown fresh produce), just as we’ve done with smoke-free workplaces. These are practical strategies that help prevent chronic disease and set a new standard for government at all levels.

To promote prevention practice within government, state leadership can:

- ▶ **Foster a “culture of health” in all state workplaces and facilities through policies and practices that support the health and safety of employees, contractors and visitors.**
- ▶ **Build on the work of the Strategic Growth Council and Health in All Policies Task Force by engaging additional agencies and departments; further aligning decision-making, investment and funding; and providing guidance and support to local governments that want to pursue prevention goals across sectors.**
- ▶ **Direct the State Controller to develop criteria for assessing impacts on health, equity and climate change of all state investments and provide analysis of the impact of divesting from tobacco, alcohol, firearms and fossil fuels.**
- ▶ **Establish a joint legislative commission on health, equity and prevention, staffed by the Office of Health Equity, tasked with conducting hearings in communities across the state to understand community priorities and innovative approaches, with a report back to the legislature and governor.**

WHO WE ARE

The statewide *Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments* was formed in 2002 to encourage state leadership to pursue chronic disease prevention. Thanks to the work of multiple state administrations, state legislators and community advocates throughout the state, we are beginning to see measurable declines in chronic disease rates in California. Today, Strategic Alliance, with staffing and support of Prevention Institute, and in collaboration with our partners throughout the state, are releasing this platform in pursuit of a goal we all can share: A Healthy Future for California.



View past Strategic Alliance publications at:
<http://www.preventioninstitute.org/publications-sa.html>

Strategic
Alliance
Promoting healthy
food and activity environments

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This document was prepared
by Prevention Institute.
PRINCIPAL AUTHORS:
Juliet Sims RD, MPH
Manal J. Aboelata, MPH
Sarah Mittermaier, BA