

September 23, 2013

Dear Representatives Burgess and Christensen and Senators Cardin, Crapo and King:

The undersigned organizations, representing healthcare groups, associations, patients, and employers, would like to express our support for the Preventive Health Savings Act (H.R. 2663/S. 1422).

We share the conviction that the way in which the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) currently “scores” legislation severely constrains the ability of policymakers to accurately assess legislation that would prevent chronic disease. We agree wholeheartedly on the need for a continued focus on wellness and disease prevention in Congress and in the private sector if healthcare costs are to be contained. We believe this legislation represents a significant step toward this goal.

**More than 133 million Americans live with a chronic condition such as diabetes, heart disease, or asthma.**

- That number is expected to climb to 171 million by 2030 as the American population ages.
- Much of the illness, suffering, and early death related to chronic diseases is caused by modifiable health risk behaviors such as lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use.

**Preventing or delaying the onset of new cases and mitigating the progression of chronic disease will improve the health of Americans while lowering healthcare costs and overall spending but the current scoring process does not give Congress a complete picture of efforts to combat chronic disease.**

- Research has demonstrated that certain expenditures for preventive medicine generate savings when considered in the long term, but those cost savings may not be apparent when assessing only the first ten years—those in the “scoring” window.
- Long-term benefits from current preventive health expenditures may not be fully reflected, if at all, in cost estimates from CBO.
- Lawmakers need sound information, and today’s methods and procedures may not work as well as needed in analyzing certain efforts to prevent costly complications of chronic diseases.
- CBO has already begun to examine prevention in new ways. In 2012, CBO published long-term estimates of the effect of a hypothetical tobacco tax on the federal budget. CBO also published a study which found greater prescription drug access and adherence can reduce healthcare costs in other areas.

**The Preventive Health Savings Act will permit leaders in Congress to request that CBO estimate the long-term health savings that are possible from preventive health initiatives.**

- This legislation provides that the Chairman or Ranking member of either budget or health-related committees can request an analysis of the two 10-year periods beyond the existing 10-year window.
- The bill requires CBO to conduct an initial analysis to determine whether the provision would result in substantial savings outside the normal scoring window.
  - CBO must include a description of those future-year savings in its budget projections, but would retain the option of creating a formal projection that includes some or all of the budgetary outyears.
- The bill defines preventive health as an action designed to avoid future healthcare costs that is demonstrated by credible and publicly available epidemiological projection models, incorporating clinical trials or observational studies in humans.
- This narrow, responsible approach discourages abuse while encouraging a sensible review of health policies and programs Congress believes will further public health.

As the chronic disease epidemic continues to worsen, so does the need for legislation that will properly allow Congress to see the full savings of enacting prevention-focused measures. We applaud your efforts in sponsoring this important legislation and look forward to joining with you in transforming our nation to one that prioritizes efforts to achieve wellness and well-being.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Aetna

Alliance for Aging Research

Allscripts

Alzheimer's Association

America's Essential Hospitals

American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR)

American Association of Diabetes Educators

American Clinical Laboratory Association

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

American College of Preventive Medicine

American College of Radiology

American Diabetes Association

American Osteopathic Association

American Podiatric Medical Association

America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP)  
AmerisourceBergen Corporation  
Ascension Health  
BioReference Laboratories  
BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee  
Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund  
Care Continuum Alliance  
C-Change  
Council for Affordable Health Coverage  
Dialysis Patient Citizens  
Eli Lilly and Company  
Health Dialog  
Healthcare Leadership Council  
Healthways  
IHRSA: International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association  
Ikaria, Inc.  
Johnson & Johnson  
Life Technologies  
Marshfield Clinic  
Medtronic  
MemorialCare Health System  
Mental Health America  
Merck  
Myriad Genetic Laboratories  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Business Coalition on Health  
National Retail Federation  
Novo Nordisk  
Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease  
Premier healthcare alliance  
Prevent Cancer Foundation  
Resources  
Sanofi  
SCAN  
Takeda Pharmaceuticals  
Texas Health Health Plan  
The Endocrine Society  
VHA, Inc.  
Weight Watchers  
Wichita Medical Research and Education Foundation  
YMCA of the USA