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## **HHS Secretary Sebelius Announces Cornerstone Funding of the \$650 Million Recovery Act Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative**

Creating ways for healthful lifestyle habits to be the natural first choice for Americans is the goal of a \$650 million initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will be used to increase physical activity, improve nutrition, decrease obesity, and decrease smoking in U.S. communities.

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today announced a funding opportunity for communities and tribes to apply for \$373 million in cooperative agreements for the comprehensive public health initiative, *Communities Putting Prevention to Work*, to be led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“This initiative will make disease prevention and health promotion top priorities in states and communities across the country,” Secretary Sebelius said. “Preventing disease is vital as a strategy to improve our nation’s health and reduce health care costs.”

*Communities Putting Prevention to Work* will change systems and environments—for example, improving access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity—and putting into place policies, such as clean-indoor-air laws, that will promote the health of populations. Funded entities will have two years to complete their work.

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The \$373 million in cooperative agreements will be awarded to communities through a competitive selection process. The cooperative agreements will support evidence-based prevention strategies for youth and adults and will promote partnerships across communities and sectors.

The remainder of the funds for this initiative will be made available in the coming weeks to states, territories, and organizations to support, extend and evaluate the reach and impact of the community projects.

Funded projects will emphasize high-impact, broad-reaching policy, environmental, and systems changes in schools (K-12) and communities. For example, communities will work to make high-fat snack foods and sugar-sweetened beverages less available in schools and other community sites and to use media to promote healthy choices. In addition, funded communities will be encouraged to provide quality physical education in the nation's schools and enact comprehensive smoking bans.

“The CDC is excited to have this opportunity to help states and communities do more to deliver proven prevention strategies, in ways that reach whole communities and populations,” said CDC Director, Thomas Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. “Chronic diseases linked to obesity, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and tobacco use are the leading causes of death and disability in our nation. These additional resources will improve the quality of life for millions of Americans.”

Communities interested in applying for *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* grants can find more information at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The application deadline for the community projects is Dec. 1, 2009. Deadlines for state, territory, and other prevention projects that are part of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative will be announced soon.

To learn more about the *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* public health initiative visit <http://www.hhs.gov/recovery/programs/cdc/chronicdisease.html>

# HHS News

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



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## **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Summary of the Prevention and Wellness Initiative – Community Component**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has created a comprehensive initiative for the \$650 million allotted for chronic disease prevention efforts in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The goal of this initiative – *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* – is to reduce risk factors, prevent/delay chronic disease, promote wellness in children and adults, and provide positive, sustainable health change in communities.

*Communities Putting Prevention to Work* will address the leading preventable causes of death and disability, namely obesity and tobacco use, by expanding the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, mobilizing local resources at the community-level, and strengthening the capacity of states. As a result of these efforts, powerful models of success are expected to emerge that can be replicated in other states and communities.

The cornerstone of the initiative is the Community Program (\$373 million), with cooperative agreements to be awarded to communities through a competitive selection process.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will support evidence-based community approaches to chronic disease prevention and control in selected communities (urban and rural) to achieve the following prevention outcomes:
  - Increased levels of physical activity;
  - Improved nutrition;
  - Decreased overweight/obesity prevalence;
  - Decreased tobacco use; and
  - Decreased exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Communities will implement a set of evidence-based interventions related to the behaviors listed above which aim to achieve broad reach, high impact, and sustainable change. The specific amount of funding per community will be determined by a mix of interventions, population size, ability to reduce health disparities, and likelihood of success.
- Communities will assemble an effective communitywide consortium with a history of working with partners such as local and state health departments and other governmental agencies, health centers, schools, businesses, community and faith-based organizations, academic institutions, health care, mental health/substance abuse organizations, health plans, and other community partners to promote health and prevent chronic diseases.
- This component also includes a robust support plan to ensure funded communities are successful and that the communities are able to evaluate the impact of their efforts. The plan consists of a three-pronged approach: program support, community mentoring, and evaluation.

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