

## BEYOND MEDICAL CARE

# Key messages for talking about prevention policy opportunities

## Defining the problem

- Ohioans are living less healthy lives despite spending more on health care than people in most other states.
- We are not getting good value for our healthcare dollar in Ohio.
- Access to quality health care is necessary, but not sufficient, for good health.
- This generation of kids is on track to live less healthy, shorter lives than their parents – but we can turn that around. (TFAH, 2013)

## Solutions and action

- The good news is that there are evidence-based strategies that Ohio can implement to improve outcomes.
- We know what works to improve health. (refer to sources such as the [HPIO Guide to Evidence-Based Prevention](#), [Ohio's Plan to Prevent and Reduce Chronic Disease](#), the [Community Guide](#), and [What Works for Health](#)).
- Upstream strategies that address the causes of health problems rather than just the symptoms and consequences
- Working together, policymakers, healthcare and public health organizations, and other partners can take on these challenges and improve health value in Ohio.
- Expand the health policy agenda in Ohio to include a more balanced focus on the factors that shape our health both inside and outside the clinical care system.
- Connecting health at the doctor's office with ways to stay healthy beyond the doctor's office (TFAH, 2013)
- While results can take years to achieve, all communities can be on the road to better health. Helping people stay healthy can take a variety of forms – from opening supermarkets that sell healthy foods in underserved neighborhoods, to designing safe and accessible streets, to expanding early education opportunities, to encouraging more physical activity, and much more. (CHRR)
- No single person or group can tackle this problem alone. It will take leaders from business and government, educators, employers, citizens, and organizations representing many interests working together to create opportunities to live a healthy life. (CHRR)
- *Use specific examples of prevention strategies and real results from local communities*
- *Focus on the future, opportunities for children, and achievable goals*

## Key words

- Prevention, upstream prevention, community-based prevention
- Health value
- Health equity
- Opportunity
- Return on investment, cost-effective
- Partnership, partners
- Beyond medical care, beyond the doctor's office
- Health care vs. sick care
- Balanced portfolio of strategies

## Social determinants of health

- Health starts where we live, learn, work and play. (RWJF)
- Health starts—long before illness—in our homes, schools and jobs. (RWJF)
- Your opportunity for health starts long before you need medical care. (RWJF)
- It's not just doctors or hospitals that help us be healthier—it's the people who build roads, teach kids, pass laws, and create businesses. Moms and dads, students, coaches, and volunteers from all walks of life can create change. (CHRR)
- Because much of what affects our health happens beyond medical care, it is important to build a culture of health where getting healthy, staying healthy, and making sure our kids grow up healthy are top priorities. (CHRR)
- It's time we expand the way we think about health to include how to keep it, not just how to get it back. (RWJF)
- In addition to medical care, health is shaped by our behaviors and by the social, economic and physical environment.

## Personal responsibility and shared accountability

- Everyone has role to play. No single sector alone can tackle the health challenges in a community.
- Healthcare providers share some of the responsibility for improving health, but good health starts long before we get to the doctor's office.
- Every individual is responsible for keeping themselves healthy by doing things like eating healthy, being physically active and not smoking. These daily decisions about how to stay healthy are heavily influenced by the world around us. Evidence-based prevention strategies can help to make it more likely that people will engage in healthier behaviors.
- Strategies should acknowledge the importance of personal health practices and individual knowledge, skills and ability, as well as the social, economic and physical environments that “make health more likely.”
- Create the conditions in which individuals and families can be healthy.
- Provide opportunities for individuals to improve their own health and wellbeing in ways that are meaningful to them.

## Disparities and equity

- Some Ohioans experience significant challenges on the path to better health.
- All [Ohioans] should have the opportunity to make the choices that allow them to live a long, healthy life, regardless of their income, education or ethnic background. (RWJF)
- Your neighborhood or job shouldn't be hazardous to your health. (RWJF)
- People's health is significantly affected by their homes, jobs and schools (RWJF)
- Lifting everyone up (RWJF)
- Giving everyone a chance to live a healthy life (RWJF)

## Value of prevention

- Investing in prevention will save money, and it has real value as a cost-effective, common-sense way to keep people healthy and improve their quality of life. (TFAH, 2013)
- Prevention saves lives, reduces health care costs, and makes the country a healthier, more productive place (improving health and lowering costs; lowering disease rates and reducing health care costs). (TFAH, 2013)
- Proven prevention programs spare people from needless suffering and trips to the doctor's office. (TFAH, 2013)
- Contain healthcare costs and save money in the long run by preventing people from getting sick in the first place. (TFAH, 2013)

### Sources

TFAH: **Messaging research findings**, Trust for America's Health, 2013

CHRR: *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Message Guide*

RWJF: **A New Way to Talk about the Social Determinants of Health**, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2010

HPIO publications: **Beyond medical care**, **Ohio prevention basics**, **What is “population health”?**