

December 8, 2023

The Honorable Jodey Arrington
Chairman
House Budget Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bendan Boyle
Ranking Member
House Budget Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Arrington and Ranking Member Boyle:

We, the 53 undersigned organizations, would like to express our support for the Preventive Health Savings Act, which removes outdated statutory constraints which currently prevent Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates from correctly assessing preventive health initiatives that might achieve long-term health savings in federal programs.

As leaders in health care representing patients, providers, associations, and employers, we all agree on the need for a continued focus on wellness and disease prevention if healthcare costs are to be contained. We share a bipartisan, bicameral view with many in Congress that to move forward with policy solutions to address the growing burden of long-term chronic disease, Congress needs new tools to rise above traditional legislative approaches to health care.

Simply put, we know we can't "cut" our way to a healthier America by shaving dollars from federal programs that provide care to people in need every time Congress finds a new approach. As such, we all agree that the statutory constraints that CBO must currently follow to "score" legislation severely constrains the ability of policymakers to accurately assess legislation that would prevent chronic disease. We believe this legislation represents a significant step toward the goal of including new ideas and tactics to improve care that have proven successful in the private sector, or in health systems abroad that don't have the same regulatory or budgetary constraints.

Chronic disease places a significant burden on our health and economy, but it can be reversed.

- We know that chronic diseases are responsible for 7 of 10 deaths among Americans each year, and they account for 90 percent of the \$4.1 trillion our nation spends annually on medical care.^[1] These figures will worsen as the 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, tobacco use, and alcohol and substance misuse.
- Preventing or delaying the onset of new cases and mitigating the progression of chronic disease will improve the health of people in America while lowering healthcare costs and overall spending.

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 health interventions 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.[\[2\]](#)
- Also, in 2012, CBO published a study which found greater prescription drug access and adherence can reduce healthcare costs in other areas.[\[3\]](#)
- In the 118th Congress, the House of Representatives continues to require CBO to score certain large bills by considering projected impacts on revenue and spending from assumed economic effects the bills.[\[4\]](#)

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 the budgetary out years.
 - This bill is necessary to bring greater attention to the longer-term value of wellness and prevention policies specifically.
- The bill defines preventive health as an action designed to avoid future healthcare costs that are 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 the public’s 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 policy 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 for all.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Alliance for Aging Research

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Association of Clinical Endocrinology

American Association of Nurse Practitioners

American College of Gastroenterology

American College of Lifestyle Medicine

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

American College of Preventive Medicine

American Society for Nutrition

Ascension

Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists

Avery's Hope

Biocom California

Blooming Health, Inc.

California Chronic Care Coalition

Caregiver Action Network

Chronic Care Policy Alliance

Connected Health Initiative

COPD Foundation

Council For Affordable Health Coverage

Determined Health

Fight Colorectal Cancer

FundPlay Foundation

Geneoscopy

Gerontological Society of America

Global Liver Institute

Healthcare Leadership Council

HealthyWomen

HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute

Johnson & Johnson

Marshfield Clinic Health System

MemorialCare Health System

Merck

National Minority Quality Forum

Nevada Chronic Care Collaborative

NourishedRx

NTM Info & Research

Obesity Action Coalition

Obesity Medicine Association

Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease

Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease

PLAY Sports Coalition

Premier Inc.

Sports & Fitness Industry Association

Team Titin

Texas Health Resources

The Obesity Society

Tivity Health

UsAgainstAlzheimer's

Vizient

Wellvana

YMCA of the USA

[1] <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/costs/index.htm>

[2] <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/43319>

[3] <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/43741-Medic...>

[4] <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-resolution/5/text>