



Public Statement from The Convergence Partnership on Recommendations for advancing community prevention

Following the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, the Convergence Partnership¹ developed the following memo of recommendations for advancing the fundamental emphasis on community engagement and change to advance prevention and equity. These recommendations build from the accomplishments, investments, and momentum built through community-based prevention programs funded by federal and private partners. In particular, these recommendations focus on the development of the new Community Prevention Grants and the additional resources allocated to the Diabetes Prevention and Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Convergence Partnership has been gratified by the national growth in community-based initiatives aimed at enhancing health and equity by improving the environments, policies, and institutions that most touch our lives. Current community-based prevention programs have built a significant infrastructure, capacity and expertise in communities across the country and provide an extremely beneficial foundation that is already starting to yield valuable returns, making healthier people through healthier places. The Partnership strongly recommends that future work in community-based prevention adopt and advance the foundational principles already put in place. Leveraging these existing investments and lessons learned can accelerate progress, enhance impact, and bring efforts to full scale.

We urge our colleagues and partners to share similar statements on key principles and to communicate widely about the valuable lessons learned and successes emerging from on-the-ground community-based prevention efforts:

Maintain equity as a core outcome—Great strides have been made in operationalizing equity outcomes and prioritizing investments where there are the greatest needs—from isolated rural communities to urban neighborhoods of color. Maintaining this *explicit* focus on improving equity in future funding opportunities is necessary to ensure the continued vitality of our health system, workforce, and social fabric.

¹Representing 8 of the nation's leading national private foundations and health care organizations, Convergence Partnership works together to ensure that every community fosters health, prosperity, and well-being for all. The Convergence Partnership steering committee includes representatives from Ascension Health, The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, Kresge Foundation, Nemours, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention serve as critical technical advisors on the committee. PolicyLink, a national research and action institute devoted to advancing economic and social equity, serves as program director for the partnership. Prevention Institute, a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving community health and equity through effective primary prevention, provides policy research and analysis along with strategic support. The Convergence Partnership's funds are managed by the Tides Foundation.

Emphasize children and families—Ensure that there is a specific focus on the needs and challenges of children in the community, where the benefit of investments in prevention, can be particularly meaningful as they accrue over time.

Support comprehensive approaches and multi-sectoral collaboration—A key lesson learned from current investments is that advancing community health, safety and equity calls for comprehensive approaches that simultaneously address multiple community determinants of health—from transportation to early care and education, from economic development to access to healthy food. The emphasis to date on multi-sectoral collaboration across diverse fields is effectively breaking down traditional silos, aligning priorities, and promoting action that is comprehensive in scope and impact. In particular, we encourage allowing national and community-based, non-governmental agencies and stakeholders to be eligible as direct funding recipients in a leadership/integrator role in future grants.

Emphasize community level changes, momentum and leadership—Great capacity has already been created amongst community leaders and residents who are working hand in hand with community based organizations to change their community environments. Further cultivating this focus on community partnerships to advance specific activities that transform the places where children and families live, learn, work and play offers great promise for accelerating positive health, safety and equity outcomes.

Look to community partners for leadership on initiatives and provide the necessary flexibility to awardees when appropriate—Allowing applicants to determine the population they seek to serve and not restricting applicants to only those who can serve a large county or geographic area ensures that success is also achieved in smaller communities with committed partners. Another consideration is enabling applicants to determine the condition(s) they seek to address, within certain parameters and based on an assessment of local needs. Some may seek to address more than one condition, whereas other communities may be best served with a focused initiative addressing one major health outcome or condition. Lastly, given the natural delay in starting award activities due to the due diligence process, we recommend that providing awardees with the flexibility to pursue, on a case-by-case basis, no cost extensions to complete activities and/or to conduct final program evaluation.

Build connections between clinical and community prevention efforts—As the focus on health system transformation spreads, this is a unique opportunity to combine expertise in both clinically oriented prevention efforts and community prevention. Future funding could place even greater emphasis on the integration of community prevention and healthcare services in order to best address community determinants of health. This can also be encouraged by better connecting funding.

Taken together, these steps will lead to significant advances in individual and community health and equity in communities and states across the country.