

PREVENTION WORKS

MAKING THE CASE FOR A CALIFORNIA WELLNESS TRUST

Investing in healthier communities is one of the smartest ways to fundamentally reshape the health of California. While good quality health care is essential for all Californians, public health interventions that prevent illness, injury, and inequitable health conditions can keep people from needing care in the first place, make our health care dollars go further, and improve lives. These programs—and hundreds of other successful initiatives across the state—are evidence of the success we can expect with sustained funding from a California Wellness Trust.

EXAMPLES OF CALIFORNIA PREVENTION PROGRAMS THAT WORK

SCHOOL-BASED EXERCISE PROGRAMS IMPACT CHILDHOOD OBESITY TRENDS



Niños Sanos, Familia Sana (NSFS) in Fresno County has shown promising results in slowing the increase in childhood obesity. NSFS engages Latino elementary-age kids and their families through nutrition education, a non-traditional physical education curriculum, and an economic incentive that encourages families to purchase healthier foods.¹ Participating boys have shown a lower increase in obesity and waist circumference compared to a control group.

PRIORITIZING AFFORDABLE HOUSING SAVES HEALTH CARE DOLLARS



Housing for Health, a Los Angeles County Health Services program, has provided affordable homes to 3,500 chronically homeless individuals, reducing county medical and mental health costs by \$20 million in the first year alone. The program provides participants with permanent affordable housing linked, through comprehensive case management, to a voluntary and flexible array of health, mental health, substance use, and social services to help them achieve housing stability, improved health, greater independence, and economic security.³

EXERCISE INTERVENTIONS REDUCE FALLS IN OLDER ADULT POPULATIONS



Humboldt County's Senior Resource Center offers a 12-week exercise class called Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance.⁶ This evidence-based program can reduce the number of falls in their older adult population by up to 58 percent,⁸ and help decrease the annual cost of fall hospitalizations, which has reached more than \$12.8 million countywide.⁷

TOBACCO REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS SAVE HEALTH CARE DOLLARS & LIVES



Reducing tobacco use shines as an example of what we can achieve with sustained funding for prevention. Over 25 years of dedicated funding has produced bold social marketing campaigns and established policies that create smoke-free environments, reduce youth access to tobacco, and increase taxes on tobacco products. The result: over 1,000,000 California lives saved and \$134 billion in healthcare costs avoided.²

WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMS IMPROVE MORALE AND HEALTH



The California Department of Public Health's Worksite Initiative uses its Fit Business Kit⁴ to help employers promote increased fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity, and a culture of wellness. One grocery chain in Gilroy uses the kit to encourage healthy choices by displaying educational materials near healthy food items and hosting community health fairs. The owner credits the program with a 20 percent drop in on-the-job injuries, less employee turnover, and increased morale.⁵

HEALTHY FOOD INCENTIVES INCREASE FRUIT & VEGETABLE SALES



Market Match, a statewide program that doubles the buying power of federal assistance dollars for fresh produce purchased at farmers markets, generated over \$4.4 million in fruit and vegetable sales in 2017,⁹ expanding access to healthy foods for more than 310,000 Californians.¹⁰ Lack of access to healthy food is a key contributor to obesity and other costly chronic diseases.¹¹