



Protect, Prevent, Live Well

The following questions were designed to help APHA, state and regional affiliate members and other interested parties raise the profile of critical public health issues and policies as members of Congress begin working on health reform at the federal level. One of our goals is to expand thinking about our nation's health system from one of health care to one that includes all public health services and activities, and to generate interest in prevention and support for strengthening the public health infrastructure. The lists provided in questions 1, 2 and 3 are not meant to be exhaustive. You are encouraged to pick examples that are relevant to you and that you are comfortable with.

1. I am concerned about the state of our nation's public health infrastructure. As the swine flu outbreak and food safety scares remind us, state and local health departments are on the frontlines of emerging issues and are often asked to take on more responsibilities without being provided more resources. As you consider health reform legislation, what are you going to do to assure that after years of underfunding, our public health system, including state and local health departments have the resources it needs to: (fill in from list)?
 - a. Monitor and prevent chronic and communicable disease and injuries
 - b. Train new and existing public health workers
 - c. Ensure adequate resources for public health laboratories
 - d. Ensure adequate personnel at state and local health departments
 - e. Provide a health safety net for the uninsured and underinsured
 - f. Assure access to quality health care
 - g. Ensure access to cancer screening
 - h. Administer vaccine delivery programs
 - i. Provide tobacco prevention and cessation programs
 - j. Protect the public from environmental hazards
 - k. Ensure food safety
 - l. Protect worker health and safety
 - m. Provide health and health literacy education

2. It's been said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Primary prevention requires us to direct the emphasis in the health system from one that focuses on treating people after they get sick to one that helps people stay healthy. Prevention and wellness include more than clinical preventive services, worksite wellness or chronic disease management. Public health activities and population-based programs, such as tobacco cessation, nutrition,; building healthy and safe communities

where people live, work, play and travel easily; and assuring clean air and water must be part of any disease and injury prevention strategy. What are you willing to do to support a broader approach to prevention so that we move from treating preventable illnesses and injuries to ensuring that the population has access to a broader range of prevention interventions?

3. Federal agencies provide much of the funding for state and local public health programs, including (fill in from list). Unfortunately, several of these agencies – such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration – are not provided sufficient funding to accomplish their mission and protect the public’s health. How would you prioritize funding for these agencies so they can fulfill their roles in health reform?
 - a. Support to immunization programs
 - b. Surveillance and monitoring the nation’s health
 - c. Prevention block grants
 - d. Community health centers
 - e. Health professions training and education
 - f. Improving the built environment
 - g. Emergency preparedness and response
 - h. Health education and outreach
 - i. Worker health and safety

4. While in the last 30 years, overall health of American’s has improved, racial and ethnic minorities have not seen the same improvement and the disparities in infant mortality, chronic disease and other indicators of health between racial and ethnic minorities and non-Hispanic whites have increased. In addition, racial and ethnic minorities experience disparities in access to and quality of prevention and treatment options. What type of provisions do you support in health reform to eliminate these disparities?

5. With rising numbers of uninsured and underinsured in the US population, we must move forward this year to assure that all residents are covered for access to affordable health care. The lack of health care insurance coverage undermines health status, aggravates social and economic disparities, and continues to place an undue burden on our nation’s emergency departments and public hospitals. We must also ensure that everyone can access all types of health services, including clinical and community-based preventive services. A strong public plan option for insurance coverage (such as Medicare for all) can provide coverage for the uninsured and underinsured quickly, and aid in solving the problem of access to care. How would you include a public plan option in health reform?