

03-06

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Coverage of Preventive Services

Policy

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) supports the provision of comprehensive preventive coverage by all public and private health insurers and healthcare plans. These benefits include screening and counseling in primary care settings, prevention of dental caries in young children, and tobacco-cessation counseling.¹ NACCHO urges the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, state and local governments, and private insurance health plans to retain or increase preventive services consistent with the recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Bright Futures Project, and the HRSA/National Academies Committee on Women's Preventive Services. NACCHO continues to support public and private initiatives at the federal, state, and local levels that aim to continue or increase preventive services offered, increase access to these services, and reduce disparities in access to and use of preventive services.

Justification

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) offers expanded coverage for preventive services. Plans purchased through the healthcare marketplaces are required to cover all preventive services receiving an A or B recommendation from the USPSTF at no cost to the patient. In addition, ACA requires coverage, at no-cost, for recommended services from the ACIP, HRSA's Bright Futures Project, and the HRSA/National Academies Committee on Women's Preventive Services. The requirement to cover these services also applies to Medicaid plans for individuals qualifying under the ACA expansion.² Medicaid plans for individuals traditionally qualifying for Medicaid are not required to cover these preventive services, but ACA offers an expanded match of 1% for states that do so at no patient cost.³ The ACA also expanded Medicare's coverage of preventive services, again at no cost to participants.⁴

It is crucial to cover preventive services for all populations; many future medical problems and diseases can be prevented if adequate coverage for these preventive services is provided. In fact, 75 percent of health care spending is related to chronic medical conditions, of which the top five causes of morbidity (cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory disease, cerebrovascular disease, and diabetes) can be traced to lifestyle factors.⁵ The nation could save up to \$500 billion per year by addressing smoking, obesity, and other modifiable behavioral risk factors.⁶



In 2016, CDC debuted its 6|18 Initiative. This initiative focused on six high-burden health conditions and the clinical preventive services with evidence of effectiveness to address these conditions.⁷ Throughout 2016, CDC worked with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials and other partners to bring together state health departments and Medicaid programs in nine states to ensure payment would be readily available for these services. CDC and its partners recognize that while these six health conditions are a start, the same approach needs to be applied across a variety of health conditions to reduce future disease burdens. To ensure the continued success of 6|18 and similar efforts, public and private healthcare coverage must continue to expand its coverage of preventive services as well as work to educate providers on how to be reimbursed for them.

References

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Record of Action

Proposed by Community Health and Prevention Advisory Committee

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