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## **\$120 Million for States Made Available as Part of Recovery Act Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today announced the release of \$120 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for prevention and wellness programs for U.S. states and territories, building on the recent announcement of the \$373 million funding opportunity for communities and tribes around the country. In all, the comprehensive *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* initiative will make \$650 million available for public health efforts to address obesity, increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and decrease smoking.

“Today’s announcement is an important step toward a healthier America,” said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. “We know that many chronic diseases are preventable, and the resources now available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will assist states and territories in the implementation of proven prevention and wellness programs that will save lives and lower health care costs for all Americans.”

The \$120 million in cooperative agreements will be awarded to states and territories for three components: statewide policy and environmental change, tobacco cessation through quitlines and media campaigns, and special initiatives to create health-promoting policies and environments. For the first two components, dollar amounts awarded to each state and territory will be based on population size and number of smokers. For the third component, states will apply for special funds through a competitive process based on the potential health impact of the proposed activities. States and territories will have two years to complete their work. They will coordinate their efforts with other *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* initiatives in large cities, urban areas, small cities, rural areas, and tribal areas.

“State health departments are the backbone of the public health system and are uniquely positioned to support and leverage local efforts for chronic disease prevention and control,” said Thomas Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). “We expect that as a result of this nationwide project, most Americans will live in states with improved obesity-related and tobacco policies, we will make a national shift toward healthy environments, and we will increase significantly the number of people who are able to stop smoking.”

Funded projects will emphasize state-level policy and environmental changes that will help communities and schools support healthy choices. For example, states will make use of their collective purchasing power to improve the selection and availability of healthy foods in public venues.

“Chronic diseases are the leading cause of premature death in the country, account for spiraling health care costs, and cause disability and suffering for millions of Americans,” said Janet Collins, Ph.D., director of CDC’s National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. “The good news is that we can greatly reduce the toll of chronic disease by reducing just four risk factors -- tobacco use, physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and obesity. With these new funds, states and territories will work to improve the environments where their residents live, work, learn, and play so that healthy choices become the easy choice.”

States and territories interested in applying for cooperative agreements can find more information at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The application deadline is Nov. 24, 2009. Deadlines for additional projects that are part of the *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* initiative will be announced soon.

To learn more about *Communities Putting Prevention to Work*, visit [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/recovery](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/recovery).

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.

