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One Hundred Organizations Send Letter to Capitol Hill Urging Change in CBO Scoring Rules for Disease Prevention Programs

Patient, Health Industry, Employer Groups Offer Support for Legislation That Would Enable CBO to Analyze Long-Term Benefits of Preventive Health

WASHINGTON – Noting that chronic illnesses account for more than 80 percent of the nation's \$2.7 trillion annual healthcare spending, 100 organizations – including numerous patient advocacy organizations, multiple health industry sectors, and the nation's leading employers – have sent a letter to Capitol Hill endorsing legislation that would change the way the Congressional Budget Office analyzes possible savings from disease prevention programs.

The organizations declared their support for the Preventive Health Savings Act, which would require CBO to analyze whether preventive health initiatives would generate savings beyond the conventional 10-year scoring window. This extensive analysis would need to be requested by the chair or ranking minority member of a congressional budget or health-related committee. The legislation is co-sponsored in the Senate by Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Angus King (I-ME), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Tom Udall (D-NM).

The letter was initiated by the Healthcare Leadership Council, a coalition of companies from all healthcare sectors. Among the co-signers are the Alzheimer's Association, America's Health Insurance Plans, American Diabetes Association, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Retail Federation, and the Society for Women's Health Research.

The letter makes the case that the public may be denied the benefits of innovative disease prevention initiatives simply because conventional budget scoring processes don't capture the long-term savings gained from improved population health.

"Research has demonstrated that certain expenditures for preventive medicine generate savings when considered in the long term, but these cost savings may not be apparent when assessing only the first ten years – those in the "scoring" window," they wrote.

The groups added, "Preventing or delaying the onset of new cases and mitigating the progression of chronic disease will improve the health of Americans while lowering healthcare costs and overall spending."

The Healthcare Leadership Council is a coalition of chief executives of the nation's leading health care companies and institutions. Follow us on Twitter at @HealthInFocus