

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

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County Prevention Policy

Prevention is defined as an active process of creating conditions and fostering personal attributes that promote self-sufficiency and the health, well-being, and safety of individuals, families and communities.

Purpose

The prevention policy is designed to support the Board of Supervisors' leadership role in planning and facilitating prevention initiatives and services throughout the region and to guide program development and funding within County government. The policy is countywide and interdepartmental in scope, since the social, physical and economic problems related to the quality of life of individuals and the cost-effective provision of services cross departmental and organizational lines.

Background

California counties are the public service delivery arms of the State. Due to State and federal program requirements and funding limitations, counties are structured to provide services to individuals, families and communities in response to problems after they have reached a critical stage. This reactive crisis intervention model of care often results in the provision of intensive and costly services. At all governmental levels, there is increasing awareness that a prevention approach to create conditions that promote and sustain the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities can address many of the underlying causes of the problems and crises – before they reach a critical stage – that County services address.

Prevention may provide a more cost-effective, long-term approach for government and the optimal approach for strengthening the ability of individuals, families and communities to achieve a desired quality of life. Research studies have shown that \$1 invested in early childhood programs can save \$7 or more in long term costs in criminal justice, healthcare, and welfare.

The nature of the family throughout the United States has changed. It includes more than the traditional two-parent households with children. A broader definition of families must be included to encompass the full range of households, e.g. single parent families, children and their foster parents and the other family units that are increasingly common within our society. Prevention programs and strategies must take into account ethnic and cultural differences. A prevention policy must be broad in the manner in which it defines the family and the provision of support to make the family successful. Building on best practices in prevention involves utilizing a family support approach which focuses on helping families identify and develop their strengths

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and access and utilize needed services. It also provides opportunities for the family to connect and participate in personal, program, and community improvement.

Assumptions

The following assumptions underlie the Board policy:

- The family, defined in broadest sense, is the primary care giver and source of social learning. The family must be supported and, when necessary, strengthened.

- Children and youth are inherently valuable members of our society and are entitled to love, respect, safety, and guidance. To ensure proper development, their basic needs for safety, shelter, food, and education must be met; their access to proper physical, social, and mental health services ensured; opportunities to be physically active provided; and their sense of self-worth and self-reliance developed.

- If individuals and families are unable to ensure their basic needs are met, it is the responsibility of the community to assist them with services. These services should be effective, integrated, accessible, efficient, and culturally appropriate.

- Conditions presently exist which produce social problems such as welfare dependency, poverty, crime, gangs, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, family breakdown and the abuse of children, spouses and older adults. The results of those conditions affect all persons in the county and can most effectively be addressed by the shared efforts of the citizenry, the private sector, community-based organizations and government.

- The County of San Diego in its regional role has a unique opportunity to provide leadership in planning, developing, implementing, and promoting prevention programs.

- Prevention programs lead to the development of capable individuals, families and communities, reducing the demand for health, criminal justice system, and social services.

- A comprehensive County Prevention policy and system of prevention services results from the collaborative efforts of the leadership of the Board of Supervisors and the support and recommendations provided by communities, advisory groups, community-based organizations, and service providers.- A comprehensive County Prevention policy supports one of the foundational components of the *Live Well, San Diego!* initiative – the emphasis on prevention in regards to the three risk behaviors (i.e., tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity) that contribute to four chronic diseases (i.e., cancer, heart disease and stroke, type 2 diabetes, and

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respiratory conditions like asthma) that account for over 50 percent of mortality worldwide (56 percent in San Diego).

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. The County shall initiate and sustain a process of creating conditions and fostering personal attributes that promote the health, well-being, safety and self-sufficiency of individuals, families and communities.
2. A prevention approach will guide and be incorporated into the full range of County programs for individuals, families and communities.
3. All new programs, plans and policies will be evaluated in terms of their support for and conformity with the County Prevention Policy.
4. Prevention will be a priority of the Board as it develops State and federal legislative initiatives. To the maximum extent possible, funding will be provided for prevention-based services.
5. The Board of Supervisors and County staff will take a leadership role in collaborating and establishing partnerships with educational institutions, private and community-based organizations, and other governmental agencies to implement the County Prevention Policy.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-2019.

Board Action

12-11-90 (51)

5-15-96 (11)

3-14-06 (11)

12-09-08 (33)

01-29-13 (9)

CAO Reference

1. Health and Human Services Agency
2. Public Safety Group
3. Department of Housing and Community Development