

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

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County Prevention Policy

In its simplest form, prevention is defined as the action of stopping something from happening or arising. For county governments, prevention includes a wide range of activities aimed at reducing risks or threats to individuals, families and communities in attaining the highest level of health, safety and self-sufficiency. Primary prevention aims to prevent a risk or condition before it ever occurs. Secondary prevention aims to reduce the impact of an event or condition that has already occurred. Tertiary prevention aims to soften the impact of an ongoing condition that has lasting effects.

Purpose

This 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. This policy is countywide and interdepartmental in scope, since the social, environmental, physical, behavioral, 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. Funding sources may come directly from the federal government through the State to the local jurisdiction or come directly from the federal or State governments. Due to federal and State 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 support and create conditions throughout the region that promote and sustain the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families and communities can address many of the underlying circumstances– 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 \$8¹ or more in long-term costs in criminal justice, healthcare, and welfare.

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This is an example of policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change that has the greatest population impact.²

Effective prevention efforts require broad-based participation from both individuals, families, and communities to achieve sustainable, collective impact.

Prevention programs and strategies must take into account ethnic, socio-economic, linguistic, familial, generational and cultural differences. A prevention policy must be broad in the manner building on best practices.

Assumptions

The following assumptions underlie the Board policy:

- The family, defined in broadest sense, is the primary caregiver, source of social learning, and the child. 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 optimal development, their basic needs for safety, shelter, healthy food, and education must be met; their exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) must be minimized; their access to clean water and air proper social, physical, 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 and linguistically appropriate.
- Conditions presently exist which produce conditions such as lack of self-sufficiency, poverty, crime, gangs, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and family breakdown, as 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, faith- and community-based organizations, and government

1. [Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald, *Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return*, March 2003; James J. Heckman and Dimitriy V. Masterov, *The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children*, October 2004; High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, *The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*, November 2004.](#)
2. [Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH. Am J Public Health. 2010 April; 100\(4\): 590–595. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2009.185652](#)

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- 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 and resilient 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 and collective impact of the leadership of the Board of Supervisors and the support and recommendations provided by communities, advisory groups, faith- and community-based organizations, ~~and~~-service providers, and residents.
- A comprehensive County Prevention policy supports the three foundational components of the *Live Well San Diego* vision – Building Better Health, Living Safely, and Thriving. Each has an emphasis on prevention. For Building Better Health, a focus is the three risk behaviors (i.e., tobacco use/substance abuse, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity) that contribute to four chronic diseases (i.e., cancer, heart disease and stroke, type 2 diabetes, and respiratory conditions like asthma) that account for over 50 percent of mortality worldwide (51 percent in San Diego, based on 2017 data). Living Safely incorporates focus areas, which include Preparedness, Prevention, Protection, Accountability, and Rehabilitation to ensure that residents are protected from crime or abuse; neighborhoods are safe to work, live, and play; and communities are resilient to disasters and emergencies. Thriving promotes stronger coordination and collaboration throughout the region among all stakeholders, to build community awareness and connectivity, fill gaps and ensure equal access to basic needs, and exceed our basic needs.

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Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. The County shall initiate and sustain a process of creating conditions and environments that foster 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 staffs will take a leadership role in collaborating and establishing partnerships with educational institutions, private, faith- and community-based organizations, private organizations, and other governmental agencies to implement the County Prevention Policy.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-2026.

Board Action

- 12-11-90 (51)
- 5-15-96 (11)
- 3-14-06 (11)
- 12-09-08 (33)
- 01-29-13 (9)
- 11-19-19 (7)

CAO Reference

1. Health and Human Services Agency
2. Public Safety Group