



# Hot on the Hill

## Inside this issue:

Study Finds Exorbitant Costs Associated with Health Inequities	2
Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease Host Panel to Evaluate Health Reform Proposals	2
FDA Moves Forward on Implementation of Tobacco Legislation	3
Updates from the States	4

## Get Involved!

- Stay up to date by reading your local paper or visiting a national news outlet webpage
- Visit your Member of Congress and let them know about your work as a health educator and SOPHE's work nationally
- Encourage others to join SOPHE and participate in SOPHE advocacy events and activities

## House Releases Draft of Health Reform Bill



On October 29, Speaker Nancy Pelosi unveiled the combined, tri-committee draft of H.R. 3962, [Affordable Health Care for America Act](#). Wellness and prevention provisions are included in Division C, which begins on p. 1209 of the PDF. In particular, Title III details the Prevention and Wellness Trust (p. 1286).

SOPHE members should note that the bill includes \$33.9 billion for a Public Health Investment Fund and \$15.4 billion for a Prevention and Wellness Trust over the next five years. These funds will be used to prevent chronic diseases, which currently consume roughly 70 cents of every health care dollar.

To learn more about developments in health reform and to read SOPHE's position on these issues, visit: [www.sophe.org](http://www.sophe.org).

## Senate Finance Committee Approves Health Reform Bill

On October 13, the Senate Finance Committee's approved its version of health reform legislation, [America's Healthy Future Act of 2009](#), by a vote of 14-9. The vote was strictly along party lines, with one exception: Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) was the lone Republican to vote for the bill.

The Senate Finance Committee's version of the bill now will be joined [with the version](#) that the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee approved in July. The full Senate is expected to begin debate in early November, after the combined draft is scored by the Congressional Budget Office.

## SOPHE Co-Sponsors Congressional Briefing Highlighting the Cost of Health Inequities

On September 22, 2009, the [National Working Group on Health Disparities and Health Reform](#) held a Capitol Hill briefing titled, [Cost Savings of Reducing Health Disparities in Health Reform](#).



The briefing panelists represented diverse organizations – from think-tanks to government agencies to health care providers – but they shared a common message: addressing health disparities and inequities is of critical importance, from both moral and economic standpoints.

To read two briefing papers associated with the event, please see: [The Economic Burden of Health Inequities in the United States](#) and [Estimating the Cost of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities](#)

*“...over 30 percent of direct medical expenditures – some \$229.4 billion from 2003 to 2006 – for African Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanics were excess costs linked to health inequalities.”*

## Study Finds Racial Inequalities Cost U.S. Health System Over \$50 Billion a Year

On September 17, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies [released a study](#) detailing the economic burden racial and ethnic health disparities place on the U.S. health care system. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland found that over 30 percent of direct medical expenditures – some \$229.4 billion from 2003 to 2006 – for African Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanics were excess costs linked to health inequalities. They estimated that the illness, lost wages, premature death and other indirect costs associated with racial and ethnic disparities cost the nation about \$1.24 trillion over the same three-year period.

To view the press event announcing the release of the study, please visit: <http://www.visualwebcaster.com/event.asp?id=62053>

## Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease Hosts Panel to Evaluate Health Reform Proposals on Wellness, Disease Prevention Provisions

On September 16, the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease (PFCD) held a panel discussion titled, [Getting to ‘Health’ in Health Reform: Emphasizing Prevention and Wellness](#).

The panelists represented a variety of constituencies, from labor unions to patient advocates to health care providers. Each of the speakers addressed the critical role that wellness policies play in keeping our nation healthy, and the urgent need to include such provisions in the health reform bills that are making their way through Congress.

Dave Hoffman, Legislative and Policy Committee Chair of the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors discussed not only the need for such services, but also said that any provisions included in the health reform

bill must represent a “real, meaningful, [and] sustainable” commitment to community and clinical preventive services. Pat Ford Roegner, CEO of the American Academy of Nursing discussed the role nurses play in administering such programs, and curbing preventable hospital readmissions. Carol Allred, CEO of WomenHeart, spoke about the need for patient education and research parity to address racial and ethnic disparities in health care delivery. Ann Kempfski, Director of Health Policy for the Service Employees International Union, urged action to curb health care spending.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.fightchronicdisease.org>

## Congress Approves 2nd Continuing Resolution

Congress approved a second continuing resolution (CR) to keep the federal government running. The CR was approved as part of the FY2010 Interior and Environment spending bill ([H.R. 2996](#)). The [first continuing resolution](#) expired on October 31, 2009.

## Trust for America’s Health Highlights Programs that Prevent Disease

Earlier this month, the Trust for America's Health released a report on programs shown to prevent disease and improve community health. Produced by the New York Academy of Medicine, the report includes community-based programs to prevent heart disease, stroke and diabetes; falls among the elderly; asthma; tobacco use; and HIV.

For more information on the report, please visit: [http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/NYAM\\_Compedium.pdf](http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/NYAM_Compedium.pdf)

## Child Nutrition Reauthorization Briefing: School Nutrition and Physical Activity



On October 1, the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) (of which SOPHE is a member) hosted a Capitol Hill briefing to review the status of school district local wellness policies since they were established as part of the 2004 reauthorization of the [Child Nutrition Act](#) and NANA's recommendations to strengthen the policies in the child nutrition reauthorization. The briefing also highlighted a bill, The Nutrition Education and Wellness in

Schools Act, that Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO) plans to introduce later this year.

During the briefing, Jamie Chriqui, PhD, MHS, reviewed research she conducted with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to evaluate the strength of local wellness policies mandated by the Child Nutrition Act. Derek T. Scholes, PhD, of the [American Heart Association](#) and Tracey Fox, MPH, RD, President-Elect of the [Society for Nutrition Education](#) (SNE), also spoke.

For more information on NANA, please visit: <http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html>

To read SNE's 2009 report on the State of Nutrition Education & Promotion for Children & Adolescents, please visit: [http://www.sne.org/documents/SNENENPreport630\\_Final\\_000.pdf](http://www.sne.org/documents/SNENENPreport630_Final_000.pdf)

To review the data presented by Dr. Chriqui, please visit: [http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org/research\\_products/](http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org/research_products/)

## FDA Moves Forward on Implementation of Tobacco Law

At the end of August the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced an action regarding the implementation of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. The Agency has officially established the Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee (TPSAC).

The Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee is tasked with providing advice, information, and recommendations to the Commissioner of Food and Drugs on health and other issues relating to tobacco products.

The committee will be asked to consider a variety of topics including:

- identifying the effects of the alteration of the nicotine yields from tobacco products;
- reporting on the impact of the use of menthol in cigarettes on the public health; and
- advising on an application for modified risk (use of descriptors such as "light") tobacco product.

The TPSAC will consist of 12 members, including the Chair to be selected by the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, from among experts knowledgeable in the fields of medicine, medical ethics, science, or technology involving the manufacture, evaluation or use

of tobacco products. There will be nine voting and three non-voting members. Of the nine voting members, seven will be health care professionals practicing in the area of oncology, pulmonology, cardiology, toxicology, pharmacology, addiction, or any other relevant specialty. One member will be an officer or employee of a state or local government or the federal government, and the final member will be a representative of the general public.

The three non-voting members will be identified with industry interests. These members will include one representative of the tobacco manufacturing industry, one representative of the tobacco growers, and one representative of the small business manufacturing industry.

Three related Federal Register documents are on display today and being published tomorrow; one announces the establishment of the new advisory committee, one requests nominations for voting members to serve on the committee, and one requests nominations for non-voting members.

For further information please access the following link and then scroll to Food and Drug Administration: <http://www.federalregister.gov/inspection.aspx#regular>

### **FDA Extends Time Period for Public Input**

On July 2, 2009 the FDA announced that it was seeking public input on the implementation of its historic new authority overseeing tobacco products in the United States. The period for comments on the implementation of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act were initially due at the end of October; however, the deadline has been extended to **December 28, 2009**. The notice is available online at: [http://www.federalregister.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2009-26307\\_PI.pdf](http://www.federalregister.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2009-26307_PI.pdf)

# Updates from the States

SOPHE is pleased to present the latest updates from the states on chronic disease prevention and health promotion policy from our 2009 Health Promotion Policy Experts (HPPEs)!

## Washington

In April the final budget for Washington State was approved, which included \$4.4 billion in reductions over three years. Cuts to health care programs included reduced public awareness activities on tobacco use prevention and control; reduced funding for local community and school programs; and elimination of funding for the State Supplied Vaccine Program beginning May 1, 2010 (or when state funds exhausted). Children with private health insurance will no longer be eligible for any state supplied vaccines after May 1, 2010...

## Michigan

With the decline of the American automotive industry, Michigan was especially hard hit by monumental decreases in state revenue as the collectable sales and income taxes dwindled down. Unfortunately, many of the cuts being proposed are in the areas of health and human services. In Michigan, the Healthy Michigan Fund, which supports many preventive services including maternal and child health, lead poisoning prevention, smoking cessation, and family planning services, is at risk of losing \$8.3 million in funding. The Medicaid program was slashed by \$53 million...

## New York

In July 2009, Governor David A. Paterson signed into law three Governor's Program bills that will make health insurance more affordable and improve access to health care for New Yorkers. The first bill extends the period of time for COBRA coverage from 18 to 36 months...

## Ohio

On August 11, Judge Fais ruled against Governor Strickland and the Ohio legislature, who removed \$230 million from an endowment to reduce tobacco use; the ruling states those funds must be used to prevent children from smoking and to help current smokers quit smoking. However, the ruling is for a tobacco foundation that was dissolved a year ago. Gov. Strickland is poised to mount an appeal to the ruling. *Ohio Survey Shows Fewer Uninsured Children; More Uninsured Adults* More Ohio children have health care coverage now than in 2004, according to results from the 2008 Ohio Family Health Survey. The number of children without insurance dropped to 4 percent in 2008 from 5.4 percent in 2004...

## California

As with the rest of the country, California is combating fiscal difficulties of unprecedented proportions. The "State Budget Crisis" of 2009 followed last year's legislative delay of several months in passing a state budget. For the past few months, the state has been issuing billions of dollars in IOUs in light of its financial difficulties. The current budget cuts are severely impacting health and human services and the California healthcare safety net. In July 2009, Medi-Cal, the state Medicaid program, eliminated reimbursement for certain "optional" benefits...

## Illinois

*HB 3767: Obesity Prevention Initiative Act—Illinois Department of Public Health to organize at least 6 hearings on the health effects and costs of obesity and the need to address the obesity epidemic – It's official! Illinois' governor signed HB 3767 into law on August 7, 2009! The entire Act can be found at: <http://ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0155>*

## Maryland

The current economic situation of the country has also affected Maryland and its counties negatively with the state facing a more than \$700 million budget shortfall. With a commitment to spare K-12 funding, Governor O'Malley has his hands full trying to find savings in the budget. While federal stimulus funding is helping to close the deficit, Medicaid, aid to local governments, and transportation are taking the biggest hits...

To read more updates from our HPPEs in these states, visit:

[http://www.sophe.org/upload/Updates%20from%20the%20States%20October%202009%20358812426\\_10302009165847.pdf](http://www.sophe.org/upload/Updates%20from%20the%20States%20October%202009%20358812426_10302009165847.pdf)



SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC  
HEALTH EDUCATION

10 G Street, NE, Suite 605  
Washington, DC 20002,

Phone: 202-408-9804  
Fax: 202-408-9815  
E-mail: [info@sophe.org](mailto:info@sophe.org)



## Save these Dates!

### SOPHE 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

*An Invitation to Innovation*  
November 5-7, 2009  
Sheraton Hotel, Philadelphia, PA

### 18th Annual NALBOH Conference

*Call for Presentations*  
*Journey to the Future: Facing Public Health Challenges Today for a Healthier Tomorrow*  
August 5-7, 2010  
Omaha, Nebraska  
For details, visit: [http://www.nalboh.org/NALBOH\\_Conference.htm](http://www.nalboh.org/NALBOH_Conference.htm)

### 13th Annual Health Education

*Advocacy Summit*  
March 6-8, 2009  
Washington Court Hotel, Washington, DC  
*In collaboration with the Coalition of National Health Education Organizations*  
For details, visit: [www.healtheducationadvocate.org](http://www.healtheducationadvocate.org)