Obama Administration Sinks Big Bucks Into Public Health

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The Department of Health and Human Services announced a $750 million investment to build public health tools and resources that will help individuals and local communities prevent disease and support healthier lives, according to a recently released HHS statement.

The investment measure is called the Prevention and Public Health Fund and is part of the Affordable Care Act, a.k.a. health care reform. Communities will use the monies to increase immunizations and to battle tobacco use, obesity, heart disease, stroke and cancer.

“Prevention is something that can’t just happen in a doctor’s office,” said Kathleen Sebelius, secretary of Department of Health and Human Services. “If we are to address the big health issues of our time, from physical inactivity to poor nutrition to tobacco use, it needs to happen in local communities.”

In fiscal year 2010, the government distributed $500 million of prevention funding among states and communities for disease prevention, public health efforts, better access to care and efforts to cultivate a new generation of health care professionals. The new funds will expand on these efforts.

“This investment is going to build on the prevention work already under way to help make sure that we are working effectively across the federal government as well as with private groups and state and local governments to help Americans live longer, healthier lives,” Sebelius said.

For fiscal year 2011, the government plans to spend new funds on four areas: community prevention, clinical prevention, public health infrastructure, and research and tracking. Communities will use the money to improve localities’ nutrition and increase people’s physical activity; prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer; make immunizations more available; investments in information technology and train the public health workforce; and help collect data about the impact of the Affordable Care Act.

For more information about these investments, visit healthcare.gov.

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