



Chronic Disease

America's biopharmaceutical companies recognize that chronic disease is one of our nation's greatest health care challenges.

Nearly half (45%) of all Americans – 133 million people – suffer from at least one chronic illness (e.g., diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or arthritis.). The number of Americans with chronic conditions is expected to rise at alarmingly high rates over the next decade –as much as three times faster than the population as a whole.

These conditions of unmanaged chronic disease can be debilitating and life-threatening for people who suffer from them. Patients with chronic diseases experience increased doctor and hospital visits, decreased productivity on the job, and, often times, an inability to work altogether. In fact, chronic disease is the number one cause of death and disability in the U.S.

We believe health care policies should focus resources on preventing and managing chronic illness – not just treating it.

If our nation is serious about finding ways to control health care spending and reform the U.S. health care system, then we must look for solutions to resolve the high cost of chronic disease. The primary cause of rising health care costs is the increased prevalence of chronic disease. Treating patients with chronic conditions accounts for 75% of the nation's health care spending - \$1.7 trillion. In taxpayer-funded programs, treatment of chronic disease constitutes an even larger proportion of spending: 98 cents per dollar for Medicare and 83 cents per dollar for Medicaid.

Many chronic conditions can be prevented by adopting healthy lifestyles such as eating nutritious foods, exercising and refraining from smoking. Preventive services, such as regular health exams and screening for chronic conditions, can also help to diagnose and control chronic diseases early, keeping them from developing into much more severe, and costly, conditions. We must focus our resources on keeping people healthy, as opposed to only treating them once they become ill.

Policies that encourage prevention, early diagnosis and treatment and improved adherence to medication regimens are essential to reducing the impact of chronic disease on Americans' health and our health care system.

The illness that is the least costly is the one that is prevented. We believe that policies to address the rising cost of health care should incentivize prevention of chronic conditions and ensure access to early detection and diagnosis of these diseases.

Many patients who are diagnosed with a chronic condition are not receiving recommended care. Yet medicines play a key role in improving health and reducing costs, especially when it comes to controlling chronic disease. In fact, increased patient adherence used to treat diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol yields between \$4 and \$7 of savings in other health care costs for every additional dollar spent on medicines. We must look at the system as a whole – not just any one factor – when looking for ways to improve health care and patient outcomes.



Saving lives is our job.

Biopharmaceutical companies are dedicated to continuing to discover and develop innovative medicines to fight chronic disease.

Advances in medical innovation have resulted in a longer and better quality of life for Americans. However, diseases and other health problems can evolve, creating new challenges that can only be solved through the application of new technology. Fifty years ago, heart disease incapacitated people and left little hope for recovery, let alone resuming an active lifestyle. Today, statins, beta blockers, diagnostic imaging and stents have made it possible to overcome heart disease to an extent considered unthinkable in the 1950s and 1960s.

Prior to the development of vaccines, thousands of babies and children died or were seriously disabled every year from life-threatening infections such as polio, whooping cough, and rubella. Thanks to innovation, these diseases are now preventable – and have been nearly eradicated.

We advocate for policies that encourage future opportunities to innovate and fight chronic disease, including strong protection of intellectual property and promotion of a business environment that encourages risk-taking and rewards investment in research.

We support programs that expand access to preventive services and medicines for all Americans.

We joined with health care providers, patient advocacy organizations and community groups nationwide to launch the Partnership for Prescription Assistance program (<http://www.pparx.org>), which has helped more than 5 million patients who are uninsured and financially struggling to find programs that provide prescription medicines for free or nearly free.

We are part of a diverse coalition, the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease (<http://www.fightchronicdisease.org>), which advocates for initiatives aimed at preventing and better managing care for Americans who suffer from chronic conditions, promoting health lifestyles and wellness, and reducing health disparities.

We support the Council for American Medical Innovation (<http://www.americanmedicalinnovation.org>), which is working to drive a national policy agenda on medical innovation which will ultimately help prevent and better treat chronic illnesses and life-threatening diseases.

We have improved outreach and enrollment in Medicare Part D through a broad-based coalition, the Medicare Rx Education Network. To date, there are more than 26 million seniors enrolled in the program.

We have supported extending high-quality, comprehensive coverage to the millions of children who are eligible for, but not enrolled in, Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

America's biopharmaceutical companies support health care reform that expands access to high-quality, affordable health insurance for all Americans, preserves patient and provider choices, fights chronic disease and advances medical innovation for the benefit of our nation's health and economy.