

March 18, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing in support of H.R. 766, the “Dr. Michael C. Burgess Preventive Health Savings Act.” This bipartisan bill would provide leaders in Congress with the ability to request that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) provide an estimate of the long-term health savings that are possible from preventive health initiatives.

Chronic disease is a leading cause of death and disability in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year more than 877,500 Americans died of heart disease or stroke, more than 1.7 million people were diagnosed with cancer, and more than 37.3 million Americans have diabetes, with an additional 96 million adults diagnosed with prediabetes, which puts them at risk for type 2 diabetes. These diseases, along with other conditions such as obesity, Alzheimer’s, and mental health issues, place a significant burden on the economy, accounting for 90 percent of our nation’s \$4.1 trillion in annual health care spending.¹ These figures will undoubtedly worsen as the population ages.

Congress should be able to consider the long-term economic benefits of legislation that would promote wellness and disease prevention initiatives that reduce chronic conditions. However, the way in which the CBO currently “scores” legislation severely constrains the ability of policymakers to accurately assess legislation that would prevent chronic disease. For example, while research has demonstrated that certain expenditures for preventive medicine generate savings when considered in the long term, those cost savings may not be evident when evaluating only the first 10-year “scoring” window.

We believe this legislation represents a significant step towards providing Congress with the means to obtain a more relevant long-term economic picture of the benefits of legislation to prevent chronic diseases. The legislation would allow, among other things, the Chair and Ranking member of the budget and health-related committees in the House or Senate to jointly request an analysis of the two 10-year periods beyond the existing initial 10-year window. The provisions requiring these requests to come jointly from the Chair and Ranking Member of the budget and health-related committees in the House or the Senate will ensure the CBO is not diverted to frivolous or overly partisan analyses. Furthermore, the legislation’s definition of “preventive health” appropriately captures the unique nature of this concept by including actions that focus on the health of the public, individuals, and defined populations to protect,

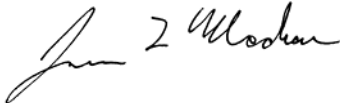
¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/costs/index.htm>.

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promote, and maintain health and wellness, as well as prevent disease, disability, and premature death as demonstrated in credible, publicly available studies and data.

The AMA applauds your leadership in bringing this important legislation to the House floor for consideration and looks forward to working with you on this and other efforts to promote wellness and increase chronic disease prevention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: The Honorable Jody Arrington
The Honorable Brendan Boyle
The Honorable Michael Burgess
The Honorable Diana DeGette