Sustainable Financing for Health Promotion

Health promotion is a transformative force in addressing the risk factors of preventable noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), rising healthcare costs and health inequities. Sustained investment in health promotion and disease prevention is therefore vital for improving population health while reducing the long-term health, social and economic costs of preventable disease. Major challenges, including tobacco and harmful alcohol use, physical inactivity, and the social and commercial determinants of health, require sustained action over time.

Adequate resourcing is important for effective health promotion, translating into population health outcomes. Sustainable and predictable financing arrangements provide the stability needed for continuity, long-term planning, innovation, evidence generation and partnership. The collective experience of members of the International Network of Health Promotion Foundations (INHPF) demonstrates how Health Promotion Foundations (HPFs) can provide a sustained institutional platform for investment in prevention and cross-sectoral action.

Across the INHPF, members have seen the importance of sustainable financing and strong institutional mechanisms in enabling long-term health promotion action. The importance of innovative financing for NCD prevention has long been recognized internationally. The 2011 United Nations High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of NCDs highlighted the need to explore innovative financing approaches to support efforts to address NCDs. Investment in health promotion and prevention can also help governments mitigate wider economic and social burdens by preventing premature mortality and disability, reducing future healthcare needs, and easing long-term cost pressures on health systems, including Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Dedicated Financing for Health Promotion: The Case of Thailand

For more than two decades, Thailand has demonstrated an innovative approach through the **Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth)**, a Full Member of INHPF. Established under the Health Promotion Foundation Act in 2001, ThaiHealth is financed through a dedicated 2% surcharge on tobacco and alcohol excise taxes,

providing a sustained source of investment specifically for health promotion and prevention.

Thailand's approach illustrates one model for financing health promotion and prevention. Tobacco and alcohol contribute substantially to preventable disease and wider social and economic costs, while health taxes can help reduce consumption and associated harms. In Thailand, revenue from the dedicated surcharge has supported long-term investment in health promotion and prevention.

ThaiHealth's dedicated resources serve a distinct and complementary purpose within Thailand's health system. They support evidence generation and translation, innovation, community action, public communication, and partnerships across government, civil society, academia and other sectors. Dedicated financing provides the resources and flexibility to initiate action, test new approaches, strengthen networks and help effective interventions reach greater scale.

Safeguarding Sustainable Financing for Health Promotion

Evidence from public health and health promotion research identifies funding stability, organizational capacity and partnerships as important factors in supporting program sustainability and continuity over time.[i,ii] These considerations are particularly important in health promotion, where effective prevention often depends on long-term relationships, accumulated knowledge and sustained collaboration across sectors.

INHPF highlights the importance of financing arrangements that can:

1. secure adequate, dedicated and predictable resources for health promotion and prevention over the long term;
2. sustain program continuity, institutional capacity and cross-sectoral partnerships;
3. preserve sufficient flexibility for innovation and the ability to respond to emerging public health challenges;
4. where applicable, maintain a logical connection between health-harming products and investment in preventing and reducing the health and wider societal costs associated with their consumption.

Together, these principles provide a foundation for sustaining effective health promotion and prevention efforts over the long term.

Sustaining Investment for Future Health

ThaiHealth's experience illustrates how sustained financing and a dedicated institutional mechanism can support long-term investment in prevention, innovation and population health. Over more than two decades, this approach has enabled continued support for health promotion initiatives, partnerships and community action.

With the growing burden of NCDs and increasingly complex social, environmental and commercial determinants of health, the capacity to invest consistently in prevention remains critical. Health systems need resources not only to respond to illness, but also to address the conditions that contribute to illness before it occurs.

INHPF recognizes the importance of sustainable, predictable and adequate financing for health promotion and disease prevention. While financing mechanisms may vary across different contexts, long-term investment and strong governance are essential to sustaining effective prevention efforts and improving population health.

INHPF supports approaches that preserve sustained investment in health promotion and prevention in Thailand. We emphasize the importance of maintaining the institutional capacity, continuity and flexibility that have supported health promotion in Thailand over more than two decades, for the health and well-being of present and future generations.

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[i] Bodkin A, Hakimi S. Sustainable by design: a systematic review of factors for health promotion program sustainability. BMC Public Health. 2020;20:964. doi:10.1186/s12889-020-09091-9.
[ii] Schell SF, Luke DA, Schooley MW, Elliott MB, Herbers SH, Mueller NB, Bunger AC. Public health program capacity for sustainability: a new framework. Implementation Science. 2013;8:15. doi:10.1186/1748-5908-8-15.

About INHPF
Established in the early 2000s, the International Network of Health Promotion Foundations (INHPF) is a global network of health promotion foundations committed to sharing knowledge, experience, and innovative approaches to strengthen health promotion worldwide. INHPF brings together members and partners to foster collaboration and advance sustainable health promotion. For more information, visit www.inhpf.org.