



**U.S. House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

January 30, 2019

Dr. Keith Hall  
Director  
Congressional Budget Office  
402 Ford House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6925

Dear Dr. Hall:

It is widely understood that providing certain preventive health care services can avert disease or lead to earlier treatment of diseases and other health problems, offering the potential to improve people's health and thus improve the quality and length of their lives. In general, preventive medical services include those that are intended to prevent the onset of disease (such as influenza vaccinations), those that are intended to detect disease at an early stage (such as blood pressure screening in the general population), and those that are intended to limit the progression of disease (such as counseling regarding diet and exercise for people with diabetes or heart disease). As Members of Congress develop proposals to expand investments in preventive health services, it would be helpful to gain a more thorough understanding of how such investments affect federal spending and revenues.

I request that the Congressional Budget Office prepare a report that discusses how the agency analyzes both the short-term and long-term effects of legislative proposals that seek to improve people's health through policies that prevent illness and the progression of disease. Greater use of preventive services might affect the federal budget not only by affecting federal spending on health care but also by affecting outcomes such as longevity, labor force participation, and productivity. The report should focus primarily on the evidence regarding the effects of preventive medical services and how CBO uses that evidence in evaluating the budgetary effects of legislative proposals to expand the use of such services. The report should also discuss other government policies that can improve people's health, such as policies that aim to improve health by changing behavior. In addition, there is a growing awareness among Members of Congress and the public that a broad range of government policies can affect health, including policies aimed at improving factors such as nutrition, housing, and environmental quality. The report should discuss how CBO would evaluate such policies. The staff contact for this request is Erika Appel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Yarmuth".

John Yarmuth  
Chairman