

NECON, a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization that serves as a vehicle for the development and enhancement of disease prevention and health promotion public policies and practices in New England, held its 26th Annual Conference on Promoting Prevention entitled "Prevention: The Ultimate Cost Containment Strategy and a Key to Affordable Universal Healthcare in America" on December 16, 2008, at the Royal Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Marlboro, MA. Dr. Kenneth Thorpe of the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University gave the keynote address detailing the inclusion of prevention practice in the development of healthcare reform under the Obama administration. Dr. David L. Katz, Director of the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center also presented the case for common sense in prevention policy development. NECON originated in Fall River in 1984 as an initiative of the Yaffe Foundation. It is comprised of working groups and healthcare coalitions in the six New England states that periodically make recommendations to the New England Governor's Conference and health care policymakers throughout New England for the improvement of the health status of the region. For more information about NECON, contact Bert Yaffe.



(Top row, left) Dr. Thorpe outlines how he sees the probable development of healthcare reform under the new Obama administration and its inclusion of health promotion as part of the overall strategy. (Top row, center) Bert Yaffe describes Dr. Thorpe's role in shaping healthcare policy in the new administration. (Top row, right) Matt Lockwood Mullaney, market manager for Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, and Cathy O'Connor, director of the Office of Healthy Communities for the Mass. Dept. of Public Health, listen to the presentations. (Middle row, left) Dr. David L. Katz, director of the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center, describes some common sense approaches to childhood obesity prevention such as his ABC For Fitness program. (Middle row, right) chair of the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health Walter Willett, MD, DrPH, raises a question about the broader role of government policy in reducing obesity through funding of alternative forms of transportation that encourage walking. (Bottom row, left and right) Rajiv Kumar, president of Shape Up Rhode Island, describes a statewide exercise and weight loss challenge that has enrolled over 12,000 people while Ray Rickman, senior consultant for the program, points out some of the components that have made the program successful. (Bottom row, center) Sandi Van Scoyoc, president of the Healthy New Hampshire Foundation, listens as Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health commissioner John Auerbach comments on some of the approaches that Massachusetts is using to incorporate prevention into its overall approach to health and healthcare.