



January 23, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

I write to you today with deep gratitude and optimism as I begin my term as President of the Society for Prevention Research (SPR). As we enter this next chapter together, I am inspired by the future we are building—one in which science remains our guiding North Star and where our shared pursuit of knowledge and evidence reflects our commitment to all people, inclusive of every race, gender, faith, creed, and sexual orientation.

These are unquestionably unprecedented times. Yet, despite the uncertainty that surrounds us, I remain confident in the strength of this organization and the resolve of our membership. Together—with our elected leaders, early-career scholars, practitioners, interdisciplinary colleagues, and longstanding members—we will continue to advance prevention science in ways that strengthen our communities, inform policy, and promote well-being for individuals and families across the globe.

Over the past year, the SPR Board has engaged in thoughtful, and at times difficult, conversations about who we are as an organization and where we need to go. These discussions require clarity about our mission and courage to evolve. They also require us to recommit to transparent communication, meaningful knowledge-sharing, and authentic co-design. If there is one thing we have learned as a field, it is that none of us can do this work alone. I know many of you are navigating immense demands across your institutions, projects, and personal lives, and yet you continue to contribute your time, intellect, and leadership to SPR. It is because of your dedication that I am confident we will shape a more vibrant, inclusive, and resilient future for the communities we serve.

Moments of disruption are also moments of opportunity. This is a time for us to assess what we have built, reflect on what we may have taken for granted, and challenge ourselves to innovate. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to reimagine how we conduct research, collaborate across distance, and sustain connections. Today, we face new and equally complex challenges—from shifting public and political perceptions of science to growing disinformation ecosystems and rapid changes in the behavioral health landscape. These challenges require us not only to refine our methods but to tell our story differently and to more effectively communicate the value of prevention.

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During my remarks at the 2025 annual meeting, I emphasized the importance of strengthening the bridge between researchers and practitioners. That commitment remains central to my priorities as President. We are not separate communities; we are co-creators of knowledge whose partnership is essential to advancing the field. As such, you will see renewed efforts to elevate practitioner perspectives, deepen co-design, and create new spaces for sustained, year-round engagement.

In the coming year, the Advocacy Committee will expand its role in ways that strengthen SPR's research-to-policy strategies and amplify the visibility of prevention science. Beyond responding to key policy moments, the Committee will focus on developing a *proactive and strategic policy agenda* that elevates the importance of prevention across local, state, and federal systems. This includes strengthening our capacity to translate scientific evidence into policy-relevant insights, advancing pathways that move evidence into action, and promoting the use of rigorous prevention research to catalyze meaningful and sustained societal change. Communicating the value of prevention has always been challenging—because when prevention is successful, its impact is often invisible. Yet it is precisely this quiet success that underscores our obligation to more effectively demonstrate, elevate, and champion prevention as essential to population health and well-being.

As Prevention Science continues to mature—with the growth of degree-granting programs, expanded methodological tools, and increasingly interdisciplinary approaches—the Board has undertaken a series of updates to strengthen the conceptual and professional foundation of our field. Central to this work is the newly approved definition of Prevention Science, which is now embedded directly within the updated [Core Competencies of Prevention Researchers](#) report. Together, the definition and competencies provide a cohesive framework that articulates what prevention science *is*, what prevention scientists *do*, and the skills required to conduct rigorous, ethical, and impactful research.

The Board-approved definition reads:

“Prevention science is an interdisciplinary field that studies the factors and conditions that influence health and well-being; how to prevent and reduce their impact; and how to promote health and well-being among individuals, families, and communities.”

Embedding this definition within the Core Competencies ensures conceptual clarity, strengthens alignment across training programs, and affirms our shared commitment to advancing a science grounded in rigor, innovation, and real-world relevance. In parallel, we continue our review and update of the [Standards of Evidence](#) to ensure they reflect contemporary scientific realities and support the future of prevention research and practice.

We are also reimagining our annual conference as one part of a continuous cycle of learning, collaboration, and dissemination. The 2026 conference theme on [Multi-level Interventions](#) will

anchor a year-long effort to examine how effective strategies can be integrated across systems and settings to catalyze broader population impact.

In the year ahead, we will also focus on diversifying our funding base and cultivating new partnerships aligned with our mission and values. Expanding our funding portfolio is not merely a matter of organizational sustainability—it is an opportunity to broaden the reach of prevention science, strengthen interdisciplinary collaborations, and ensure the long-term vitality of our field.

As we chart this course together, I invite you to remain engaged—through committee service, mentorship, conference participation, and advocacy. Your ideas, questions, and aspirations are essential to shaping SPR as the professional home you return to year after year.

It is an honor to serve as your President and to work alongside such a dedicated, brilliant, and compassionate community of scholars and practitioners. Together, we will continue to advance the science and practice of prevention—guided by evidence, strengthened by collaboration, and inspired by the possibility of a brighter, healthier future for all.

With gratitude and resolve,

Phillip W. Graham, DrPH, MPH
President, Society for Prevention Research (2025–2027)