

# The Swedish Medical Association's policy for promoting health and preventing disease in Sweden



The healthy choice  
should be the easy choice

# The Base

- Preventive and health promoting work is a **shared responsibility** between **the individual and society**.
- Health promoting efforts by society should make it **easier to make healthy choices** and support the individual's willingness and ability to take increased control for his/her own health.
- The society should **support** individuals that are **less able to influence their situation**
- **The individual should not be put to blame.**
- **Equalization of, and compensation for, social differences** are the main means in achieving improvements in health

## Childhood, youth and education are in focus.

- Preventive efforts should primarily be of a **general nature**.
- Continued **improvements of living conditions** - with particular focus on marginalised groups – is essential
- The general government **subsidies to families with children** should be significantly increased.
- Both primary and secondary school must offer **schooling tailored to the various requirements of all children**.
- **Efforts to minimise drop-out rates** from primary and secondary schools must be strengthened.

# Society should support healthy choices

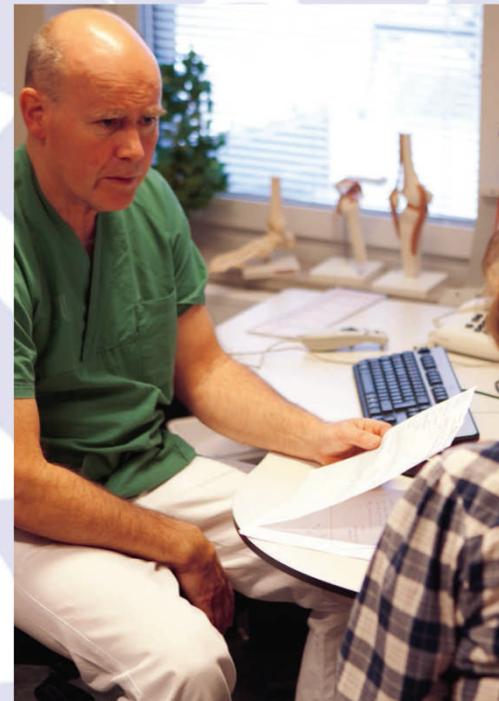
- Regulations and targets in building society should strengthen the foundations for providing good physical, mental and social quality of life.
- Legislation, taxes, fees and subsidies should be used more actively to support healthy choices.



# Healthcare services should increase the use of illness prevention methods

Doctors should be given increased opportunities to work with illness prevention:

- **Continuous upgrading** of skills
- **Supportive structures** such as specialised units for quitting smoking.
- **Economic resources**
- **A well-established primary healthcare** is essential for public health work.



# Mental health

- The Government should initiate a broad effort to **stimulate preventive actions against mental ill-health**. One aim should be to increase the level of employment
- .
- Actions for supporting relatives**, in particular young people, living in families with other family members suffering from serious mental illness or substance abuse must continue to be developed both in medical care and in society at large.



## A smoke-free Sweden in year 2025

- The government should take the initiative to investigate how **tobacco** use may be **phased out in Sweden by 2025** at the latest.
- A guaranteed supply of **smoking cessation support** should be established in health and medical services.
- Increased legal protection against **passive smoking**.
- Sweden should promote introduction of **plain tobacco packaging** and that the remaining articles of the WHO Tobacco Convention are implemented with no delay



## Alcohol and health

- The Swedish **national alcohol policy measures** such as the coordination of the measures against alcohol, drugs, doping and tobacco should be extended and further elaborated.
- Alcoholic beverages should be labelled with information about the number of **standard glasses of alcohol** the product equals to .
- Alcoholic beverages should be labelled with a **content declaration**, at least equal to the requirements set for other beverages.
- **No volume discounts** should be permitted for the pricing of alcoholic beverages.

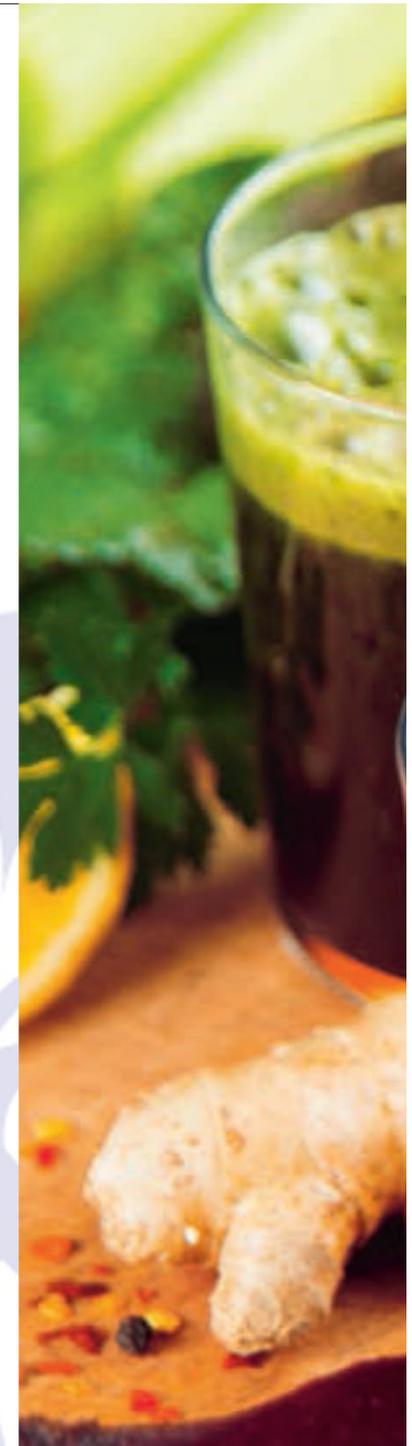
# Physical activity is the best medicine

- Efforts to **facilitate physical everyday activities** should be increased.
- Children's opportunities for **walking and biking to school** should be promoted.
- The school's objective should be that all school children should be **physically active for at least one hour every day** and the physical education classes are designed for everyone's participation.
- Doctors and other health professionals should **stimulate increased physical activity for all relevant patient groups.** FYSS /FaR



# Healthy eating habits

- Broad initiatives should be taken to create **common scientifically-based principles and messages** about food and health.
- **Legislation, subsidies and taxes** should be used more actively to stimulate healthy eating habits. High requirements should, however, be placed on the evaluation of the effects.
- Sweden should promote that **EU regulations** on food to a larger extent should consider health benefits.
- A **common system for labelling of food products** should be developed that will report amounts of energy, nutritional contents and health benefits.



## Preventing injuries and accidents

- All risk groups among the **elderly** should be offered **accident preventive** measures in their homes and local environment.
- Anyone who lives permanently in Sweden should be offered **swimming lessons** free of charge, and all children should learn to swim in school.

## What we want to achieve

- **Use** the experience and knowledge of **doctors** in building society
- **Regain** health promotion and illness prevention as a **responsibility** of the medical profession.
- Use the **trustworthiness** embedded in the medical profession to support public health work.
- Contribute to **create arenas** where interested doctors can take active part .

## Next step

Dr Heidi Stensmyren, President of the Swedish Medical Association, will promote the policy as a delegate in the National Swedish Commission on Health Equity that is planned to start 2015.