



Connie Beck, Director  
Social Services | Public Health | Behavioral Health

## news release

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Oct. 1, 2025

### Federal bill cuts funding for local health-related prevention programs

Effective Oct. 1, \$250,000 of federal funds will be eliminated from Humboldt County Public Health's CalFresh Healthy Living budget which funds programs and outreach to improve the health and nutrition of children and vulnerable members of our community.

The Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services' (DHHS) Public Health Branch funding loss comes as a result of the passing of HR 1, also known as the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," eliminating SNAP-Ed funding which has been used locally to pay for nutrition and physical activity education in schools and the community. That includes the Safe Routes to Schools program and the "Rethink Your Drink" educational program where young people learn about alternatives to sodas and other sugary drinks which are both known contributors to obesity. The cut will also eliminate funds for falls prevention classes for senior citizens.

Alice Birney Elementary School Principal Kristin Sobilo said her school has been partnering with Public Health on programs for years, and she's seen the positive impacts they've made.

"The loss of funding for Public Health programs is a significant setback for our students and families," Sobilo said. "Without this support—encouraging our kids to walk safely to school, learning about nutritious food and drink choices and staying active daily—we risk losing a vital component of our efforts to promote lifelong healthy habits and prevent chronic diseases from an early age."

Area 1 Agency on Aging (A1AA) Director Maggie Kraft said this loss of funding will impact her agency's contract with Public Health staff who teach falls prevention classes for local seniors.

With the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimating that one in four older adults falls each year and one in 10 leads to serious injury, Kraft said Public Health's partnership has been crucial in providing falls prevention

classes at no cost for older adults in Humboldt County, helping them maintain their independence and reducing the risk of injury.

"The loss of this funding means these vital classes will no longer be available, creating a gap in support that our seniors rely on for their health and safety," she said. "Falls prevention is not just about avoiding injury—it's about preserving quality of life."

Kraft said A1AA receives about \$12,000 a year in Older Americans Act Title III-D health promotion funding that supports their SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life) classes. "The loss of funds means we will be back to only SAIL classes in Humboldt."

Humboldt County Second District Supervisor Michelle Bushnell said the county relies on a mix of state and federal funding for programs that support vulnerable populations, including older adults and children. "Losing funding that helps support upstream programs has negative impacts on our community as a whole. Prevention programs are far more effective than trying to fix problems after they occur because they address issues at their root. These programs help our residents make healthy choices, avoid crisis and reduce harm, ultimately making Humboldt County more resilient."

In addition to the elimination of these Public Health-administered programs, portions of this funding have historically been distributed to the following community partners throughout the county that have helped provide health and nutrition education to their participants, students, clients and members, including:

- Eureka City Schools
- Redwood Community Action Agency
- Humboldt Senior Resource Center
- Open Door Community Health Centers
- K'ima:w Medical Center
- Southern Humboldt Community Healthcare District
- CalPoly Humboldt
- Alder Bay Assisted Living
- Comunidad Unida del Norte de Arcata (CUNA)
- Making Headway for Brain Injury Recovery
- Jefferson Community Center and Park
- A1AA
- Humboldt County Association of Governments.

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