Imagine Doing Better

Improving Population Health with Imagination, Reflection, & Action

Paul J. Fleming

October 9, 2026



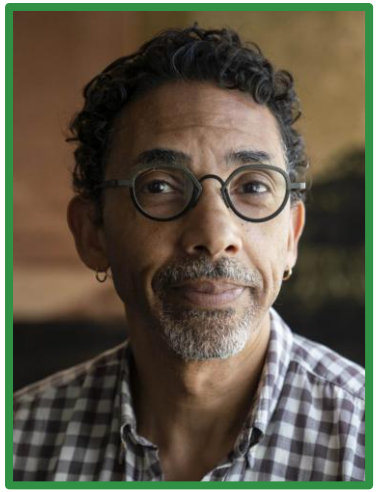
Art by Ricardo Levins Morales

Stifled Imagination, Stifled Progress



“The map to a new world is in the imagination.”

– Robin D. G. Kelley



Crisis Expands Our Imagination



Art by Olly Costello



“Don’t ask the question, ‘what do we have now and how can we make it better?’ Instead ask, ‘what can we imagine for ourselves and the world?’”

– Mariame Kaba



Reflection to identify root causes



What is Prevention Thinking?

1. Identify the root causes

2. Prioritize primary prevention

3. Involve impacted communities

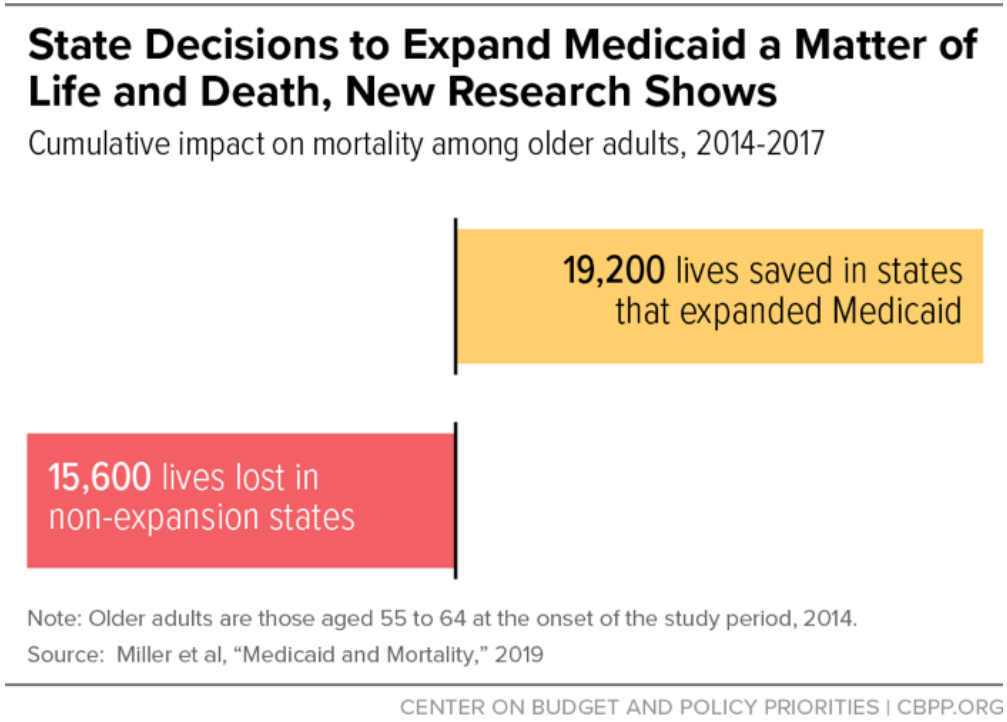




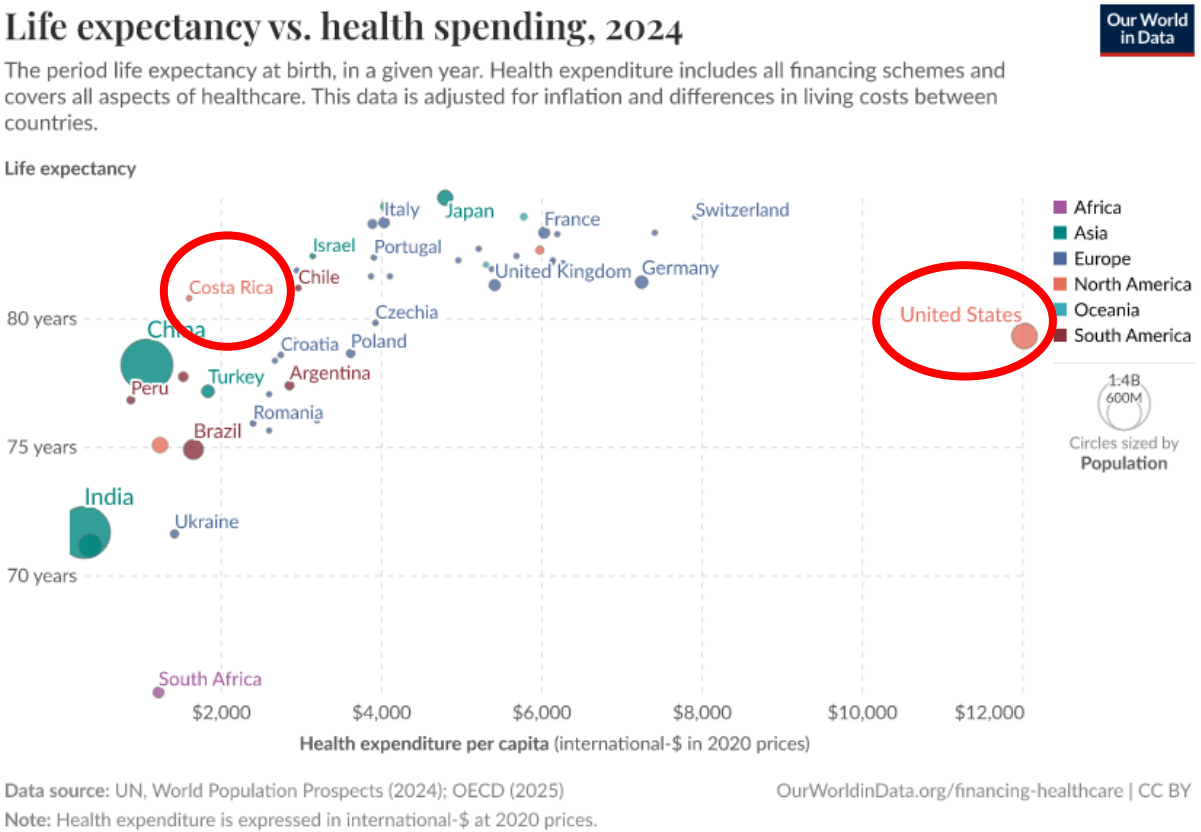


Prevention Thinking: Healthcare Policies

Policies that help prevent poor health can save lives



Healthcare Policies



Imagine Doing Better: Healthcare

Costa Rica's community-oriented primary health care

Lower costs & better outcomes using prevention thinking

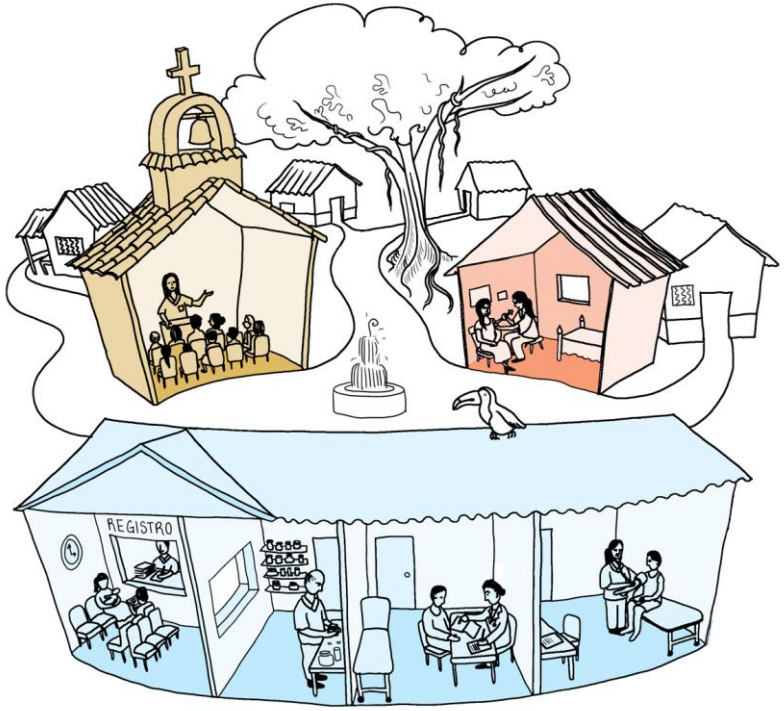


Image from Commonwealth Fund report

Prevention Thinking: Criminal Legal Policies

Criminal legal system and policing are not using prevention thinking;

They are focused on addressing harms *after* they happen

Criminal Legal Policies

$42,672

Average cost per year to imprison someone in 2022 (DOJ)

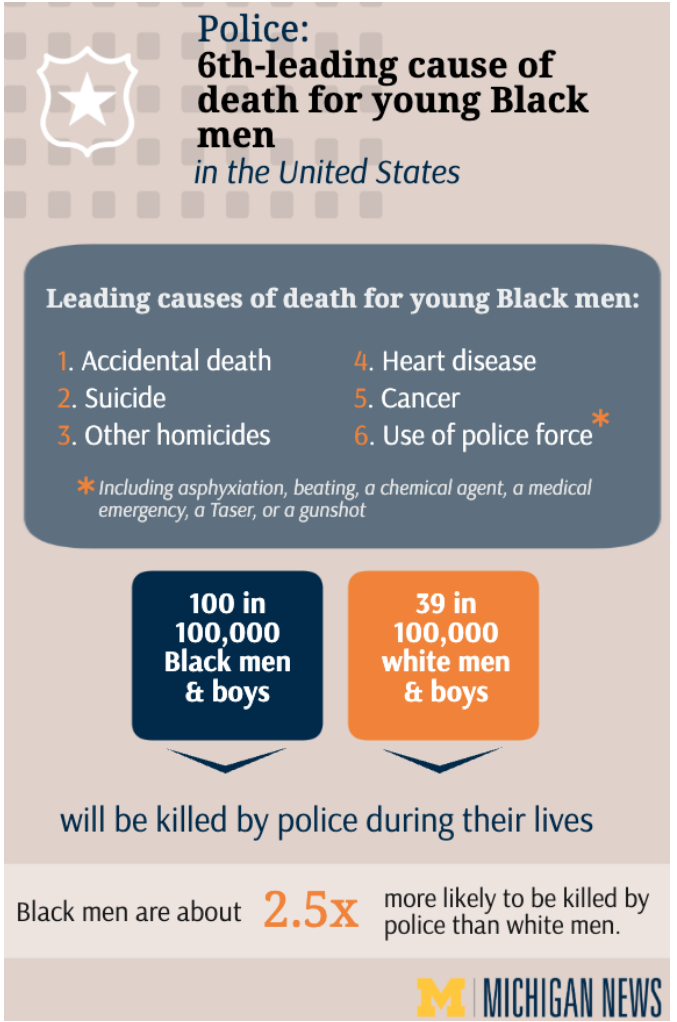
$40,480

US Census: Median annual income in US, 2022 (US Census)

Criminal Legal Policies

- Life expectancy decreases by 2 years for every 1 year in prison[1]

- Over 1,000 people killed by police and 50,000 young people injured, per year[2]



1. Wildeman (2016) *Criminology.*
2. Feldman et al. (2016). *J Urban Health*
3. Edwards, Lee, Esposito (2019). *Proc Natl Acad*

Imagine Doing Better: Criminal Legal Policies

Using Prevention Thinking:

- Restorative Justice
- Unarmed non-police programs response





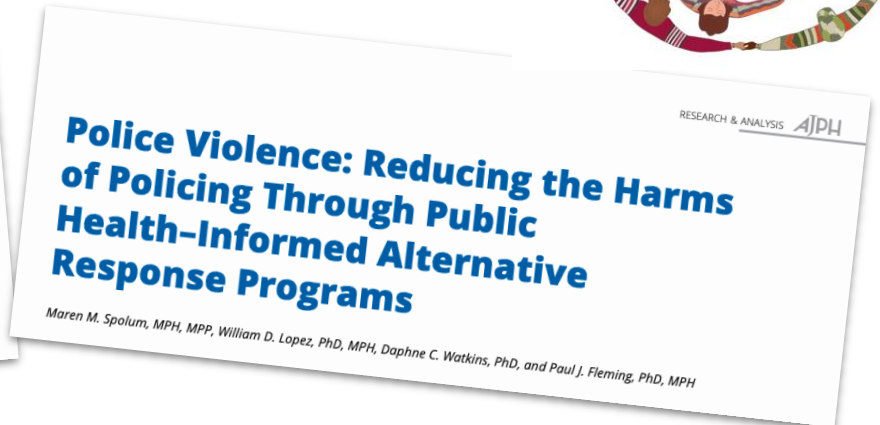
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https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1177/10901981251353505

Sage Journals

Policy, Environmental, and Structural Approaches

Care-Based Approaches for Responding to Emergencies: How Unarmed Non-Police Programs Address Inequities

Wolfgang V. Bahr, MPH, MSW, Alexandra Parks, MPH, Hannah Mesa, MPH, MPP, and Paul J. Fleming, PhD, MPH



RESEARCH & ANALYSIS AJPH

Police Violence: Reducing the Harms of Policing Through Public Health–Informed Alternative Response Programs

Maren M. Spolum, MPH, MPP, William D. Lopez, PhD, MPH, Daphne C. Watkins, PhD, and Paul J. Fleming, PhD, MPH

Take Action for Better Futures











Katie Fahey shared a Page.

November 10, 2016 ·

I'd like to take on gerrymandering in Michigan, if you're interested in doing this as well, please let me know 🙂

We Have Power

"***The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any***."

- Alice Walker



Work Collectively



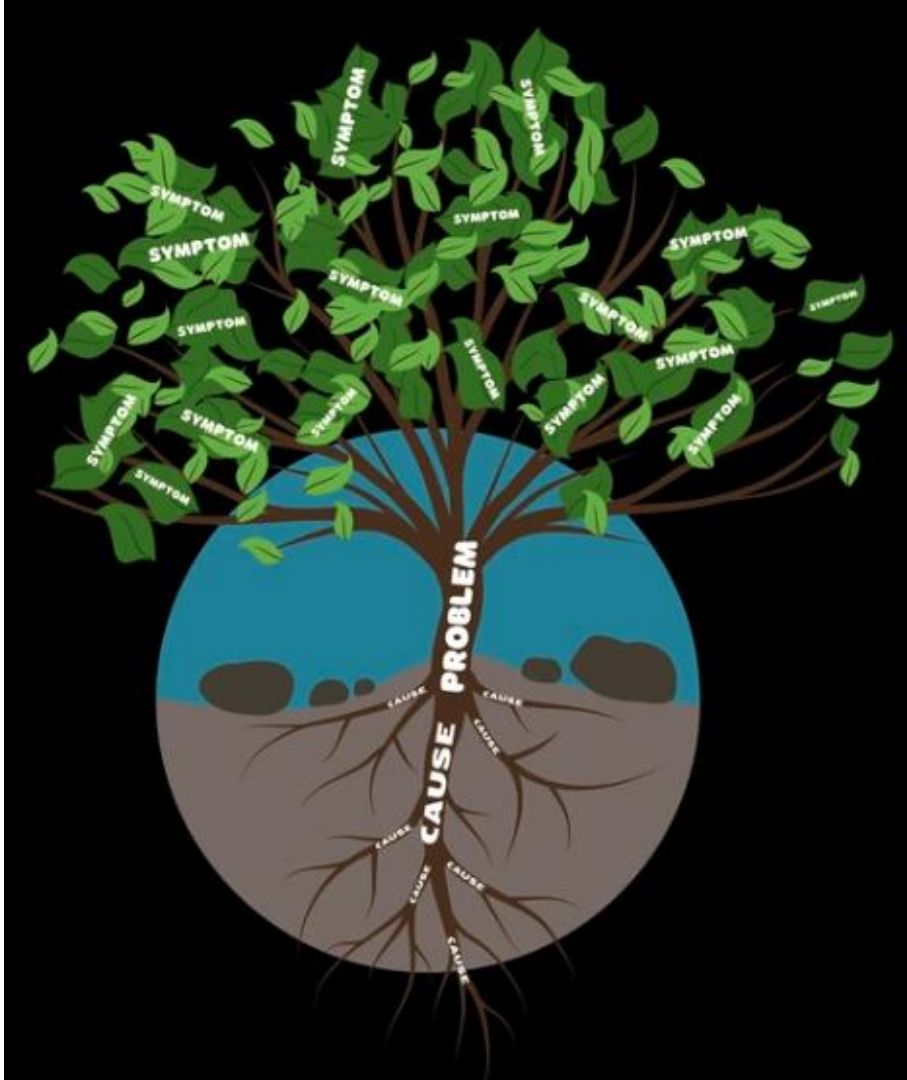
Art by Nina Montenegro

Tackle Root Causes

Policies

Systems

Narratives



Art by @TryIt_Designs

Plant Seeds for the Future

10-3-1-3

10 year vision

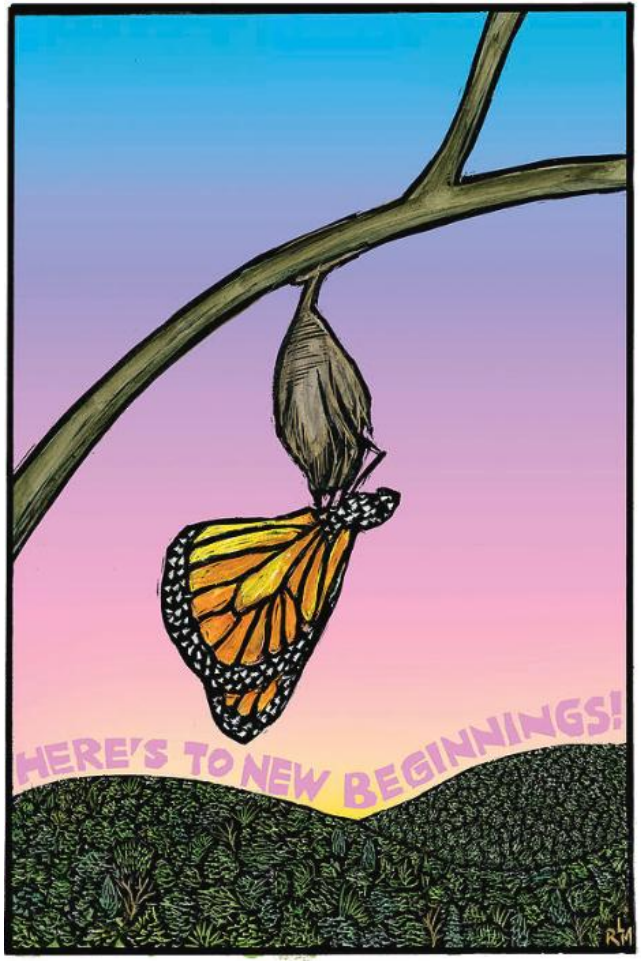
3 years goal?

1 year goal?

3 month goal?

civilla

civilla.org/archive/10-3-1-3



Art by Ricardo Levins Morales

Thank You!

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