



American  
Public Health  
Association

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*Protect, Prevent, Live Well*

May 7, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals and advocates in the world, I write to urge you to reject any effort to use the Prevention and Public Health Fund as an offset for the Interest Rate Reduction Act.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund represents a critical investment in public health and a historic commitment to changing our health system from one that focuses on treating the sick to one that focuses on keeping people healthy. Chronic disease spending makes up a significant majority of our skyrocketing health care costs and the fund presents an opportunity to rein in our health care spending by reducing the rate of many leading chronic diseases. The fund's mandatory nature demonstrates an ongoing commitment to preventing disease and improving the health of our nation.

Already, the fund is being used to control the obesity epidemic, reduce tobacco use, modernize vaccination systems and for other important interventions that will improve the health of the nation's children and that research has shown will ultimately improve student achievement. Additionally, the fund is increasing training opportunities for the public health workforce, preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and expanding our public health departments' abilities to prevent and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. Eliminating or reducing this funding would leave American families less healthy and at higher risk in the event of a public health emergency.

Public health funding, including the Prevention and Public Health Fund, has already seen significant reductions in recent years. We urge you to oppose any efforts to eliminate or reduce this critical public health funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin".

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (E)  
Executive Director