

Protect, Prevent, Live Well

July 17, 2012

The Honorable Denny Rehberg Chairman House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education 2358 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg:

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 express our opposition to the draft FY 2013 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill that the subcommittee will consider tomorrow. This proposal contains significant cuts in public health funding, rescinds the Prevention and Public Health Fund, blocks funding for implementing much of the Affordable Care Act and includes a number of troubling anti-public health legislative riders which will harm the health of all Americans and increase the cost of health care.

Recent cuts to public health funding have caused public health agencies at the federal, state and local level to do more with less and struggle to provide basic health and prevention services. By rescinding the Prevention and Public Health Fund, total resources for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in your proposal would be reduced by 11 percent below FY 2012 levels. The draft bill also proposes significant reductions to other important agencies including the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. In addition, the draft bill would completely eliminate funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the Title X Family Planning program. Simply put, this proposal would significantly endanger the ability of the public health community to protect the health of the American public and the long term medical and human costs will far outweigh the short term savings.

We are also extremely disappointed that the proposal includes language to block implementation of many of the key provisions under the Affordable Care Act. Such a move would turn back the clock on our progress in changing our health system to one that focuses on keeping people healthy rather than treating the sick. The Affordable Care Act is critical to addressing a number of the biggest challenges facing our health system including escalating health care costs, uneven quality and deaths due to medical errors, discriminatory practices by health insurance providers and the shrinking ranks of the nation's primary care providers.

We strongly urge you to reconsider this proposal and to work in a bipartisan manner with your House and Senate colleagues to craft a Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill that prioritizes funding for public health.

Sincerely.

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

Executive Director

Cc: Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education