



**Public
Health
ACTion**

Public Health ACTION

APHA 2011 PHACT Campaign Toolkit



**American
Public Health
Association**

www.apha.org

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Dear Public Health Advocates,

Many of our federal policy-makers continue to be unaware of the important role prevention and public health play in improving our nation's health. The Public Health ACTION Campaign—or PHACT—is an opportunity to communicate directly with your members of Congress and express support for a variety of policies that shape the health of our communities. We need support from APHA members and Affiliates to encourage Congress to strengthen the nation's public health system and support prevention by providing adequate resources to our nation's public health agencies and to protect the important prevention funding provided by the Prevention and Public Health Fund. If we are to make progress against the economic and health-related costs of chronic and communicable disease and injuries, we must strengthen our nation's investment in prevention and public health at the national, state and community level.

The purpose of this toolkit is to raise awareness of public health's critical role in ensuring a healthy America. It includes information and resources on different strategies for engaging in grassroots advocacy—making a phone call, attending a town hall or face-to-face meeting with your Representative or Senators or writing an op-ed to your local paper about the important role our nation's public health agencies and the public health workforce play in building healthy communities across the country.

APHA members, the Student Assembly, and state Affiliates are especially encouraged to use and disseminate the toolkit in preparation for the August recess when members of Congress return to their home states and districts to connect with constituents on the important issues of the day.

Thank you for your assistance in promoting APHA's legislative agenda. Each voice heard and story shared is another step in the right direction toward building healthy communities and the healthiest nation in one generation.

Sincerely,



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

The American Public Health Association (APHA) is the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world. Founded in 1872, the Association represents a broad array of health providers, educators, environmentalists, policy-makers and health officials working at all levels both within and outside of government. APHA aims to protect all Americans and their communities from preventable, serious health threats and strives to assure community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities and preventive health services are universally accessible in the United States. Our goal is for the United States to become the healthiest nation in one generation.



Public Health ACTION Campaign

“Building Healthy Communities”

During this year’s August congressional recess, Aug. 8–Sept. 5, APHA is mobilizing advocates to educate legislators on important public health issues that build and maintain healthy communities. APHA will provide assistance to help APHA members, Affiliates and public health advocates communicate with their members of Congress to express support for a variety of policies that shape the health of our communities.

PHACT campaign priorities: Key legislative priorities before the 112th Congress include:

- 1. Increasing public health funding:** Urge Congress to protect critical funding for public health service agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration.
- 2. Protecting public health funding in health reform:** Encourage Congress to protect the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the first national commitment to public health and prevention of its kind, created under last year’s health reform law.

What our Healthy Communities Leaders can do:

- ◆ Publicize the campaign to your membership, constituency and coalition partners;
- ◆ Recruit colleagues to meet with your congressional delegation district staff or attend a town hall being held by your legislator(s) and candidates;
- ◆ Submit a letter to the editor or write an op-ed; and
- ◆ Document your visit, including photos, and submit information to APHA for national media exposure.

All of the materials you need to successfully educate and advocate to your legislators on these important public health issues are available online on our PHACT campaign website at:

www.apha.org/advocacy/tips/PHACT+Campaign.

Please contact APHA staff at PHACT@apha.org for assistance planning your PHACT activities!

Critical Funding Needs for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) requires a funding level that enables it to effectively carry out its prevention mission. Unfortunately, the 2011 continuing resolution included more than \$740 million in cuts to CDC’s budget authority. By translating research findings into effective intervention efforts, CDC has been a key source of funding for many of our state and local programs that aim to improve the health of communities. Perhaps more importantly, federal funding through CDC provides the foundation for our state and local public health departments, supporting a trained workforce, laboratory capacity and public health education communications systems. **For fiscal year (FY) 2012, APHA supports a funding level of \$7.7 billion for CDC’s core programs** as the minimal amount CDC will need to fulfill its core mission.

CDC continues to be faced with unprecedented challenges and responsibilities, ranging from chronic disease prevention and eliminating health disparities to bioterrorism preparedness and combating the obesity epidemic. It is notable that more than 70 percent of CDC’s budget supports state and local health organizations and academic institutions. CDC funds the following in communities across the country:

- ◆ Injury control programs;
- ◆ Programs to reduce tobacco use;
- ◆ Programs that build healthier schools, worksites and communities;
- ◆ Initiatives to prevent heart disease, cancer, stroke, and other chronic diseases;
- ◆ Programs to improve nutrition and immunization;
- ◆ Programs to monitor and combat environmental effects on health;
- ◆ Interventions to improve oral health;
- ◆ Birth defect prevention programs;
- ◆ Public health research;
- ◆ Strategies to prevent healthcare-associated infections, and other infectious diseases; and
- ◆ Data collection and analysis on a host of vital statistics and other health indicators.

CDC serves as the command center for our nation’s public health defense system against emerging and reemerging infectious diseases. From pandemic flu preparedness and prevention to West Nile to smallpox to SARS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is our nation’s—and the world’s—expert resource, response and laboratory reference center, coordinating communications and action. States and communities rely on CDC for accurate information and leadership in a crisis or outbreak.

In addition to being key to maintaining a strong public health infrastructure and protecting Americans from public health threats and emergencies, CDC programs play a crucial role in reducing healthcare costs and improving the public’s health. To successfully fulfill this role, **CDC needs a funding level of \$7.7 billion for FY 2012.**

FY10 Actual	FY11 CR	FY12 President’s Request	FY12 APHA Request
\$6,397	\$5,649	\$5,893	\$7,700

Budget authority in millions of dollars

Critical Funding Needs for the Health Resources and Services Administration

HRSA operates programs in every state and territory and thousands of communities across the country and is a national leader in providing health services for individuals and families. The agency serves as a health safety net for the medically underserved, including the 50 million Americans who were uninsured in 2009 and 60 million Americans who live in neighborhoods where primary health care services are scarce. **For fiscal year (FY) 2012, APHA supports a funding level of \$7.65 billion for HRSA.**

Over the past several years, HRSA has received mostly level funding, undermining the ability of its successful programs to grow. Anything less will undermine the efforts of HRSA programs to improve access to quality health care for millions of our neediest citizens. Additionally, APHA is concerned about the deep cuts made to the agency in the final FY2011 Continuing Resolution and the negative consequences for public health. Therefore, the requested minimum level of funding for FY2012 is essential to allow the agency to carry out critical public health programs and services that reach millions of Americans.

Some of the major health initiatives conducted by HRSA to reach this mission are:

- ◆ Health professions programs;
- ◆ Primary care programs;
- ◆ Maternal and child health programs;
- ◆ HIV/AIDS programs;
- ◆ Family planning programs;
- ◆ Rural health programs; and
- ◆ Additional specialized programs

If adequately funded, HRSA’s broad health programs will help ensure that vulnerable populations transition smoothly into a new health system and receive continued, quality health services. By supporting, planning for and adapting to change, we can build on the successes of the past and address the new gaps that emerge as a result of health system reform.

To respond to the challenges and public health needs of our nation, **HRSA requires a funding level of at least \$7.65 billion for FY 2012.**

FY10 Actual	FY11 CR	FY12 President’s Request	FY12 APHA Request
\$7,506	\$6,262	\$6,821	\$7,650

Budget authority in millions of dollars

TIPS for Attending a Town Hall

- ◆ **Arrive on time.** Town hall meetings are often very crowded and you do not want to disturb the meeting after it has started. Also, you may have a better opportunity to ask your question and speak with your member of Congress after the event if you are seated near the front of the hall.
- ◆ **Prepare your question ahead of time.** Before attending the town hall, write down your question on a piece of paper so you are prepared to ask it when the time comes (APHA has included sample questions in this toolkit that you can tailor to your needs). A clear, concise question will show you are knowledgeable about the issue area and will give your member of Congress a better opportunity to respond.
- ◆ **Be polite and professional** even if your member of Congress or other town hall attendees disagree with your position. Stick to the facts, even if others don't.
- ◆ **Follow up with the member of Congress and his/her staff.** Call or email the office after the town hall to offer additional resources or ask follow up questions about the issues that were discussed.

Sample PHACT campaign questions for town halls and other public forums

The following questions are designed to help start conversations about public health issues with policy makers at the local, state and federal level. They can be tailored to highlight local issues by providing local examples and concerns. Our goal is to demonstrate the importance of federal public health funding in communities around the country. The lists provided in questions 1 and 2 are not meant to be exhaustive. You are encouraged to pick examples that are relevant to you and your community.

1. I am concerned about the future of our state and local public health workforce and the important services they provide in our state and communities. These services include (**fill in with relevant examples—see list below for some options**). Are you familiar with the public health programs that are funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration in our state/district? Will you pledge to support adequate funding for these important agencies?
 - a. Disease and injury prevention activities
 - b. Public health workers
 - c. Public health labs
 - d. Personnel at state and local health departments
 - e. Safety net for uninsured/assuring access to care
 - f. Cancer screening
 - g. Vaccine delivery programs
 - h. Tobacco prevention programs
 - i. Protecting the public from environmental toxins and other exposures
 - j. Food safety
 - k. Maternal and child health care programs

2. Earlier this year, **Congress made drastic cuts to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration** and the outlook for next year's budget is also bleak. These agencies provide funding for programs like **(fill in with relevant examples—see list below for some options)**. How can we make progress against the economic and health-related costs of chronic and communicable disease and injuries when our country is not investing in the programs that prevent and treat these problems? Will you oppose future cuts to these critical programs?

 - a. community health centers*
 - b. obesity and tobacco use prevention*
 - c. emergency preparedness and response*
 - d. health professions training and education*
 - e. health education and outreach*
3. It's been said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Do you support maintaining funding for the **Prevention and Public Health Fund** which provides much needed mandatory funding that is being used for programs at the local, state, and federal level to fight obesity, curb tobacco use, increase access to preventive care services, as well as to help state and local government respond to public health threats and outbreaks?

Calling Your Members of Congress

A phone call to your policy-makers or their staff is an effective way to influence legislation. Legislators regularly ask their staff to report on the opinions of constituents calling the office and often keep track of the numbers of constituents weighing in on either side of a particular issue.

To call your Senators' and Representative's Washington, D.C., office, **call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121** and ask for the office of Representative/Senator XX.

You can also find additional contact information for your members of Congress, including their district office, by visiting their websites:

Senate websites: www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

House of Representative websites: www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml

Sample Phone Script

Hello, my name is XX and I am a constituent and public health advocate in your [state/ district].

I am calling today on behalf of the American Public Health Association to urge Senator/ Representative XX to support full funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in the fiscal year 2012 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations spending bill. This year, we are requesting a funding level of \$7.7 billion for CDC's core programs and \$7.65 billion for HRSA. This funding level is needed to support and strengthen the public health system so that it is able to respond to everyday health threats, in addition to unexpected public health emergencies, and ensure that all individuals have access to the health services including prevention care they need.

Thank you for your attention to my request, and I look forward to hearing Senator/Representative XX's position on public health funding.

[Leave your name, home address and phone number so the office can follow up with you.]

Meeting With Your Members of Congress

One of the most effective ways to influence the policy-making process and build a relationship is to visit with your senators and representative, or their staff, in person.

Tips for Arranging a Meeting

- ◆ **Call or e-mail to request an appointment.** If you want to meet with your legislator in the district, send the request to the district office. Congressional member websites often have online submission appointment requests available.
- ◆ **Follow up by phone.** Do not hesitate to call the office if you do not receive a response to your initial request.
- ◆ **Be sure to identify yourself as a constituent.** Include information about who you are, the nature of your visit (identify what you want to discuss), when you would like to meet and the names of any friends or colleagues who may accompany you.
- ◆ **Call or e-mail to confirm the appointment.**

Sample Request for an Appointment

August/September **XX**, 2011

The Honorable **XX**

Attention: Scheduler

Dear Senator/ Representative **XX**,

As a constituent and public health professional, I am writing to request an appointment with **[Senator/ Representative XX]** in **[name of town where nearest district office is]** on **[insert date and times available]** to discuss public health funding.

Please contact me to let me know when the **[Senator/Representative]** or the relevant staffer might be available to meet. I will follow up with you in the next week by phone. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Contact information]

Tips for Conducting a Meeting with Your Members of Congress

- ◆ **Arrive on time.** If meeting with a staff member, be sure you have the correct contact name. Do not underestimate the power of the staff person in helping to shape the policy-maker's opinions and positions on issues or a particular piece of legislation.
- ◆ **Bring two or three colleagues with you.** Prior to the meeting, you should agree on what points will be made and which one each of you will discuss.
- ◆ **Try to deliver your message in three minutes.** Be sure to introduce yourself and your colleagues and explain why you are concerned about the issue and why you have expertise regarding the issue. Be concise, polite and professional.
- ◆ **Be prepared to answer questions.** When asked what you want, clearly explain.
- ◆ **Be a resource for the policy-maker and his/her staff.** Offer your time and assistance if he/she wants to talk about your areas of interest and expertise in the future.
- ◆ **Provide material to support your position.** Leave behind a business card and a one-page fact sheet summarizing your position.
- ◆ **Follow up with a thank you letter.** Be sure to include any additional information you may have promised or that may be relevant to the issue.

The Do's and Don'ts When Meeting With Your Members of Congress

DO

- ◆ Learn the committee assignments of your members of Congress.
- ◆ Present the need for what you're asking the member of Congress to do using data or cases.
- ◆ Relate relevant situations in his/her home state or district.
- ◆ Ask the policy-maker's position and why.
- ◆ Show openness to the knowledge of counterarguments and respond to them.
- ◆ Admit you don't know. Offer to find the answer and send information back to the office.
- ◆ Spend time with members whose position is opposite yours.
- ◆ Develop relationships with congressional staff.
- ◆ Thank them for stands the member has taken that you support.

DON'T

- ◆ Overload the meeting with too many issues.
- ◆ Confront, threaten, pressure or beg.
- ◆ Be argumentative.
- ◆ Overstate the case.
- ◆ Expect members of Congress to be specialists.
- ◆ Be put off by smokescreens or long-winded answers.
- ◆ Make promises you can't deliver.
- ◆ Be afraid to take a stand on the issues.
- ◆ Shy away from meetings with legislators with known views opposite your own.
- ◆ Be offended if a legislator is unable to meet and requests that you meet with his/her staff.

TIPS for Getting a Letter to the Editor Published

Writing a letter to the editor for your local newspaper or other media outlet is a great advocacy tool and helps create awareness of the importance of public health in health reform.

- ◆ **Be brief and concise.** Focus your letter on just one concept or idea. Limit yourself to 150–200 words.
- ◆ **Refer to other stories.** If possible, refer to other articles, editorials or letters the newspaper has recently published. This should be done as soon as possible after the article was published. This will increase its chances of being printed.
- ◆ **Include contact information.** Include your name, address and daytime and home phone number so the paper can contact you with any questions. Also, include any titles and degrees that are relevant to help the media know you have expertise. And make sure to refer to your organization or the American Public Health Association in your letter.

Sample Letter to the Editor

Suggested headline: Budget Cuts Mean Taking a Chance on Nation’s Health

I find it troubling that instead of valuing the progress we are making to save money through preventing chronic and communicable diseases, Congress voted to drastically cut public health funding this year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention alone—an agency tasked with protecting Americans from deadly disease outbreaks and pandemics—is facing a historic budget cut, putting the health of all of us at risk. The capacity for health professionals to prevent and respond to some of today’s pressing health challenges or simply provide basic public health and preventive services is in serious peril.

We cannot afford to wait and watch the devastating effects of recent budget cuts to proven health programs trickle down to communities across the country, including **[name of city]**. The nation needs to invest in public health and support life-saving programs and services that have long been woefully underfunded in **[our state]**.

For **[name of Member]**, the message is clear: the long-term and potentially deadly health consequences of a compromised public health system will far outweigh the short-term savings. The public health community strongly urges renewed and desperately needed public health funding. The future of our nation’s health is depending on it.

Name

Title

Contact Information

TIPS for Getting an Op-Ed Published

Writing an op-ed for a local newspaper helps bolster awareness around a variety of public health issues. This important media advocacy tool is an opportunity to offer your opinion or position on a given topic. An op-ed is a short opinion piece generally placed opposite the editorial page in your local newspaper.

- ◆ **Start early.** Many papers receive up to 500 submissions a week. Submit an op-ed to only one paper at a time.
- ◆ **Reach out.** Call the newspaper and ask for the editorial page editor. Introduce yourself and tell them you are interested in submitting an op-ed for placement during the August congressional recess. Ask about any specific guidelines. An op-ed is usually limited to around 650 words.
- ◆ **Follow the submission guidelines.** Most newspapers now accept op-ed submissions via e-mail or an online form on their websites, though some may still ask you to send it via U.S. mail. Following their preferences will increase the chances of getting your op-ed placed. When you send your submission, include a cover letter reminding the editor who you are and reference any previous contact you may have had. Highlight why the subject is important to the newspaper's readers. Include your full name, contact information and a brief description of who you are and what you do, illustrating what makes you an expert on the subject.
- ◆ **Be persistent.** Make a follow-up call about a week after submitting your op-ed to give time for the editor to review it. Confirm that the op-ed was received and answer any questions the editor may have. Offer to modify it if needed.

Sample Op-Ed

Suggested headline: Budget Cuts Take a Chance on the Nation's Health

We know a lot about how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and prevent disease. In communities across the country, we are seeing more people change the way they care for their health by limiting tobacco use, eating healthier and becoming more physically active. Collectively, we are making steps to improve our health and the health of our loved ones due in no small part to the tremendous public health successes we've had in the past several years.

Yet, it's hard to believe that in a nation that holds such promise, nearly 1 million Americans are still dying every year from diseases that could be prevented. In addition, the country still leads the way in some of the worst health outcomes of any other industrialized nation. We can't make inroads on some of the nation's deadliest diseases if we rest on past successes. Simply talking about what it takes to improve health gets us nowhere.

One critical piece of the puzzle that could help reverse this dangerous trend is to promote community-based health and increase funding for the public health infrastructure. The nation's public health system is designed to keep people healthy and prevent disease. It is vital to our everyday lives. It is responsible for ensuring that the water we drink, food we eat and air we breathe are safe. And, it is working behind the scenes every day to keep you healthy. The future of our nation's health depends on strong properly equipped public health infrastructure at the community level—in **[name of city]** and in cities and towns across the country.

Yet, it's troubling that at a time when **[name of state/city]**'s budget shortfalls are facing even tighter restraints, federal, state and local health departments are being asked to do more with less. Instead of valuing the progress we are making to save money through preventing chronic and communicable diseases and injuries, Congress voted to cut public health funding this year by drastic proportions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention alone—an agency tasked with protecting Americans from deadly disease outbreaks and pandemics—is facing a historic budget cut, putting the health of all Americans at enormous risk. The capacity for health professionals to prevent and respond to some of today's pressing health challenges or simply provide basic public **health and preventive services is in serious peril.**

Devastating effects of recent federal budget cuts to proven health programs will soon trickle down to communities across the country including **[name of city]**. We have already begun to see the impact of state cuts. **[Include local perspective here]**

Public Health Funding

The nation needs a reinvestment in public health funding that will support life-saving programs and services that have long been woefully underfunded in **[our state]**. Rebuilding public health infrastructure means improving community-based health and strengthening the capacity within **public health departments. With a substantial increase in public health funding, we can strive to be the healthiest nation in one generation.**

It's time to act on what we know is the right thing to do. For [name of Member], the message is clear: the long-term health consequences will far outweigh the short-term savings. The public health community strongly urges renewed and desperately needed public health funding. We cannot afford to wait. Our nation's health is depending on it.

Name

Title

Contact Information

Tips for Utilizing Social Media

Social media allows you to enhance your advocacy activities and should be integrated into the other work you do. Below is some additional explanation on social media tools and how best you can use them to bring attention to your PHACT Campaign activities.

- ◆ **Twitter (www.twitter.com)** Send short messages (140 characters or less) about your advocacy activities or about public health issues to your followers. The tweets can be easily “retweeted” by other users. APHA’s @publichealth Twitter feed provides frequent updates on public health issues that can be shared with your networks.
- ◆ **Facebook (www.facebook.com):** Post information about public health issues on your wall or status and update your page with new advocacy activities in which you are participating. Invite your friends to join you at a town hall or meeting. Share pictures and stories about the activities.
- ◆ **Flickr (www.flickr.com):** Flickr allows you to share your photos easily with others and allows users to search for images. Create a Flickr account so you can post photos of your advocacy activities and link to your Flickr photos from your Web site, blog and Facebook page and tweet the link when you upload new photos.
- ◆ **Blogs:** If you have a blog, use it to promote your activities. Post all the essential information (location, date, time, etc.) and provide frequent updates to encourage your readers to join you in your efforts. This can also be a forum for readers to post questions in the comments section, which you will be able to answer and potentially address in future posts.

Additional Resources

- ◆ APHA Congressional Vote Record, 2010 (APHA members only)
<http://www.apha.org/NR/ronlyres/D565B7EC-446D-4B18-A6F0-AD17109074E2/0/APHAVotingRecord11.pdf>
- ◆ APHA Letters to Congress
www.apha.org/advocacy/activities/actionissues/
- ◆ APHA Testimony on the FY 2011 Budget
www.apha.org/advocacy/priorities/comments/
- ◆ CDC Coalition Website
www.cdccoalition.org/
- ◆ Friends of HRSA Website
www.friendsofhrsa.org/
- ◆ HHS State Fact Sheets on the Prevention and Public Health Fund
<http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/prevention02092011a.html>
- ◆ CDC State Funding Website
http://cdc.gov/about/business/state_funding.htm
- ◆ HRSA State Funding Website
<http://stateprofiles.hrsa.gov/index.aspx>
- ◆ The U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations Website
<http://appropriations.senate.gov/>
- ◆ The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations Website
<http://appropriations.house.gov/>

The Prevention and Public Health Fund

The Prevention and Public Health Fund was created as a part of the Affordable Care Act. The Fund is the nation's first mandatory funding stream dedicated to improving our nation's public health.

Facts

Currently, nearly all public health and prevention programs are primarily funded through discretionary appropriations, meaning that Congress determines the amount of money the programs receive each fiscal year. This unpredictable type of funding leaves programs susceptible to significant budget changes year to year. For example, funding for rural health programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) decreased by more than \$10 million from Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 to FY 2009, but then increased by nearly \$10 million in FY2010. These types of fluctuations in funding streams make it difficult to maintain and enhance public health programs.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) addressed this issue by creating the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the nation's first mandatory funding stream dedicated to public health programs. By law, the Fund must be used "to provide for expanded and sustained national investment in prevention and public health programs to improve health and help restrain the rate of growth in private and public health care costs." It is anticipated the Fund will be used for programs at the local, state, and federal level to fight obesity, curb tobacco use, increase access to preventive care services, as well as to help state and local government respond to public health threats and outbreaks. The Fund will also provide grants to local communities to develop prevention and wellness services through the Community Transformation Grant program. This program will allow communities across the country to enhance their efforts to prevent disease and improve public health. In 2010, the Fund provided resources to state health agencies to improve public health infrastructure. The Fund is not intended to supplant existing activities at our federal public health agencies.

How Much Money Is In The Prevention And Public Health Fund?

The ACA stipulates that \$15 billion are available through the Fund between FY2010 and FY2019, and \$2 billion every year thereafter. During the first five years of the Fund's existence, the yearly amounts gradually increase to \$2 billion per year:

- ◆ \$500 million in FY2010, \$750 million in FY2011, \$1 billion in FY2012, \$1.25 billion in FY2013, \$1.5 billion in FY2014, and \$2 billion in FY2015 and each fiscal year after.

In comparison, the CDC's budget in FY2010 for core programs was \$6.46 billion. The Prevention Fund therefore represents a substantial increase in funding for public health, assuming that the Fund does not supplant existing discretionary spending.

Who Decides How the Fund is Allocated?

- ◆ While the amount available to be spent every year is set in statute, the exact uses of the Fund will be decided yearly through the Congressional appropriations process, in coordination with the White House.
- ◆ In years when Congress does not pass a budget, the administration has the authority to direct allocations from the Fund. This occurred in the FY2010, since the ACA passed too late for the Fund to be included in the FY10 budget process. It has also occurred in FY2011, since as of February 2011, Congress has not yet passed an FY2011 budget.

Can the Fund be used for non-public health purposes or eliminated?

- ◆ Congress has the ability to eliminate the Fund, or redirect money from it to pay for non-public health legislative proposals. However, such action would require new legislation to be passed into law that amends the ACA.

Where The Money is Going in FY2011

The Department of Health and Human Services announced the allocations for the 2011 Prevention and Public Health Fund in February 2011. The \$750 million available for FY2011 will be used for a variety of public health efforts, including supporting the work of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA):

- ◆ Community Prevention (\$222 million): Funds will be used to enhance community-based preventive health programs at the local level through Community Transformation Grants including tobacco cessation, obesity prevention, and disease-specific efforts.
- ◆ Clinical Prevention (\$182 million): Funds will be used to expand awareness of clinical preventive services and benefits.
- ◆ Public Health Infrastructure and Training (\$137 million): Funds will be used to bolster public health infrastructure at the state and local level, increase training capacity for the health care workforce, and expand public health officials' ability to prevent and respond to infectious disease outbreaks.
- ◆ Research and Tracking (\$133 million): Funds will be used to increase and expand data collection on public health services nationwide.

TIPS for Attending a Town Hall

- ◆ **Arrive on time.** Town hall meetings are often very crowded and you do not want to disturb the meeting after it has started. Also, you may have a better opportunity to ask your question and speak with your member of Congress after the event if you are seated near the front of the hall.
- ◆ **Prepare your question ahead of time.** Before attending the town hall, write down your question on a piece of paper so you are prepared to ask it when the time comes (APHA has included sample questions in this toolkit that you can tailor to your needs). A clear, concise question will show you are knowledgeable about the issue area and will give your member of Congress a better opportunity to respond.
- ◆ **Be polite and professional** even if your member of Congress or other town hall attendees disagree with your position. Stick to the facts, even if others don't.
- ◆ **Follow up with the member of Congress and his/her staff.** Call or email the office after the town hall to offer additional resources or ask follow up questions about the issues that were discussed.

Sample PHACT campaign questions for town halls and other public forums

The following questions are designed to help start conversations about public health issues with policy makers at the local, state and federal level. They can be tailored to highlight local issues by providing local examples and concerns. Our goal is to demonstrate the importance of federal public health funding in communities around the country. The lists provided in questions 1 and 2 are not meant to be exhaustive. You are encouraged to pick examples that are relevant to you and your community.

1. I am concerned about the future of our state and local public health workforce and the important services they provide in our state and communities. These services include **(fill in with relevant examples—see list below for some options)**. Are you familiar with the public health programs that are funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration in our state/district? Will you pledge to support adequate funding for these important agencies?
 - a. Disease and injury prevention activities
 - b. Public health workers
 - c. Public health labs
 - d. Personnel at state and local health departments
 - e. Safety net for uninsured/assuring access to care
 - f. Cancer screening
 - g. Vaccine delivery programs
 - h. Tobacco prevention programs
 - i. Protecting the public from environmental toxins and other exposures
 - j. Food safety
 - k. Maternal and child health care programs

Public Health in the Affordable Care Act

- 2.** Earlier this year, **Congress made drastic cuts to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration** and the outlook for next year's budget is also bleak. These agencies provide funding for programs like *(fill in with relevant examples—see list below for some options)*. How can we make progress against the economic and health-related costs of chronic and communicable disease and injuries when our country is not investing in the programs that prevent and treat these problems? Will you oppose future cuts to these critical programs?

 - a. community health centers*
 - b. obesity and tobacco use prevention*
 - c. emergency preparedness and response*
 - d. health professions training and education*
 - e. health education and outreach*
- 3.** It's been said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Do you support maintaining funding for the **Prevention and Public Health Fund** which provides much needed mandatory funding that is being used for programs at the local, state, and federal level to fight obesity, curb tobacco use, increase access to preventive care services, as well as to help state and local government respond to public health threats and outbreaks?

Calling Your Members of Congress

A phone call to your policy-makers or their staff is an effective way to influence legislation. Legislators regularly ask their staff to report on the opinions of constituents calling the office and often keep track of the numbers of constituents weighing in on either side of a particular issue.

To call your Senators' and Representative's Washington, D.C., office, call the **U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121** and ask for the office of Representative/Senator XX.

You can also find additional contact information for your members of Congress, including their district office, by visiting their websites:

Senate websites: www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

House of Representative websites: www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml

Sample Phone Script

Hello, my name is XX and I am a constituent and public health advocate in your [state/district].

I am calling today on behalf of the American Public Health Association to urge Senator/Representative XX to protect the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund is making urgently needed investments in reducing tobacco use, improving nutrition, and increasing the availability and use of immunizations in an effort to prevent some of the nation's leading causes of death. The Fund is also strengthening our state and local health departments so they are prepared to keep our families safe from future disease outbreaks and public health emergencies. Repealing the Prevention and Public Health Fund would turn back the progress we are making to shift our health system from one that focuses on treating the sick to one that focuses on keeping people healthy.

Maintaining this important investment in prevention and public health is critical to improving and protecting the health of all Americans.

Thank you for your attention to my request, and I look forward to hearing Senator/Representative XX's position on supporting funding for prevention and public health programs.

Meeting With Your Members of Congress

One of the most effective ways to influence the policy-making process and make a lasting connection is to visit with your senators and representative, or their staff, in person.

Tips for Arranging a Meeting

- ◆ **Call or e-mail to request an appointment.** If you want to meet with your legislator in the district, send the request to the district office. Congressional member websites often have online submission appointment requests available.
- ◆ **Follow up by phone.** Do not hesitate to call the office if you do not receive a response to your initial request.
- ◆ **Be sure to identify yourself as a constituent.** Include information about who you are, the nature of your visit (identify what you want to discuss), when you would like to meet and the names of any friends or colleagues who may accompany you.
- ◆ **Call or e-mail to confirm the appointment.**

Sample Request for an Appointment

August/September **XX**, 2011

The Honorable **XX**
Attention: Scheduler

Dear Senator/ Representative **XX**,

As a constituent and public health professional, I am writing to request an appointment with **[Senator/ Representative XX]** in **[name of town where nearest district office is]** on **[insert date and times available]** to public health funding in the Affordable Care Act.

Please contact me to let me know when the **[Senator/Representative]** or the relevant staffer might be available to meet. I will follow up with you in the next week by phone. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Contact information]

Tips for Conducting a Meeting with Your Members of Congress

- ◆ **Arrive on time.** If meeting with a staff member, be sure you have the correct contact name. Do not underestimate the power of the staff person in helping to shape the policy-maker's opinions and positions on issues or a particular piece of legislation.
- ◆ **Bring two or three colleagues with you.** Prior to the meeting, you should agree on what points will be made and which one each of you will discuss.
- ◆ **Try to deliver your message in three minutes.** Be sure to introduce yourself and your colleagues and explain why you are concerned about the issue and why you have expertise regarding the issue. Be concise, polite and professional.
- ◆ **Be prepared to answer questions.** When asked what you want, clearly explain.
- ◆ **Be a resource for the policy-maker and his/her staff.** Offer your time and assistance if he/she wants to talk about your areas of interest and expertise in the future.
- ◆ **Provide material to support your position.** Leave behind a business card and a one-page fact sheet summarizing your position.
- ◆ **Follow up with a thank you letter.** Be sure to include any additional information you may have promised or that may be relevant to the issue.

The Do's and Don'ts When Meeting With Your Members of Congress

DO

- ◆ Learn the committee assignments of your members of Congress.
- ◆ Present the need for what you're asking the member of Congress to do using data or cases.
- ◆ Relate relevant situations in his/her home state or district.
- ◆ Ask the policy-maker's position and why.
- ◆ Show openness to the knowledge of counterarguments and respond to them.
- ◆ Admit you don't know. Offer to find the answer and send information back to the office.
- ◆ Spend time with members whose position is opposite yours.
- ◆ Develop relationships with congressional staff.
- ◆ Thank them for stands the member has taken that you support.

DON'T

- ◆ Overload the meeting with too many issues.
- ◆ Confront, threaten, pressure or beg.
- ◆ Be argumentative.
- ◆ Overstate the case.
- ◆ Expect members of Congress to be specialists.
- ◆ Be put off by smokescreens or long-winded answers.
- ◆ Make promises you can't deliver.
- ◆ Be afraid to take a stand on the issues.
- ◆ Shy away from meetings with legislators with known views opposite your own.
- ◆ Be offended if a legislator is unable to meet and requests that you meet with his/her staff.

TIPS for Getting a Letter to the Editor Published

Writing a letter to the editor for your local newspaper or other media outlet is a great advocacy tool and helps create awareness of the importance of federal child nutrition and wellness programs.

- ◆ **Be brief and concise.** Focus your letter on just one concept or idea. Limit yourself to 150–200 words.
- ◆ **Refer to other stories.** If possible, refer to other articles, editorials or letters the newspaper has recently published. This should be done as soon as possible after the article was published. This will increase its chances of being printed.
- ◆ **Include contact information.** Include your name, address and daytime and home phone number so the paper can contact you with any questions. Also, include any titles and degrees that are relevant to help the media know you have expertise. And make sure to refer to your organization in your letter.

Sample Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

There has been talk lately about efforts to eliminate funding included in the Prevention and Public Health Fund, created under the Affordable Care Act and direct it to other non-health related initiatives.

Specifically, these efforts aim to remove the ‘mandatory’ nature of the Fund and instead allow Congress to determine how much to spend on preventive health programs each year. This move would only continue the senseless fluctuation in federal funding of public health programs that we have had in recent years and will only hamper the capacity of our local health departments to support critical disease and injury prevention programs as intended under the law.

Reallocating the Fund is a foolhardy political move that will only inhibit millions of Americans from living full, healthy lives. The Fund represents the first time that our country has made a sustained financial commitment to improving public health.

Those who support this idea don’t quite seem to understand the devastating effect this could have on **[name of state]**’s local Health Departments and public health services.

Prevention holds a great deal of promise for our nation’s health and well-being. In fact, it could usher in a fundamental change in how all Americans think about the way we care for our health.

The Prevention Fund is not a grab bag for other non-health related initiatives. In order for health reform to have a maximum impact, the Fund and other important and often overlooked prevention provisions must be protected.

[Name]

[Title]

[Contact information]

TIPS for Getting an Op-Ed Published

Writing an op-ed for a local newspaper helps bolster awareness around a variety of public health issues. This important media advocacy tool is an opportunity to offer your opinion or position on a given topic. An op-ed is a short opinion piece generally placed opposite the editorial page.

- ◆ **Start early.** Many papers receive up to 500 submissions a week. Submit an op-ed to only one paper at a time.
- ◆ **Reach out.** Call the newspaper and ask for the editorial page editor. Introduce yourself and tell them you are interested in submitting an op-ed for placement during the August Congressional recess. Ask about any specific guidelines. An op-ed is usually limited to around 650 words.
- ◆ **Follow the submission guidelines.** Most newspapers now accept op-ed submissions via e-mail or an online form on their websites, though some may still ask you to send it via U.S. mail. Following their preferences will increase the chances of getting your op-ed placed. When you send your submission, include a cover letter reminding the editor who you are and reference any previous contact you may have had. Highlight why the subject is important to the newspaper's readers. Include your full name, contact information and a brief description of who you are and what you do, illustrating what makes you an expert on the subject.
- ◆ **Be persistent.** Make a follow-up call about a week after submitting your op-ed to give time for the editor to review it. Confirm that the op-ed was received and answer any questions the editor may have. Offer to modify it if needed.

Sample Op-Ed

Prevention is perhaps the most valuable tool we as public health professionals have to limit the scourge of chronic disease in this country. It's also a wise investment that will save us money down the line.

Despite the enormous contributions prevention makes to improving and protecting health, some in Congress seek to undo gains we've made. In particular, some legislators are working to eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which was established as part of health reform. Such a move is foolhardy and will inhibit millions of Americans from living full, healthy lives.

The Prevention Fund invests in proven prevention strategies that help people stay well now. Over the next 10 years, the Fund will commit \$15 billion to support life-saving community-based tobacco cessation programs, obesity fighting initiatives, breast and colon cancer screenings and adult vaccine programs. It represents the first time that our country has made a sustained financial commitment to improving public health. It will save lives and yield real savings to the entire health system.

Chronic disease—most of which that could be prevented -- is a dominant driver of health care spending that costs the United States \$1 trillion every year in lost productivity. And the toll of suffering lives lost is immeasurable. As a nation, we already know what it takes to limit the burden of some of the most life-threatening diseases. We know it starts by staying physically active, avoiding tobacco smoke, eating healthy and getting annual preventive screenings. By virtue of the Fund, we can translate this awareness to real action and usher in a fundamental change in how all Americans think about the way we care for our health.

Unfortunately, some in Congress don't get it. They seek to remove the 'mandatory' nature of the Fund and instead allow Congress to determine how much to spend on preventive health programs each year. This move would continue the senseless fluctuation in federal funding of public health programs that we have had in recent years and will hamper the capacity of our local health departments to support critical disease and injury prevention programs as intended under the law.

The law clearly codifies how the Prevention Fund should be spent. Yet there are those who believe the Fund is a "grab bag" and should be reallocated for other non-health related initiatives don't quite seem to understand the devastating effect this could have on [name of state]'s local health departments and public health services.

Our nation's health care spending is reaching uncontrollable levels. Now more than ever, we need to realign our paradigm and make wise investments in proven prevention strategies now that will pay dividends down the line. In order for the fund to have maximum impact, Congress must protect it.

Name

Title

Contact Information

Tips for Utilizing Social Media

Social media allows you to enhance your advocacy activities and should be integrated into the other work you do. Below is some additional explanation on social media tools and how best you can use them to bring attention to your PHACT Campaign activities.

- ◆ **Twitter (www.twitter.com)** Send short messages (140 characters or less) about your advocacy activities or about public health issues to your followers. The tweets can be easily “retweeted” by other users. APHA’s @publichealth Twitter feed provides frequent updates on public health issues that can be shared with your networks.
- ◆ **Facebook (www.facebook.com)**: Post information about public health issues on your wall or status and update your page with new advocacy activities in which you are participating. Invite your friends to join you at a town hall or meeting. Share pictures and stories about the activities.
- ◆ **Flickr (www.flickr.com)**: Flickr allows you to share your photos easily with others and allows users to search for images. Create a Flickr account so you can post photos of your advocacy activities and link to your Flickr photos from your Web site, blog and Facebook page and tweet the link when you upload new photos.
- ◆ **Blogs**: If you have a blog, use it to promote your activities. Post all the essential information (location, date, time, etc.) and provide frequent updates to encourage your readers to join you in your efforts. This can also be a forum for readers to post questions in the comments section, which you will be able to answer and potentially address in future posts.

Additional Resources

- ◆ APHA Congressional Vote Record, 2010 (APHA members only)
[.http://www.apha.org/NR/rdonlyres/D565B7EC-446D-4B18-A6F0-AD17109074E2/0/APHAVotingRecord11.pdf](http://www.apha.org/NR/rdonlyres/D565B7EC-446D-4B18-A6F0-AD17109074E2/0/APHAVotingRecord11.pdf)
- ◆ APHA Fact Sheet
<http://www.apha.org/NR/rdonlyres/63AB0803-AC5B-41BE-82F8-790F446EAA28/0/PreventionPublicHealthfactsheet.pdf>
- ◆ APHA Issue Brief on Prevention Provisions in the ACA
<http://www.apha.org/NR/rdonlyres/763D7507-2CC3-4828-AF84-1010EA1304A4/0/FinalPreventionACAWeb.pdf>
- ◆ HHS 2011 Prevention and Public Health Fund Distribution Details
<http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/prevention02092011b.html>
- ◆ HHS Prevention and Public Health Fund State Fact Sheets
<http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/prevention02092011a.html>

PHACT Campaign Follow-Up

Please keep us informed of your advocacy efforts and how your policy-makers feel about public health and a public option in health reform by completing the following survey.

1. Please provide the following information:

Your Name _____
E-mail _____
APHA Section or state Affiliate _____

2. Describe your advocacy activity, including the date and who you met with or spoke to.

Date _____ Meeting with _____

3. Was the policy-maker/staff member aware of APHA? Were they aware of the state Affiliate?

4. What is the policy-maker's position on public health in health reform?

5. What is the policy-maker's position on a public insurance option in health reform?

6. What are your policy-maker's main concerns on this issue?

7. What does your policy-maker hear from constituents on this issue?

8. Follow-up needed from APHA staff:

9. Was this a positive experience for you?

10. Any additional comments?

PLEASE RETURN TO:

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