



American
Public Health
Association

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Protect, Prevent, Live Well

January 27, 2012

Dear Conferee:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association (APHA), the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals and advocates in the world, I write to urge you to reject any proposal to divert funding from the Prevention and Public Health Fund as an offset as you continue negotiations on H.R. 3630, the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Continuation Act of 2011.

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 Prevention Fund presents an opportunity to rein in our health care spending by reducing the rate of many leading chronic diseases. The Prevention Fund's mandatory nature demonstrates an ongoing commitment to preventing disease and improving the public health of our nation.

Already, states are using Prevention Fund dollars to bolster our public health infrastructure at the state and local level, increase training capacity for the public health workforce, to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, to control the obesity epidemic, and to expand public health officials' ability to prevent and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. Diverting any portion of this funding would derail current public health activities in communities and states across the country and would leave American families less healthy and at risk in the event of a public health emergency.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration. We urge you to maintain the investment in the Prevention and Public Health Fund and to reject any efforts to eliminate any portion of 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