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Protect, Prevent, Live Well

January 25, 2010

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

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 ensure that Congress sends comprehensive health reform legislation to the president in the coming weeks.

Congress has come further than ever before to passing comprehensive and affordable health reform legislation with an emphasis on changing from a system that focuses on treating the sick to one that focuses on keeping people healthy. We must expand affordable health insurance coverage to those who are uninsured, provide funding for public health and prevention activities, implement much needed insurance and coverage reforms, strengthen the Medicare system and enhance the health care and public health workforce. While the political dynamics of passing a bill may be challenging, we cannot allow politics to derail the much needed reform the American people need and deserve.

The problems with our system that need to be addressed are only getting worse: the uninsured still die prematurely at unacceptable rates by the thousands; wellness and preventive care is often available too late; the economics of the current system still do not work for individuals, business or government; the value we get for the cost is highly variable. As each day passes and more people lose their job and access to employee-sponsored health care, the problems and stresses on the health system will only get worse.

Thank you for your ongoing work to reform the nation's health system. We understand that the current proposals before Congress may not be the perfect solution, and there are many components we would like to see changed, but we believe it represents an enormous step forward. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the final bill sent to the president contains the strongest possible public health and prevention provisions to improve the health of the American people and moves us closer to providing comprehensive and affordable health coverage for all.

Sincerely,

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

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

Cc: The Honorable Barack Obama
The Honorable Harry Reid