



American
Public Health
Association

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Protect, Prevent, Live Well

May 9, 2012

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

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 in strong opposition to the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act. This misguided legislation would not solve our nation's deficit problems and instead would impose significant cuts to important safety net programs, cut public health funding and set the country on a dangerous path toward deeper cuts in nondefense discretionary spending down the line.

This legislation would slash critical investments in federal programs, including repealing the Prevention and Public Health Fund, an 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. Eliminating this funding would derail public health activities in communities across the country and would leave American families less healthy and at higher risk in the event of a public health emergency.

The proposal contains \$36 billion in cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a devastating reduction that would eliminate benefits to nearly 2 million people who currently depend on the program for food assistance. It would eliminate grants to states to create their own health insurance exchanges, a key provision in the Affordable Care Act. The proposal would also cut funding for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program by modifying payment rates to providers, eliminating services for an estimated 300,000 children.

Finally, the proposal would combine the defense and nondefense spending caps included in the Budget Control Act for 2013 and reduce the combined cap by \$19 billion – leaving critical public health programs at risk of deeper cuts.

We ask you to oppose the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act and work instead to develop a bipartisan and balanced deficit reduction plan that protects public health and prevention programs, truly strengthens the Medicare, Medicaid and CHIP programs and supports efforts to make comprehensive health insurance coverage available to all Americans.

Sincerely,

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

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