October 4, 2011

Dear Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction Member:

As leaders of national organizations, we would like to express our strong support for sufficiently funding the nation’s public health programs, and in particular, maintaining the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Fund), an unprecedented investment in national, state, and local efforts to prevent disease and reduce long-term health costs. We were disappointed that the President’s deficit reduction plan included cuts to the Prevention Fund, which would result in a 25 percent reduction in this investment by FY 2015, severely impacting our efforts to curb chronic disease. We urge you to maintain our investment in the Fund and produce a final deficit reduction plan that recognizes the importance of prevention.

Nearly 700 national, state, and local organizations support the Fund as a primary vehicle for making public health investments that would create jobs and help to lower long-term health care costs. The full list of groups in support of the Fund can be viewed at http://healthyamericans.org/health-issues/protecting-the-prevention-and-public-health-fund/recent-organizational-letters-in-support-of-prevention-fund/state-by-state-groups-supporting-aca-prevention-fund. The Fund fills a role that has the support of the American people - a public opinion survey conducted by Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that 71 percent of Americans favored an increased investment in disease prevention.

As you know, billions of dollars in mandatory funding are spent each year through Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal health care programs to pay for health care services once patients develop an acute illness, disability, injury, or chronic disease and present for treatment in our health care system. Yet prior to the creation of the Fund, there was no corresponding reliable investment in efforts to promote wellness, prevent disease, and protect against public health or bioterrorism emergencies. At a time when today's children are in danger of becoming the first generation in American history to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents, we need to get serious as a nation about our commitment to prevention, wellness, and preparedness.

We know you have already received testimony from the Congressional Budget Office regarding the projected growth in federal health care spending and its impact on the deficit. If we are committed to addressing long-term entitlement spending, upfront investment in prevention via discretionary public health programs and the Fund represents our best opportunity to improve health and lower health care costs for the federal government and American businesses. We already know the potential return on investment – a 2008 study by Trust for America’s Health concluded that an investment of $10 per person per year in proven community-based programs to increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and prevent smoking and other tobacco use could save the country more than $15.6 billion annually within five years. This is a return of $5.60 for

---

1 Congressional Budget Office, Statement of Douglas W. Elmendorf, Director: Confronting the Nation’s Fiscal Policy Challenges, before the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, September 13, 2011.
every dollar invested.\textsuperscript{2} According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Partnership for Prevention, investing in the health of Americans will improve the bottom line for businesses by lowering health care costs, reducing absenteeism, and improving productivity.\textsuperscript{3}

We also know that doing nothing is not an option. A recently published study looking at the impact of the obesity epidemic alone estimates that Americans will spend as much as an additional $66 billion per year in medical costs in this country by 2030 – over half of which would be borne by the Medicare program. By comparison, if we take action to prevent obesity and reduce the prevalence of related chronic disease and illness, the study estimates that we could achieve significant savings for both private payers and federal and states’ governments – even a 1 percent reduction in the average body mass index (BMI) of Americans could result in as many as 2.4 million avoided cases of diabetes, 1.7 million cases of cardiovascular disease, and 127,000 cases of cancer in the next two decades. The results would be even more dramatic with further success.\textsuperscript{4}

States and communities are already using Prevention Fund dollars to build epidemiology and laboratory capacity to track and respond to disease outbreaks, train the nation's public health workforce, modernize vaccine systems, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, reduce tobacco use, promote behavioral health, prevent injuries, help control the obesity epidemic, and build the evidence base to continually enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of these public health programs.

The Fund guarantees an ongoing commitment to prevention unprecedented in today's "sick care" system, and eliminating it would be an enormous step backward in our progress on cost containment, public health modernization, and wellness promotion. It would also threaten or eliminate the jobs that have already been created by this Fund. Recently released data finds that we’ve already seen a significant downturn in the nation’s public health workforce. A total of 19 percent of the local public health workforce was lost between 2008 and 2010, and among state health departments, nearly 90 percent of agencies cut services. These cuts threaten the air we breathe, the food we eat, and expand the risk of infectious diseases and disasters that could claim many lives.

Once again, as you deliberate strategies to reduce our nation’s long-term deficit, we urge you to continue our investment in the Prevention and Public Health Fund. A sensible plan for deficit reduction should recognize that prevention is the key to lowering health care costs and creating a long-term path to a healthier and economically sound America.

Sincerely,

\textsuperscript{2} Trust for America's Health, \textit{Prevention for a Healthier America}, July 2008. \url{http://healthyamericans.org/reports/prevention08/}
Normandie Nigh
Chief Executive Officer
A World Fit For Kids!

Nancy Chapman, RD, MPH
President
Advocates for Better Children’s Diets

Mark Ishaug
President and Chief Executive Officer
AIDS United

Leeann Hall
Executive Director
Alliance for a Just Society

O. Marion Burton, MD FAAP
President
American Academy of Pediatrics

E. Paul Roetert, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Geraldine “Polly” Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN
Chief Executive Officer
American Association of Colleges of Nursing

Lucinda L. Maine, PhD, RPh
Executive VP and Chief Executive Officer
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

Roberta Carlin, MS, JD
Executive Director
American Association on Health and Disability

Dr. John Seffrin
Chief Executive Officer
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
Ed Grandi
Executive Director
American Sleep Apnea Association

John H. Klippel, MD
President and Chief Executive Officer
Arthritis Foundation

Kathy Lim Ko
President and Chief Executive Officer
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Allison L. Lewis
Executive Director
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research

Katrina Crist, MBA
Chief Executive Officer
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Jeffrey Caballero
Executive Director
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Susan M. Swider, PhD, APHN-BC
President
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators

Michael Fraser, PhD, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs

Scott J. Becker, MS
Executive Director
Association of Public Health Laboratories

Harrison C. Spencer, MD, MPH, CPH
President and Chief Executive Officer
Association of Schools of Public Health

Christine Wood
Executive Director
Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors
John Auerbach, MBA
President
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Paul E. Jarris, MD, MBA
Executive Director
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Karen Probert
Executive Director
Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors

Robert Bernstein, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Matthew L. Myers
President
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Karen Licitra
Board Chair
Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund

Lorren Sandt
Executive Director
Caring Ambassadors Program, Inc.

JoEllen Tarallo-Falk, Ed.D., MCHES
Executive Director
Center for Health and Learning

Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Center for Science in the Public Interest

James C. Waul
Administrative Assistant
Children's Dental Health Project
Emily J. Holubowich  
Executive Director  
Coalition for Health Funding

Lisa Simpson, MB, BCh, MPH  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Coalition for Health Services Research

Vincent Lafronza, Ed.D.  
President  
CommonHealth ACTION

Don Mathis  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Community Action Partnership

Robert Restuccia  
Executive Director  
Community Catalyst

Lark Galloway-Gilliam  
Executive Director  
Community Health Councils

Leeann Hall  
Executive Director  
Community Organizations in Action

Kathy Burgoyne, PhD  
Vice President  
Health Equity Partners  
Comprehensive Health Education Foundation

Adam Perlman, MD  
Chair  
Consortium of Academic Health Centers for Integrative Medicine

Debra Fraser Howze  
Senior Vice President, Orasure Technologies  
Corporate Hepatitis Alliance
Patrick J. McConnon, MPH
Executive Director
Council of State and Territorial
Epidemiologists

Susan Goekler
Executive Director
Directors of Health Promotion and
Education

Allan Clear
Executive Director
Harm Reduction Coalition

Leslie Spencer, Ph.D.
Interim Chairperson of the Board of
Directors
Health Promotion Advocates

Laurie Stillman
Chief Strategy and Policy Officer
Health Resources in Action

Mary R. Grealy
President
Healthcare Leadership Council

Emily Cook
Vice President, Government Markets
Healthways, Inc.

Jane Pan
Executive Director
Hepatitis B Initiative of Washington, D.C.

Ponni Perumalswami, MD
Principal Investigator
Hepatitis Outreach Network

Andrea Weddle
Executive Director
HIV Medicine Association
James M. Hughes, MD, FIDSA
President
Infectious Diseases Society of America

Vincent Lafronza, Ed.D.
President
Institute for Public Health Innovation

Janet R. Kahn, PhD LMT
Executive Director
Integrated Healthcare Policy Consortium

Joe Moore
President and Chief Executive Officer
International Health Racquet & Sportsclub Association

Sam Blair
Network Director
Main Street Alliance

Dr. Jennifer L. Howse
President
March of Dimes Foundation

Harry MacMillan
Executive Director
MEND Foundation

Julie M. Scofield
Executive Director
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors

Robert M. Pestronk
Executive Director
National Association of County and City Health Officials

Ron Manderscheid, PhD
Executive Director
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors
Marie M. Fallon, EdD  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Association of Local Boards of Health

Hutson W. Inniss  
Executive Director  
National Coalition for LGBT Health

Keith Mason  
Executive Director  
National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention

Joseph Kimbrell, MA, MSW  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Network of Public Health Institutes

Tine Hansen-Turton, MGA, JD  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Nursing Centers Consortium

Lark Galloway-Gilliam  
President  
National REACH Coalition

Martha Saly  
Director  
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable

The Rev. Douglas A. Greenaway  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National WIC Association

Debbie I. Chang, MPH  
Vice President, Policy and Prevention  
Nemours

Michael Mawby  
Chief Government Affairs Officer  
Novo Nordisk
Jud Richland, MPH  
President  
Partnership for Prevention

Carolyn R. Aldige  
President and Founder  
Prevent Cancer Foundation

Larry Cohen  
Executive Director  
Prevention Institute

Dana Van Gorder  
Executive Director  
Project Inform

Ron Bialek, MPP  
President  
Public Health Foundation

Mary Pittman  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Public Health Institute

Marice Ashe, JD, MPH  
Executive Director  
Public Health Law & Policy

Ellen Rautenberg  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Public Health Solutions

Lois Uttley  
Co-Founder  
Raising Women’s Voices for the Health Care We Need

Deb Hubsmith  
Director  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Amber N. Williams  
Executive Director  
Safe States Alliance
Sarah E. Samuels, DrPH
President
Samuels & Associates

Steven M. Gordon, MD
President
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America

Elaine Auld, MPH, MCHES
Chief Executive Officer
Society for Public Health Education

Lisa A. Levine, CAE
President
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association

Ruth T. Perot
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.

Mickey S. Urdea, Ph.D.
Chief Scientific Officer and Chairman
Tethys Bioscience, Inc.

Michael Ruppal
Executive Director
The AIDS Institute

James P. Firman, Ed.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
The National Council on the Aging

Jeffrey Levi, PhD
Executive Director
Trust for America’s Health

J. Robinson Lynch
President and Chief Executive Officer
VSP Vision Care

Neil Nicoll
President and Chief Executive Officer
YMCA of the USA