



**PDF Internet Copy
www.FundCDC.org**

This letter was sent to several members of Congress. Please see page four for the full list of recipients.

February 17, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Room 722 Hart SOB
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Room 304 Russell SOB
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Protect the Prevention and Public Health Fund

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Shelby:

In October 2009, many of the bipartisan signatures to this letter wrote to the leadership of both parties in Congress to strongly encourage those debating health reform legislation to remember the importance of disease control and prevention. We are pleased that the Prevention and Public Health Fund was formally established. Today we write to the new leadership in Congress asking that congressional leaders pledge to oppose efforts that would cut or divert dollars away from the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Similarly, using the Fund to backfill cuts to existing health programs would also negate this effort to protect the health of the nation.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has estimated that Americans spent \$2.5 *trillion* on health care in 2009 – a growth of 5.7 percent in a year that otherwise saw very little inflation. Of this amount, roughly 70 percent was utilized to treat preventable diseases or to manage preventable adverse health conditions.

Trend lines for many preventable and costly conditions are headed in the wrong direction. While the growth of disease prevalence is due in part to our aging population, it is also true that our young generation may be the first in the history of the United States to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Clearly, we can no longer spend exorbitantly to treat disease while ignoring disease prevention.

With statistics like these, many would expect policy makers to place a greater focus on keeping Americans healthy. Yet we spend only two or three pennies of each health care dollar on prevention. Even this 3 percent number may be a charitable estimate, given that much of this is spent on what is commonly referred to as *clinical preventive services*, or tests administered by health care providers to gauge the degree of disease onset in a patient. These hospital or clinic-based tests are an invaluable part of assessing overall health, but they are not forward thinking or as much “preventive” as they are “preemptive” of a more dramatic outcome.

Primary prevention programs work at the community level and employ local public health experts to control diseases before they send people to a hospital. This unique blend of federal expertise, data and funding with local boots-on-the-ground experts make up a meager portion of our total prevention dollar. The “core programs” of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for example, account for only about 0.4 percent of all federal health spending.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund amounts to congressional recognition that many of the cost-drivers in our health system are conditions that could be best addressed through federal partnerships with local prevention efforts. Protecting the public from infectious diseases that cross our borders and state lines, combating chronic diseases, vaccinating the public, tracking disease outbreaks at the street level, supporting tobacco control and cessation programs, undertaking public health research and injury prevention campaigns — these are just some of the valuable efforts the Fund may champion in the years ahead.

We are in an era of priority setting and budget cutbacks. With that in mind, imagine if our annual spending on health care could miraculously remain flat for a decade. Cumulative U.S. health expenditures would still reach \$25 *trillion* by 2021. Meanwhile, the Fund’s \$15 billion price tag over that same 10-year timeframe would represent a scant half of one percent of this impossibly conservative, multi-trillion dollar health spending estimate. We will certainly spend more to treat illness, especially if we do little to address preventable conditions.

We are concerned by several recent events which show the future of the Fund is not clear:

- Members of Congress have offered amendments on both the House and Senate floor that would gut the Fund and use the money for other non-health purposes. More than 45 Senators voted in favor of a Prevention Fund-gutting amendment in the Senate last year.
- In August of 2010, the Obama Administration proposed cutting back its original 2011 budget request for the CDC by nearly \$250 million, the same amount provided to prevention efforts by the Fund under the 2010 budget just months earlier. Rather than supplementing our prevention efforts, the added 2010 Prevention Fund dollars would effectively supplant our prevention efforts if this proposal were adopted by Congress.
- And finally, many in Washington have repeatedly misrepresented the Fund by rhetorically implying that these dollars will be used for nothing more than building “bike paths and jungle gyms.” A look at the details of the proposed FY 2011 Senate LHHS funding bill, which laid out a scenario for these funds, shows that this is simply not true.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund represents a chance to preserve and protect the health of our population and is too important to be carved up, used to supplant existing dollars or scrapped altogether.

We ask that you respond to this letter, pledging that you will not endorse or support efforts to scale back or redirect the Prevention and Public Health Fund. We also encourage you to ask the other leaders of your party to make the same pledge. Any responses to this letter should be sent to the Campaign for Public Health, which will post replies to this letter on its website.

A bipartisan delegation of signatories to this letter may request meetings with editorial boards in the coming months in an effort to highlight the importance of the Prevention Fund. We respectfully request a response to this letter prior to March 1, 2011.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund's resources are sorely needed to address so many preventable health issues facing our population. We ask that you agree to let the fund work as intended. It is time we work in a bipartisan manner to bolster our nation's disease control and prevention efforts.

Sincerely,

Kenneth S. Apfel, *former Commissioner of the Social Security Administration and former Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Oxiris Barbot, M.D., *Commissioner, Baltimore City Health Department*

Georges C. Benjamin, M.D., *former Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and former Acting Commissioner of the Health Department, District of Columbia*

Karen K. Butler, *Interim Director of Public Health and Commissioner of Health, Cleveland Department of Public Health*

S. Ward Casscells, M.D., *former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs*

Bechara Choucair, M.D., *Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health*

Bob England, M.D., M.P.H., *Director, Maricopa County Department of Public Health*

Thomas A. Farley, M.D., M.P.H., *New York City Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene*

Marty Fenstersheib, M.D., M.P.H., *Health Officer for Santa Clara County*

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed., *Executive Director, Boston Public Health Commission*

Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., *Health Officer and Director of Public Health, Los Angeles County, member, IOM, founding member of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, Chair, Secretary's Expert Advisory Committee in the 2020 Health Objectives and Chair, Community Preventive Services Task Force*

David Fleming, M.D., *Director and Health Officer, Seattle & King County Department of Health, former Deputy Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Bill Foege, M.D., M.P.H., *former Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Steven K. Galson, M.D., *former Acting Surgeon General*

Julie L. Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H., *former Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

George E. Hardy, Jr., M.D., *former Assistant Surgeon General, former Assistant Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, former Health Officer for the Jefferson County Department of Health in Birmingham*

John H. Klippel, MD, *former clinical director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, president and CEO of the Arthritis Foundation*

Jeffrey P. Koplan, M.D., M.P.H., *former Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Michael T. Osterholm, Ph.D., M.P.H., *former Special Advisor to then–Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson on issues related to bioterrorism and public health preparedness*

The Honorable John Edward Porter, J.D., *former member of Congress and Chairman of the United States House of Representatives Labor, Health and Humans Services and Education Appropriations Committee*

William L. Roper, M.D., M.P.H., *former Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D., *former Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs and Chief Medical Officer for the US Department of Homeland Security and former Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*

David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D., *former Surgeon General, Assistant Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services and Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Donald F. Schwarz, M.D., M.P.H., *Deputy Mayor for Health and Opportunity and Health Commissioner, City of Philadelphia*

John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., *member, Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health and chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society*

The Honorable Louis Stokes, *former member of Congress and member of the United States House of Representatives Labor, Health and Humans Services and Education Appropriations Committee*

The Honorable Louis Sullivan, M.D., *former Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, President Emeritus of Morehouse School of Medicine*

Stephen L. Williams, M.Ed., M.P.A., *Director, Houston Department of Health and Human Services*

Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D., *former Director, National Institutes of Health*

This letter was also sent to:

SENATE

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye

The Honorable Richard Shelby

The Honorable Tom Harkin

The Honorable Thad Cochran

The Honorable Harry Reid

The Honorable Mitch McConnell

HOUSE

Speaker of the House John Boehner

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

The Honorable Hal Rogers

The Honorable Norm Dicks

The Honorable Denny Rehberg

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro

The Honorable Mike Enzi

The Honorable Charles Rangel