

October 14, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As health reform legislation moves forward, the Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition of Washington State, an alliance of organizations committed to preventing childhood obesity by fostering improved health and greater equity, urges you to ensure that strong provisions for community prevention are included in the legislation. Community prevention is a fundamental component of a successful comprehensive health reform approach.

A comprehensive health framework that emphasizes prevention and wellness can significantly alleviate the social and financial costs associated with sickness and health care by keeping people from getting sick and injured *in the first place*. Community prevention enables the health care system to run more effectively by reducing the burden on emergency departments, clinical and in-patient care. A study authored by Trust for America's Health, the Prevention Institute and the Urban Institute shows that a small \$10 per capita investment in community prevention can save more than \$16 billion annually in health care costs within the first five years.

Both the Senate HELP Committee's *Affordable Health Choices Act* and the House Tri-Committee's *America's Affordable Health Choices Act* would establish Community Transformation Grants to address the community level factors that support health and equity. This program should be maintained in the bill in order to support community efforts to engage in quality prevention. The bills establish a Prevention and Public Health Fund to make sure that health reform not only improves health care access and quality but also invests in improving America's health. These bills also include the establishment of a National Prevention and Wellness Strategy, which signals high level inter-agency commitment to supporting communities that foster health and equity.

As preventable illnesses and injuries are the most significant drivers of increasing health care costs, it is essential that we reorient our health care system from an after-the-fact approach to one that focuses on keeping people healthy in the first place. As an organization engaged with numerous successful community, philanthropic, and government prevention initiatives around Washington State, we have seen the value and vitality of prevention and equity efforts in improving health across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines.

We urge you to communicate your support for meaningful prevention provisions, including Community Transformation Grants, a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy, and a Prevention and Public Health Fund, with Congressional leadership.

Sincerely,

Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition -- Washington State

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD COALITION	AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS, WA CHAPTER
AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION	AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION
BICYCLE ALLIANCE	CAMP FIRE USA CENTRAL PUGET SOUND COUNCIL
CASCADE BICYCLE CLUB EDUCATION FOUNDATION	COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION FOUNDATION
CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE	COMMUNITY CHOICES (CLARK COUNTY)
FEET FIRST	GROUP HEALTH COOPERATIVE
HOPE HEART INSTITUTE	MARY BRIDGE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL & HEALTH CTR
ODESSA BROWN CHILDREN'S CLINIC	PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON
PUBLIC HEALTH SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY	REV IT UP! YAKIMA COUNTY
SEATTLE CHILDREN'S	SKAGIT COUNTY HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PROJECT
TACOMA PIERCE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT	TRANSPORTATION CHOICES
TREE SWING	WA ASSOC OF COMMUNITY & MIGRANT HEALTH CTRS
WA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL WIC AGENCIES	WA COALITION FOR PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
WA DENTAL SERVICE FOUNDATION	WA HEALTH FOUNDATION
WA RECREATION & PARK ASSOCIATION	WA SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION
	WA STATE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS
WA STATE DAIRY COUNCIL	WA STATE PTA
WA STATE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION	YMCA – GIG HARBOR

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