



October 23, 2009

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the many thousands of families whose children have special health care needs, I am writing to ask that you ensure inclusion of, and mandatory funding for, a Prevention and Public Health Fund in health reform legislation.

As you know, both the House and Senate health care reform bills would create a Prevention and Public Health Fund that would provide a sustained investment in the nation's public health infrastructure, so that critically needed resources can be devoted to the promotion of health, and the prevention of disease and injury.

Children and youth with special health care needs stand to benefit from these prevention and wellness provisions to an even greater extent than their healthier counterparts. Many children and youth with special health care needs, such as asthma or suppressed immune systems, are more vulnerable to the complications of contagious diseases like the H1N1 virus or food-borne pathogens. With a more robust public health infrastructure, the spread of such diseases can be more effectively prevented.

Moreover, an enhanced public health system may serve to reduce the number of children and youth who develop special health care needs. For example, if more women received prenatal care, some of the congenital causes of compromised health could be prevented. Further, more extensive injury prevention programs will help children and youth avoid permanent disabilities caused by trauma, such as brain injury and paralysis resulting from automobile and bicycle crashes.

Again, we urge you to ensure that the final version of health care reform legislation includes a strong commitment to improving the public health infrastructure, so that we can truly become a healthier nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sophie Arao-Nguyen".

Sophie Arao-Nguyen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Tom Harkin
The Honorable Henry Waxman