

October 22, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) and the 1,600 public health professionals who lead state efforts to prevent and control chronic diseases, I want to thank you in advance for ensuring that national health reform will expand access to affordable care and make sufficient investments in population-based prevention activities.

Chronic diseases are common, costly and often preventable. They are the single largest cost for healthcare, the primary cause of disability, and pose a major strain on families. The people who are impacted the most and have the highest risk are those least able to afford preventive health care, and most likely to live in unhealthy communities.

Inclusion of the Prevention and Public Health Investment Fund in any final health care reform legislation is a top priority of NACDD. We believe it will provide opportunities for both community based and clinical prevention activities. Both are critical components to health reform. There are many success stories to document the effectiveness of clinical prevention like cancer screening and diabetes management.

States are also showing successes associated with community prevention, such as policy change for healthier school environments, healthier menus for senior citizens, creating linkages between health providers and community resources that increase physical activity, good nutrition, and the reduction of tobacco use. Success stories from every state can be found at www.chronicdisease.org.

Chronic Disease professionals have evidenced-based cost avoidance strategies ready to scale up in communities across America if resources become available. Fewer people with diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases mean fewer families with devastating financial burdens in managing diseases and complications. It also means healthier schools, workplaces, and communities. All of the aforementioned are possible using interventions supported by science and a cadre of trained professionals at the state and local level. With your leadership, the nation can take steps to help assure a stable

funding stream to rebuild the capacity of state and local public health systems to address this looming health care crisis.

Again, thank you for making health reform a top priority of your Administration. The staff and members of NACDD are available to you and your staff at any time should you need additional information on the impact of chronic disease programs.

Sincerely,

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