



National Recreation and Park Association

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October 15, 2009

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

Dear Mr. President:

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) would like to express our strong support for the inclusion of prevention and public health provisions in the emerging health reform bills currently working their way through Congress. We were especially pleased with the provisions contained in the Senate HELP Committee version S. 1679 which creates a Prevention and Public Health Investment Fund and also creates Community Transformation Grants that seek to strengthen community-based initiatives aimed at combating chronic disease through building healthy communities and promoting healthier lifestyles. Additionally, we applaud the vision to establish a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy and hope that as your Administration works with Congress to finalize the health reform bill that you will also encourage inclusion of these provisions.

NRPA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization composed of more than 21,000 professionals, citizen advocates, educators, student members and has a reach of over 200,000 parks and recreation advocates. NRPA works to advance public parks, recreation, and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people and represents the majority of public park and recreation agencies that touch the lives of over 300 million people in the United States each year.

Health care spending in the United States totals more than \$2.2 trillion. What is even more startling is that 75 percent of this amount (\$1.65 trillion) is associated with the treatment of chronic disease. We can no longer afford to be a country that simply treats chronic disease; we must now turn our efforts to proactively preventing the onset of these diseases and conditions that are taking the lives of children and adults, exponentially increasing health care costs and impacting our country's economic growth.

While obesity and chronic disease are national epidemics, they must be combated through community-based prevention activities. A recent report 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 \$16 billion annually within five years. That is a return of \$5.60 for every \$1 spent.

Implementing community-based prevention activities will require collaboration among federal agencies and federally-supported prevention programs. We were pleased to see that the National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy, outlined in S.1679, addresses these issues while also proposing the development of measurable actions to carry out the strategy. We were also pleased that

the bill seeks to expand prevention funding by providing a dedicated source of funding through the development of a Prevention and Public Health Investment Fund.

Again, we would like to thank you for recognizing the importance of prevention and wellness and encourage you to invest in community-based prevention activities by ensuring the inclusion of such provisions in the legislation you sign into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Tulipane".

Barbara Tulipane, CAE