



October 15, 2009

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

Dear President Obama,

As health reform legislation moves forward in both the House and the Senate, the Public Health Institute expresses strong support for the public health and prevention provisions included in the *Senate HELP Committee's Affordable Health Choices Act* and the *House Tri-Committee's America's Affordable Health Choices Act*. Sustained investment in community prevention, wellness, and public health programs is essential if we are to have comprehensive health reform that will help in the fight against chronic disease, enhance quality of life, and reduce health care costs for millions of Americans.

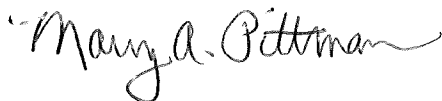
The Public Health Institute (PHI) is a leading independent, nonprofit organization with over 40 years of experience in promoting health, well being, and quality of life for people throughout California and across the nation. We commend your efforts towards reforming our health care system that fails to meet the needs of so many Americans. However, we also believe that true health reform must extend beyond expanding insurance for health care access and must also promote healthy living and prevent illness in the first place.

PHI supports the creation of a National Prevention and Wellness Strategy to define a clear vision for attaining measurable health improvements. A national agenda must establish the precise goals and metrics to ensure the coordination of effective prevention and wellness activities that reduce disparities, improve health, and link to long-term cost savings. Second, a comprehensive national strategy will only prove successful given the reliable source of core funding necessary to support ongoing public health functions. 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 and a Prevention and Public Health Fund to provide ongoing investments for America's health. These funding streams must be maintained in the final health reform legislation to fully attain long-term medical cost reductions and health improvements.

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Americans deserve a system that works to keep them healthy from the start. Your support for community prevention and wellness is critical. As Congress begins the next stage in the legislative process we urge the Administration to affirm its support for the National Prevention and Wellness Strategy, Community Transformation Grants, and the Prevention and Public Health Fund as essential elements of a health reform agenda necessary to improve health outcomes, quality, and equity.

Sincerely,



Mary A. Pittman DrPH
President & CEO
Public Health Institute

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