

October 19, 2009

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

Dear President Obama:

As health reform legislation moves forward in the House and the Senate, Public Health Solutions applauds your efforts to reform the health care system and expresses strong support for the creation of a *National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy* and a *Prevention and Public Health Fund* in any final health care reform legislation.

Public Health Solutions is a nonprofit organization that develops, implements, and advocates dynamic solutions to prevent disease and improve community health. We conduct comprehensive research providing insight on public health issues, create and manage community health programs, and provide services to organizations to address public health challenges. Programs of Public Health Solutions address critical public health needs such as maternal and child health, nutrition, access to health insurance, HIV prevention and care, and smoking cessation. Public Health Solutions, formerly known as Medical and Health Research Association or MHRA, has served New York City since 1957.

A comprehensive health care system that emphasizes prevention and wellness can significantly alleviate the social and financial costs associated with illness and health care by keeping people from getting sick and injured in the first place. Community-based prevention measures enable the health care system to run more effectively by reducing the burden on emergency departments, clinical services, and in-patient care. While the cost of prevention is low, the payoff can be significant. Studies have shown that a small investment in prevention can save billions of dollars annually in health care costs.

Prevention and wellness policies must incorporate not only vital clinical preventive services but also initiatives designed to promote healthy lifestyles and communities. A *National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy* would facilitate the coordination of health policy across local and state governments and allow the establishment of national health priorities, goals, and objectives.

A stable, reliable funding stream for community-based prevention and wellness efforts such as the proposed *Prevention and Public Health Fund* is essential to sustain the work of local and state health departments and community-based prevention activities that are beyond the reach of the medical care system.

Both the *Senate HELP Committee's Affordable Health Choices Act* and the *House Tri-Committee's America's Affordable Health Choices Act* include provisions for a national prevention strategy and prevention public health fund. As these bills move forward in the House and Senate, you must make clear your insistence on the inclusion of these provisions in the final health reform legislation.

Thank you for making comprehensive health care reform a top domestic priority of your administration. As you continue working to guarantee that every American has access to quality, affordable health care and public health services, we at Public Health Solutions urge you to ensure that a greater investment in effective community-based wellness and prevention is part of the strategy to improve the quality and reduce the cost of our nation's health system. It is also the humanitarian and ethically right thing to do!

Sincerely,



Ellen Rautenberg  
President and CEO  
Public Health Solutions