

August ____, 2010

Dear Senator:

As the Senate considers the *Small Business Jobs and Credit Act* (H.R. 5297), the undersigned organizations strongly urge you to **oppose** the use of the Prevention and Public Health Fund from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) as an offset for an amendment offered by Senator Johanns (No. 4531). Such an action would virtually eliminate the Fund, and mark a severe blow to this monumental commitment to prevention and public health under the Act.

ACA included historic reforms that have the potential to transform our health system. For too long, we have focused spending on treating people once they are sick rather than preventing illness in the first place. The Prevention and Public Health Fund (Fund) is urgently needed to address the many emerging health threats our country faces and the persistent chronic disease rates that we must begin to control. The Fund is intended to ensure a coordinated, comprehensive, sustainable, and accountable approach to improving our country's health outcomes through the most effective prevention and public health programs.

ACA clearly states that the money be used "for programs authorized by the Public Health Service Act, for prevention, wellness, and public health activities." The money would be strategically used to support disease prevention by promoting access to vaccines, building the public health workforce, and investing in community-based prevention. Furthermore, the Act specifically states that community-based prevention funding must only support evidence-based prevention programs, which have been shown through scientific research to reduce chronic disease including behavioral health conditions, and address health disparities. Research has shown that effective community level prevention activities focusing on nutrition, physical activity and smoking cessation can reduce chronic disease rates and have a significant return on investment.

Already in Fiscal Year 2010, we have seen these funds invested for programs to promote tobacco control and implement tobacco cessation services and campaigns, as well as obesity prevention, better nutrition and physical activity. The fund has been invested to support state, local and tribal public health efforts to advance health promotion and disease prevention, and to build state and local capacity to prevent, detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. The funds are also being used to support the training of current and next generation public health professionals.

The Fund is a unique opportunity to truly bend the cost curve on health care spending. Seventy-five percent of all health care costs in our country are spent on the treatment of chronic diseases, many of which could be prevented. Further, in a public opinion survey conducted just prior to the passage of the Act, Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) found that 71 percent of Americans favored an increased investment in disease prevention and that disease prevention was one of the most popular components of health reform.

We must ensure that we capitalize on the unprecedented opportunity to transform our public health system by investing in prevention and public health. **We urge you to vote NO on the prevention fund offset within the Johanns amendment.**

Sincerely,

1. AIDS Action
2. American Academy of Pediatrics
3. American Association of Colleges of Nursing
4. American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

5. American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
6. American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
7. American College of Preventive Medicine
8. American Heart Association
9. American Lung Association
10. American Nurses Association
11. American Public Health Association
12. Arthritis Foundation
13. Association of American Medical Colleges
14. Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
15. Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
16. Association of Public Health Laboratories
17. Association of Schools of Public Health
18. Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
19. Building Healthier America
20. California Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (CAADAC)
21. California Center for Public Health Advocacy
22. California Food Policy Advocates
23. California Foundation for the Advancement of Addiction Professionals (CFAAP)
24. California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
25. California School Health Centers Association
26. Center for Science in the Public Interest
27. Coalition for Health Services Research
28. Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
29. CommonHealth ACTION
30. Community Health Partnership: Oregon's Public Health Institute
31. Connecticut Certification Board
32. Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
33. Friends of AHRQ
34. Friends of NCHS
35. Friends of SAMHSA
36. Hepatitis Foundation International
37. Infectious Diseases Society of America
38. Institute for Public Health Innovation
39. International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC)
40. Media Policy Center
41. Mental Health America
42. National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
43. National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
44. National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems
45. National Association of County & City Health Officials
46. National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
47. National Coalition for LGBT Health
48. National Council of La Raza
49. National Network of Public Health
50. National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association Institutes
51. National Nursing Centers Consortium
52. National Rural Health Association
53. Nemours
54. Northwest Federation of Community Organizations
55. Novo Nordisk
56. Partners for a Healthy Nevada
57. Partnership for Prevention
58. Prevention Institute
59. Public Health Foundation
60. Public Health Law and Policy
61. Public Health - Seattle and King County
62. Public Health Solutions
63. REACH U.S. SouthEastern African American Center of Excellence for Elimination of Disparities (REACH U.S. SEA-CEED)
64. RiverStone Health
65. Safe States Alliance
66. Society for Public Health Education
67. The MetroHealth System
68. Trust for America's Health
69. U.S. PIRG
70. Washington Health Foundation
71. YMCA of the USA