

Be Active!

Washington Coalition for **Promoting Physical Activity**

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

Dear President Obama:

As health reform legislation moves forward, the Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity, an organization working to change policies and the built environment to make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to be physically active as part of daily life, urges you to ensure that strong provisions for community prevention are included in the legislation. Community prevention is a fundamental component of a successful comprehensive health reform approach.

A comprehensive health framework that emphasizes prevention and wellness can significantly alleviate the social and financial costs associated with sickness and health care by keeping people from getting sick and injured in the first place. A study authored by Trust for America's Health, the Prevention Institute, and the Urban Institute shows that a \$10 per capita investment in community prevention can save more than \$16 billion annually in health care costs within the first five years.

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 to address the community level factors that support health and equity. The legislation should contain this program in order to support community efforts to engage in quality prevention. The bills establish a Prevention and Public Health Fund to make sure that health reform not only improves health care access and quality but also invests in improving America's health. These bills also include the establishment of a National Prevention and Wellness Strategy, which signals high-level inter-agency commitment to supporting communities that foster health and equity.

It is essential that we reorient our health care system from an after-the-fact approach to one that focuses on keeping people healthy in the first place. As an organization engaged with prevention initiatives around Washington State, we have seen the value of this approach.

We urge you to communicate your support for meaningful prevention provisions, including Community Transformation Grants, a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy, and a Prevention and Public Health Fund, with Congressional leadership.

Sincerely,
Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity

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