



November 23, 2009

Senator Harry Reid
522 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

On behalf of the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), a nonprofit health and nutrition advocacy organization, I applaud you for your leadership on health care reform. We strongly support the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. I also write to urge you to ensure that the prevention and public health fund is preserved during the Senate floor debate on the bill.

For far too long, “prevention” has received meager attention by policy-makers, even though comprehensive, smart prevention programs would improve Americans’ health and save billions of dollars a year in health-care costs.

Preventing illness is the best way to promote health and hold down costs. The preventive approach must become the default—from breastfeeding the young to physical activity among the old. Menu labeling policy, which gives people information they need to take responsibility for their own health, will help people to prevent and manage diet-related diseases. Indeed, considering the soaring costs of medical care, funding expanded coverage (or even maintaining current levels of coverage) will be impossible without making a comprehensive effort to prevent illnesses and, in some cases, treat them more economically.

Please work to protect the prevention and public health fund and other prevention measures currently included in the Senate’s Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act during the floor debate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margo Wootan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Margo G. Wootan, D.Sc.
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Director, Nutrition Policy