



ASSOCIATION OF MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

November 20, 2009

Dear Senator Reid:

On behalf of the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP), we commend your leadership for including preventive and maternal and child health provisions in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act 2009. We are greatly appreciative of the provisions in Title IV - Prevention of Chronic Disease and Improving Public Health, and Title V - Health Care Workforce. We particularly applaud the inclusion of the Maternal, Infant, And Early Childhood Visitation program, which represents an extraordinary investment in assuring the health of women and young children and recognizes the leadership role of state public health agencies in implementing this program.

Additionally, we strongly support the proposed requirements in Title I for all plans to cover preventive health services including screenings provided for in the comprehensive guidelines supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration. We also support the essential benefits requirements to cover primary care, maternity and newborn care, pediatric services (including dental and vision), rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices, and mental health and substance abuse services. All of these are essential to improving the public's health. We also support the proposals promoting medical homes and integrated care in Medicaid, and the development of accountable care organizations to better coordinate care.

The above provisions represent positive steps forward in shifting our health system's focus from treatment to prevention. We congratulate you and your colleagues on moving this bill forward as it would create an unprecedented investment in the health of all Americans and revitalize our nation's severely neglected governmental public health system. Paramount among this effort is the need for adequate resources to improve population health – and that is why our top priority is the inclusion of adequate resources for the Prevention and Public Health Investment Fund in any final legislation.

As important as quality affordable coverage is, it alone will not optimally improve our nation's health unless it is complimented by investments in population-based public health activities that take place in homes, schools, workplaces, houses of worship, and communities. Your bill begins to make these investments, and Title V assures that they are supported by an adequate and trained workforce. We again thank you for your tremendous leadership in assuring that prevention is made the centerpiece of health reform legislation in the Senate.

Please let us know how we can be of assistance, and thanks again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Fraser', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael Fraser, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Senate Finance Committee and Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Members