



Your Liver. Your Life.

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October 14, 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

On behalf of the American Liver Foundation, I am writing to urge the inclusion of strong prevention and wellness provisions in the final health care reform bill. We believe that both the House and Senate Committees have done well to address this important issue and urge that these provisions be included in the final bill.

With approximately 24.5 million Americans chronically infected with the hepatitis B virus and/or the hepatitis C, the nation is faced with a major public health challenge. The best protection from viral hepatitis is better prevention and wellness activities to avoid contracting the infection, but also to slow its progression for those who are infected. In addition to viral hepatitis, fatty liver disease is an emerging health concern that is growing along with the obesity epidemic. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NASH) is a little-understood disease with potentially huge consequences for public health. It occurs mostly in people that have other conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, or high triglycerides, and in its most severe form, is an important factor in generating the need for liver transplantation. NASH is also completely preventable by maintaining a healthy weight and normal triglyceride levels.

It is essential that the United States make a major advance and strong commitment to prevention and wellness programs. Not only will this improve the health of the nation by reducing the incidence of obesity, diabetes and other chronic conditions, but it will substantially contribute to reducing overall health costs. As the House and Senate work towards finalizing health reform, strong support from you and your Administration is important to insure prevention and wellness programs are included in the final legislation.

Thank you for your support for prevention and wellness programs. The American Liver Foundation stands ready to assist you and the Congress in achieving our national health goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allan Wolkoff".

Allan Wolkoff, M.D.  
Chairman of the Board