



Live Well. Health Matters.

July 9, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce
237 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health
2204 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
2109 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nathan Deal
Ranking Member
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health
2133 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Waxman & Pallone and Ranking Members Barton & Deal:

Beach Cities Health District (www.bchd.org) is a public agency in Los Angeles County dedicated to community-based prevention. As you know, high rates of chronic disease are one of the biggest drivers of health care costs in the U.S. Prevention is the key to offsetting the economic impact of chronic diseases and disability on our health care system. Beach Cities Health District strongly supports the public health and prevention provisions included in the House tri-committee health reform mark. Division C, through its creation of a National Prevention and Wellness Strategy and a Public Health Investment Fund will help to reinvigorate our public health system. The Investment Fund would also help finance the delivery of evidence-based community-based prevention and wellness services grants.

Research has shown that effective community level prevention activities focusing on nutrition, physical activity and healthy behavior can reduce chronic disease rates and have a significant return on investment. The effectiveness of these programs increases when they are implanted in the early stage of the life cycle and with parents. Community prevention programs can enhance the effectiveness of preventive screenings by supporting the ability of individuals to follow medical advice and make healthier lifestyle choices. We need a built environment that supports healthy lifestyles and a new mandatory funding stream to ensure greater access to these essential programs.

As you discuss health reform legislation, I hope that you will consider the importance of public health and community-based prevention programs to improving our nation's health. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

Susan M. Burden A.D.

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