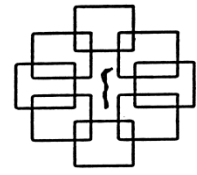


COALITION FOR HEALTH FUNDING



Emily J. Holubowich, MPP, Executive Director

August 6, 2010

Dear Senator:

As the Senate considers the Small Business Jobs and Credit Act (H.R. 5297), the Coalition for Health Funding—a nonprofit alliance of 60 national organizations representing more than 100 million patients and families, health care providers, public health professionals, and scientists—urges you to **oppose the use of the Prevention and Public Health Fund from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) as an offset for an amendment offered by Senator Johanns (No. 4531)**. The Fund should never be used as an offset. Doing so would undermine programs designed to reduce the burden of disease, improve the quality of life, and bend the health care cost curve. Such action would be a true disservice to the American people.

For too long we have paid to treat people already sick rather than prevent costly illnesses. Right now, 75 percent of all health care dollars are spent treating chronic diseases, many of which are preventable. Obesity alone is estimated to cost \$147 billion per year, while the annual cost of treatment, lost productivity, and crime for behavioral health disorders in young people is estimated to be \$247 billion. These chronic diseases cost the United States \$1 trillion in lost productivity each year. The Fund is urgently needed to address these and other public health threats through a coordinated, comprehensive, sustainable, and accountable approach to improving health and curbing costs. Prevention works, it helps to raise the quality of life, and it saves communities precious resources.

The public health infrastructure is continually asked to do more with less. On average, federal investment in the Public Health Service—including NIH, CDC, HRSA, SAMHSA, AHRQ, FDA, and the Indian Health Service—has remained flat in real dollars for the last five years. This erosion of the public health infrastructure is felt in communities across America, with states eliminating hundreds of millions of dollars in prevention and public health programs just last year, and reducing their workforces by 15 percent. These cuts have left communities around the country struggling to deliver basic disease prevention and emergency health preparedness services at a time when the public health infrastructure is already buckling under the weight of ongoing recession, an aging population, rising rates of chronic disease and behavioral health conditions, and a health workforce shortage.

The Fund in FY 2010 is filling these holes left after years of underinvestment, supporting programs to promote tobacco control and cessation and prevent obesity through better nutrition and physical activity. The Fund is supporting state, local, and tribal public health efforts to prevent disease and build capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks. The Fund is also being used to increase the supply of much needed health care providers and public health professionals to deliver needed services. In FY 2011 and beyond, the Fund will be used to support transformative, evidence-based public health and prevention programs that will produce a significant return on investment.

We must ensure that we capitalize on and allow this unprecedented opportunity to transform our public health system and improve the health of those in America. **We urge you to vote NO on the Prevention Fund offset within the Johanns amendment**, and to thwart future efforts to raid the Fund at the expense of people's health and well-being.

Sincerely,

Julio C. Abreu
President

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