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**Public Health**   
Seattle & King County

October 9, 2009

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Public Health – Seattle & King County, the local health department responsible for assuring the health of the 1.9 million residents of Seattle and King County, strongly supports inclusion of a **National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy and a Prevention and Public Health Fund in any final Health Reform legislation.**

In order to create a renewed focus on public health and wellness, we need a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy. Seventy-five percent of health care costs go toward the treatment of chronic diseases, which are the leading causes of deaths in King County. Over half of King County adults are overweight or obese. Obesity alone is estimated to cause 2,500 preventable deaths and \$2 billion in medical expenditures in Washington State, and almost \$147 billion per year nationwide. Chronic diseases cost the U.S. an additional \$1 trillion each year in lost productivity. Injuries are the leading cause of death for Americans ages one through 44 and cost more than \$117 billion per year. Health care costs will never be reduced until we improve the health and safety of Americans.

Achievement of a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy will facilitate coordination of health policy across government to assess our public health status, establish national priorities, and identify health goals and objectives. To implement this Strategy, and to prioritize prevention, we need an expanded and sustainable funding stream to support prevention, wellness, and public health activities.

Toward that end, we applaud the inclusion of a Prevention and Public Health Fund in any final legislation. A portion of this Fund would be authorized to support a Prevention and Wellness Trust, including allocations for core public health infrastructure and activities for state and local health entities; community-based prevention and wellness services; prevention and wellness research; and clinical and community-based prevention task forces.

The Fund would build upon what works, but also test new approaches to promoting prevention and wellness. It would ensure accountability by evaluating new programs that are funded and would enable us to prioritize prevention and health, instead of

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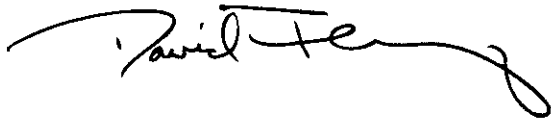
just treatment. Because the prevention needs of the nation may change over time it is necessary to have the flexibility to direct money where it will do the most good, in proven health and safety interventions.

Mr. President, your leadership on Health Reform thus far has been extraordinary.

As you keenly know, we now have the opportunity to make a major course correction in the way our country deals with promoting public health.

I encourage you in the strongest way possible to insist on **inclusion of a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy and a Prevention and Public Health Fund in any final Health Reform legislation.**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Fleming", with a long, sweeping underline.

David Fleming, MD  
Director and Health Officer

cc: Nancy-Ann De Parle, Director, White House Office of Health Reform