

October 13, 2009

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

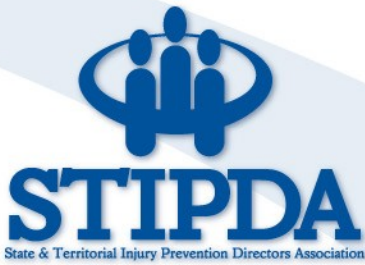
On behalf of the State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association (STIPDA), a national organization of public health injury and violence prevention professionals, we would like to thank you for your leadership and support for wellness and prevention in health reform. We are calling on you to continue to support the National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy and Prevention and Public Health Fund as a critical component of national health reform.

Nationally and in every state in the United States, injuries are the leading cause of death in the first 44 years of a person's life. More than 173,000 people die as a result of injuries and violence each year. Millions more Americans are injured and survive, only to cope with lifelong disabilities. Injuries and violence are a significant financial burden on the U.S. health care system. Each year, nearly 30 million people are treated for injuries in emergency departments across the country – accounting for nearly a third of total emergency department visits annually. Injuries are major causes of hospitalization, disability, and medical care costs for all age groups. **In 2000 alone, Americans suffered injuries resulting in over \$117 billion in medical costs and an estimated \$289 billion in productivity losses.**

Americans sincerely value prevention. According to a study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Trust for America's Health, **Americans rank prevention as the most important health care reform priority** and overwhelmingly support increasing funding for prevention programs. In fact, when evidence-based, prevention strategies are utilized, the estimated return on investment can be substantial. For example, an investment of \$46 for the purchase of one child car seat has been estimated to save \$1,900 in medical and other costs. By investing only \$74 per driver, curfews and provisional licenses for teen drivers can save \$600 per driver. In addition, home visitation programs have been demonstrated to be particularly effective in reducing child abuse and injury, saving between \$2.88 and \$5.70 for every dollar spent.

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Investing in prevention gives all Americans the opportunity to lead healthier lives and ensures our workforce is strong and healthy enough to compete with the rest of the world. By supporting the Public Health Investment Fund and National Prevention and Wellness Strategy, you can help Americans live to their fullest potential by lowering disease rates, decreasing injuries and disabilities, reducing health care costs, and improving the quality of life of children and adults throughout our country.

As the final components of health reform legislation are negotiated, STIPDA urges you support and protect the National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy and Prevention and Public Health Fund.

Yours in prevention,

*Amber N. Williams*

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Executive Director

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