



Protect, Prevent, Live Well

March 30, 2011

Chairman Fred Upton
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Henry Waxman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Joe Pitts
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee
on Health
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee
on Health
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Upton and Pitts and Ranking Members Waxman and Pallone:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals and advocates in the world, I write in strong opposition to several bills before the Subcommittee on Health that would eliminate critical mandatory prevention and public health funding created under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

With the passage of the ACA, Congress made a historic investment in changing our health system from one that focuses on treating the sick to one that focuses on keeping people healthy. The creation of the Prevention and Public Health Fund represents a critical investment in public health that is currently being used to implement evidence-based community health promotion and prevention activities to reduce chronic disease rates that will measurably improve the health of the nation and control health care costs. This funding is being used to bolster our public health infrastructure at the state and local level, increase training capacity for the public health workforce, and to expand public health officials' ability to prevent and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. One of the bills before the Subcommittee would rescind all unobligated funding from the Prevention and Public Health Fund and derail this new commitment to public health and prevention.

APHA also opposes bills that the Subcommittee will consider that would eliminate funding for other important provisions included in the ACA including school-based health centers, state-based exchanges that will help facilitate the purchase of insurance by individuals and small businesses, training the primary care workforce and grants to states for teenage pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted infection prevention programs, including HIV/AIDS. Maintaining these provisions is critical to improving the health of all Americans.

While millions of dollars in mandatory funding is spent on the treatment of illness, chronic diseases and injuries, the ACA marks the first time that dedicated mandatory funding is being directed at preventing disease and strengthen the nation's public health infrastructure. We urge you to oppose efforts to turn back the progress we are making and to reject any legislation that would eliminate or reclassify these important investments in public health and prevention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "G".

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (E)
Executive Director