



March 30, 2011

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, D. 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Pitts
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC. 20515

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

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is very concerned about legislative proposals, like H.R. 1217, to eliminate or reclassify the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Fund).

NACo, the only national organization that represents the nation's 3,068 county governments before the Administration and Congress, enthusiastically supported the creation of the Fund as a dedicated, sustained and predictable investment in community prevention and public health infrastructure and workforce, particularly at the local level. This was due to the conviction of county officials across the country that we must reorient our "sick care" system toward injury and disease prevention and health promotion. Therefore, we respectfully ask that you oppose H.R. 1217 and all other efforts to eliminate or reclassify the Fund.

County health departments are already benefiting from Fund dollars being spent to build epidemiology and laboratory capacity to track and respond to disease outbreaks, train public health workers, prevent HIV/AIDS, reduce tobacco use, and take steps to slow the alarming rise in obesity rates. These investments have been critical as counties have struggled to maintain essential public health services through the current economic downturn, all the while laying off thousands of staff.

Beyond the current crisis, though, we know the Committee is wrestling with how to make medium and long term structural changes to Medicare and Medicaid to slow their rate of growth and preserve them for future beneficiaries. With that in mind, we believe it would be a tragic mistake for you to take away the opportunity we are being afforded by the Fund to prevent the chronic diseases that drive so much of the spending in these entitlement programs.

Again, we urge you to oppose every effort to eliminate, redirect or reclassify the Prevention and Public Health Fund and to renew the partnership with your colleagues in county government to improve the health of the people that we represent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Larry E. Naake'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry E. Naake
Executive Director