

March 18, 2008

The Honorable <Senator>  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator <Last Name>:

As organizations committed to the prevention of disease, disability and premature death, we are writing to urge you to reject the FY09 Budget proposal to eliminate the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant. We urge you instead to continue funding for this important program at the FY 05 appropriated level of \$131 million. This is one of the few grants that allow states to rapidly respond to public health challenges in unique and innovative ways.

Health departments across the country have used their Preventive Health and Health Service Block Grant grants to address their high priority needs in a wide variety of public health issues including heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, physical activity, child safety seat programs, suicide prevention, smoke detector distribution and fire safety programs, adult immunization, oral health, worksite wellness, infectious disease outbreaks, food safety, emergency medical services, safe drinking water, and surveillance needs. In addition, they have used the Block Grant dollars to address newly emerging public health concerns.

States have documented that investment of Block Grant dollars have resulted in improved health outcomes and in many cases significant cost savings. For example, California used a portion of its Block Grant funding to establish a public/private partnership to increase the number of Californians receiving fluoridated water. In December 2007, after ten years of state and local level collaboration, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California began fluoridating its water supply. An additional 18 million Californians now receive fluoridated water.

Similarly, in 2007, the New York Department of Health, using Block Grant dollars, protected children from toys tainted with lead. The New York Department of Health and local health departments sent letters to thousands of physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and child care providers alerting them to the dangers of lead tainted toys. The Department of Health issued an Order for Summary Action to cease the sale and distribution of toy products containing lead. As a result nearly five hundred stores took steps to ensure that lead tainted toys were not sold to parents or children in New York.

In 2006, motor vehicle accidents were the leading cause of death for ages 5-44 and the third leading cause of death of children ages 0-4 in Mississippi. The State Department of Health used Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funds to support the Kids in Safety Seats Program (K.I.S.S.). By distributing safety seats and setting up checkpoints to make sure that children were properly secured, fatalities among children 0-4 decreased 22% from 2000 to 2006.

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services used some of the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funding to establish a community health improvement program in Racine, Wisconsin that focused on decreasing peoples' smoking, cholesterol levels, and alcohol consumption while increasing their physical activity. The program promoted healthy lifestyles through smoking cessation programs, free exercise facilities, and nutrition programs. Between 2000 and 2005, the percentage of overweight and obese adults statewide decreased, the percentage of adults who smoked cigarettes decreased, and the percentage of adults engaging in physical activity increased, improving Wisconsin's overall health.

Again, we urge you to ensure that the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funding is not eliminated in the FY09 appropriations process. It is a critical source of support for our nation's public health system and should, at a minimum, be continued at the FY05 appropriated level. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

We the undersigned:

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Public Health Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Red Cross  
Association for Professionals in Infection Control & Epidemiology  
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of Schools of Public Health  
Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors  
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing  
Association of State & Territorial Local Health Liaison Officials  
Association of State and Territorial Public Health Social Workers  
Brain Injury Association of America  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
Directors of Health Promotion and Education  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors  
National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems  
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors  
National Association of Local Boards of Health  
Society for Public Health Education  
State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials  
Trust for America's Health