

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 13, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
Co-Chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-Chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
129 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Co-Chairs and Members,

As the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction considers proposals to shrink the national deficit by \$1.2 trillion, we, as Members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, respectfully ask that all efforts be made to protect and preserve funding for preventative medicine and prevention efforts, such as the Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund. Though, we fully understand the difficulty in which the Congressional Budget Office may have with scoring savings from prevention efforts, we firmly believe that efforts to keep people from contracting long-term and chronic diseases will have a profoundly positive impact on our nation's physical and fiscal health, and especially that of our constituents.

Evidence-based preventive care and services are effective in not only reducing death, but also they greatly help reduce the onset of chronic conditions or disabilities. Preventive medicine can run the gamut of regular checkups and screenings with a primary care provider, to healthier lifestyles consisting of better eating habits, exercise, and avoiding risky behaviors such as tobacco use or drug and alcohol abuse. Unfortunately, preventative care has long been overlooked as a means to keep people healthy in our country. As a result, we are seeing increases chronic conditions. In fact, 45 percent of Americans have at least one chronic condition, and 26 percent have multiple.

Less than half of Americans with high blood pressure, and less than a third of Americans with high cholesterol have either adequately controlled. Less than half of adults regularly see a primary care provider to get up-to-date on a core set of clinical preventative services such as cancer screenings, immunizations, and general check-ups. This is leading to higher incidences of chronic disease

Contrary to anecdotal wisdom or opinion, the evidence shows that investments in community prevention are cost-effective and save money in avoided health care spending. This benefits federal and state governments and taxpayers in the form of reduced Medicare, Medicaid, and other health program spending but also more importantly, American workers and businesses in the form of lower health care premiums and out-of-pocket expenditures. In fact, a report issued by Trust for America's Health indicated that investing annually as little as \$10 per person in community-based prevention programs would yield decreasing rates chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes. It is worth noting that one out of every five health care dollars annually spent in the United States is spent on the treatment of diabetes.

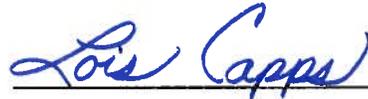
The 2008 report also found that reductions in rates of disease translate into real savings for our health system. Investing \$10 per person per year in community prevention could save the country more than \$16 billion annually within five years - a return on investment of \$5.60 for every \$1 spent. Of the \$16 billion, Medicare could save more than \$5 billion, and Medicaid could save more than \$1.9 billion. Private payers could save more than \$9 billion as well. This underscores the value of the Community Transformation Grant program and other efforts being funded by the Prevention and Public Health Fund and why they are critical to our long-term goal of lowering health care costs.

We respectfully ask that you carefully weigh and exam the net positive impact that preventive care can have on our nation's physical and fiscal health as you examine ways to reduce our deficit. Though you will be faced with many difficult decisions with regards to funding critical programs, we are confident that you will make the right decisions that will set our country's fiscal house in order, while maintaining efforts to prevent and fight the onset of chronic diseases.

Sincerely,



Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress



Lois Capps
Member of Congress

CC: Sen. Max Baucus
Rep. Xavier Becerra
Rep. Dave Camp
Rep. James Clyburn
Sen. John Kerry
Sen. John Kyl
Sen. Rob Portman
Sen. Pat Toomey
Rep. Fred Upton
Rep. Chris Van Hollen