

June 11, 2009

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Obey and Harkin and Ranking Members Tiahrt and Cochran:

The undersigned organizations write to express our strong opposition to the proposed cuts in President Obama's budget proposal to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Marketing (NCHM). NCHM plays a critical role in protecting the public's health by employing innovative and effective communications interventions to deliver crucial and timely public health information to public health professionals, policy makers and the public. In addition NCHM provides support to 16 core public health organizations, many of which have signed this letter, that help to promote CDC's core mission through a variety of programs, direct services, education campaigns and other innovative strategies to protect and improve the public's health.

The president's FY 2010 budget requests \$82.5 million for NCHM, which represents a \$2 million decrease from the FY 2009 level, including a \$1 million cut to NCHM's Partnership Cooperative Agreements. The funding provided to CDC's partners supports a wide range of activities that support CDC's core mission to prevent disease, disability, and premature death, and promote good health. These activities are especially critical given the current focus on prevention in the context of Congressional efforts to reform our nation's health system. The president's budget statement inaccurately states that partners "have other resources for public health activities." In fact, much of the work that is being undertaken by CDC's partners would not happen without CDC's financial support. This proposed cut comes on the heels of an \$8.1 million cut for NCHM in the FY 2009 omnibus bill. We strongly urge you to reject the president's proposed cut and any further cuts to NCHM. In addition, we urge you to instruct CDC to reverse its decision to cut funding to its partners in FY 2009 which CDC is undertaking as a result of the cut to NCHM's budget in the FY 2009 omnibus.

The recent H1N1 flu outbreak highlights the need for using communications services and products in educating the public, public health officials and policy makers about disease surveillance and prevention recommendations, a core function of NCHM. During the recent outbreak, NCHM played a critical role in CDC's emergency communications response activities. The public looked to CDC for timely and accurate information and found it through resources coordinated by NCHM including the CDC website, CDC-INFO which expanded its capability to respond to phone calls and emails, CDC content posted on YouTube and other social media outlets and in the numerous guidance documents, fact sheets and resource materials created for the public, public health workers and officials and public health partners, labs and individual health care providers.

We strongly believe that NCHM must receive the resources it needs to ensure that CDC's public health interventions include strong health communication and marketing science in their development and dissemination to ensure the greatest impact in protecting the public's health. We again urge you to reject the president's proposed cuts to this critical center.

Sincerely,

American Public Health Association  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of Schools of Public Health  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Local Boards of Health  
National Network of Public Health Institutes  
Partnership for Prevention  
Public Health Foundation