



National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

May 10, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

RE: Appointments to Advisory Group on Prevention,
Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the nation's 2800 local health departments, the officers and directors of the National Association of County and City Health Officials thank you for your tireless persistence in advocating Congressional passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and particularly for the Act's investments in public health and population-based prevention. We are writing to urge that you include an experienced representative of local health departments on the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health established by the Act.

The National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council created by the Act is charged with developing a long-needed, comprehensive strategy that will bring together the policies and resources of multiple agencies that have a role in improving the health of the nation. The U.S. Surgeon General in Department of Health and Human Services will chair the new Council, which will be advised by a 25-member group of outside stakeholders.

This approach to coordinated policy development for prevention, engaging many government agencies and their partners in the non-profit and private sectors, is closely analogous to health improvement planning that takes place in counties and cities across the nation, led by the local health official and supported by the resources of local health departments. For this reason, an experienced local health official would be uniquely qualified to contribute to the deliberations of the Advisory Group.

Local health departments are a cornerstone of the nation's public health system. These governmental agencies work every day in their communities to prevent disease, promote wellness, and protect health. They organize community partnerships and facilitate community conversations to create the conditions in which people can be healthy. The work of local health departments improves economic well-being, educational success, and nationwide competitiveness community by community. Among the outcomes of community-wide approaches to prevention have been reduced rates of tobacco use by youth, improved immunization rates among low-income children, more opportunities for better nutrition and physical activity for schoolchildren, and an improved state of preparedness and resiliency when public health emergencies occur.



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Local health department leaders have both the vision and practical experience in implementation that will be invaluable as the nation develops and implements the National Prevention Strategy. NACCHO stands ready to assist you in identifying a qualified representative to the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health and looks forward to active, constructive participation as a stakeholder as you and your Administration undertake this new, critically important activity.

Thank you for your leadership and attention. Please contact NACCHO Executive Director Robert M. Pestronk for further assistance.

Sincerely,



Bruce D. Dart, PhD, MS
President



Robert M. Pestronk, MPH
Executive Director

cc: Secretary Kathleen Sebelius
Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA