



American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
555 11th Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20004
202.661.5700
www.acscan.org

November 10, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
Co-chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Murray, Congressman Hensarling, and members of the Joint Select Committee:

As the representative of millions of cancer patients and survivors throughout the United States, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is deeply concerned about proposals to make deep cuts in the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

Cancer kills more than 1,500 Americans every day – over 570,000 each year. Approximately half of these deaths could be prevented. This year, an estimated 171,000 cancer deaths were caused by tobacco use alone. Another 188,000 cancer deaths were expected to be attributed to poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and obesity-related disease. In this era of budget priority-setting, prevention and public health must remain a national policy priority to save lives and reduce the number of cancer deaths.

The promise of the Prevention and Public Health Fund is that we as a nation would transform health care to resolve crises before they begin and that we would take steps to keep people from getting sick in the first place. It is a fact that diseases that have been conquered in the past – polio, smallpox, tuberculosis and others – no longer present the public health care risk that they once did because of the work we still do to prevent them from occurring. In much the same way, prevention is the real cure for cancer. The Prevention and Public Health Fund will help us transform the social and physical environment leading to a healthier and more productive population.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund is being used to save lives by addressing the greatest modifiable cancer risk factors: tobacco use, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and obesity. For example, in Washington State, funding is being used to address five strategic objectives: tobacco-free living; active and healthy eating; high impact evidence-based clinical and other preventive services; social and emotional wellness; and healthy and safe physical environments. In Texas, funding is being used to improve the health care workforce and ensure that residents have access to evidence-based clinical services such as tobacco quitlines and cancer screenings.

Prevention by itself has the potential to transform our health system in new and innovative ways that will lead to a healthier population and lower health care costs. We urge full funding of the Prevention and Public Health Fund because we know that through cancer prevention we can save thousands of lives every year.

Sincerely,

Christopher W. Hansen
President

CC: The Honorable Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader