

June 14, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye, Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Capitol, Room S-128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Vice Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, and  
Ranking Member, Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education  
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor-HHS-Education  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Inouye, Cochran and Harkin:

We, the 136 undersigned organizations and agencies, write to urge you to provide continued funding in FY2012 for two programs within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that are critical to our efforts to reduce obesity. Specifically, we ask that you provide:

- \$22.7 million for the Healthy Communities Program; and
- \$2.7 million for built environment activities within the National Center for Environmental Health

Obesity is putting a significant strain on our nation's ability to control health care costs. Nearly 17 percent of U.S. medical costs—or \$168 billion each year—can be attributed to obesity. Today, one in every three adults and nearly 1 in five children aged 6-19 are obese. Obesity has been linked to increased risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, arthritis-related disability, and some cancers.

Given our challenging economy and need to reduce the federal deficit, it is even more important that we make smart investments in low-cost solutions with high impact. These two programs within the CDC are critical to efforts to bring our obesity epidemic under control by providing families with the ability to be physically active and access healthy foods.

Since 2003, more than 300 communities of all sizes have been supported by the CDC's Healthy Communities Program. These communities are provided with very modest, one-time start-up grants (of approximately \$50,000) to advance strategies at the community-level that support healthy eating and physical activity, and ultimately reduce chronic disease and obesity. A recent report by the Trust for America's Health concluded that an investment of \$10 per person/per year in proven community-based programs to increase physical activity, improve nutrition and prevent smoking could save the country more than \$16 billion annually within five years. This is a return of \$5.60 for every \$1.

The built environment funding at the CDC has supported the Healthy Community Design Initiative (HCDI), which provides essential national leadership on the impact of the built environment on health, particularly physical activity levels. Staff at HCDI provide expert assistance and consultation to programs and initiatives across the CDC and HHS about the best program and policy approaches to create healthier built environments by providing opportunities and infrastructure for safe walking, bicycling and transit access. HCDI has provided technical assistance, research, support and resources for public health workers on the built environment and health—including more than 500 health and planning professionals who received training in how to conduct Health Impact Assessments. This small \$2.7 million investment is critical to help public health officials, organizations and local communities make improvements to their built environment so that people can build physical activity in their daily lives.

The CDC's budget justification proposes that both of these initiatives be absorbed within the Community Transformation Grants (CTG). While we support CTG, we do not believe they are a replacement for these two initiatives. The President's proposed FY2012 budget describes CTG as a "large-scale" national investment in big cities and large metropolitan areas. Under this description, it will not support the hundreds of communities of all sizes currently supported by the Healthy Communities Program. And without the national expertise and leadership provided by the Healthy Community Design Initiative, we are concerned that the CTG recipients will not have the necessary support to make healthy changes to the built environment.

We ask that you ensure that the CDC's Healthy Communities Program is continued at \$22.7 million and that the CDC's built environment funding is continued at \$2.7 million in FY2012. Together, this \$25 million investment will help promote health and reduce obesity in communities across the country. For additional information, please contact Margo Pedroso, Deputy Director, Safe Routes to School National Partnership at 301-292-1043 or [margo@saferoutespartnership.org](mailto:margo@saferoutespartnership.org).

Sincerely,

**National Organizations**

A World Fit For Kids!

Action for Healthy Kids

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

America Bikes

America Walks

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, REcreation and Dance

American Council on Exercise (ACE)

American Society of Landscape Architects

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals

ATIV Software

Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development

Challenged Conquistadors, Inc.

Children's Environmental Health Center, Mount Sinai School of Medicine  
Community Food Security Coalition  
Congress for the New Urbanism  
Defeat Diabetes Foundation  
Easter Seals  
Human Impact Partners  
Institute for Human Centered Design  
Institute of Social Medicine & Community Health  
League of American Bicyclists  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
National Association for Sport and Physical Education  
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors  
National Center for Bicycling & Walking  
National Center for Healthy Housing  
National Center on Physical Activity and Disability  
National Complete Streets Coalition  
National Environmental Health Association  
National Network of Public Health Institutes  
National Recreation and Park Assoc.  
National Wildlife Federation  
PolicyLink  
Prevention Institute  
Project for Public Spaces  
Public Health Law & Policy  
Raimi + Associates  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership  
Safe States Alliance  
Save the Children  
Society for Public Health Education  
The Public Health Institute  
The Trust for Public Land  
US Play Coalition

**State, Regional and Local Organizations and Individuals**

Bicycle Advocacy of Central Arkansas (Little Rock, AR)  
Northeast Arkansas Bicycle Coalition (Jonesboro, AR)  
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (Marina, CA)  
Bike Bakersfield (Bakersfield, CA)  
Building Healthy Communities (Salinas, CA)  
C.I.C.L.E. (Los Angeles, CA)  
California Public Health Association-North (Oakland, CA)  
Carmel Academy of Performing Arts (Carmel, CA)  
Center for Behavioral Epidemiology and Community Health (San Diego, CA)  
Center for Community Advocacy (Salinas, CA)

City of Arcata (Arcata, CA)  
City of Banning (Banning, CA)  
City of Livermore (Livermore, CA)  
City of Ukiah (Ukiah, CA)  
Community Partnership for Youth (Seaside & Salinas, CA)  
County of Monterey (Salinas, CA)  
Fairmead Community & Friends (Madera, CA)  
Heather Kuiper, Consultant (Oakland, CA)  
KWS Consulting (Glendale, CA)  
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California (Sacramento, CA)  
Local Government Commission (Sacramento, CA)  
Lois Takahashi (Los Angeles, CA)  
Mayor (Riverside, CA)  
Mayor Helene Schneider, City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara, CA)  
Natividad Medical Center (Salinas, CA)  
Richard J. Jackson, MD, MPH, Director emeritus, National Center for Environmental Health,  
CDC, and Former State Public Health Officer, California (Los Angeles, CA)  
Salinas Public Library (Salinas, CA)  
Sierra Business Council (Truckee, CA)  
Supervisor Mary Jane Griego, District Three Supervisor, Yuba County (Marysville, CA)  
Town of Windsor (Windsor, CA)  
Windsor High School (Windsor, CA)  
YWCA Monterey County (Salinas, Monterey, CA)  
Bicycle Colorado (Denver, CO)  
Colorado Society for Public Health Education (Denver, CO)  
LiveWell Bent County (Las Animas, CO)  
BikeWalkLee (Fort Myers, FL)  
Community Nutrition Consulting (Miami, FL)  
Florida State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning (Tallahassee, FL)  
Smart Growth Coalition, Collier County (Naples, FL)  
Atlanta Bicycle Coalition (Atlanta, GA)  
Georgia Bikes! (Athens, GA)  
Georgia Division of Aging Services (ATLANTA, GA)  
Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety, Inc. (Atlanta, GA)  
WK Kellogg Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative (Decorah, IA)  
Active Transportation Alliance (Chicago, IL)  
Kaw Valley Bicycle Club (Topeka, KS)  
Bike Easy (New Orleans, LA)  
Frederick County Public Schools- Safe Routes to School (Frederick, MD)  
City of Manistique Recreation Department (Manistique, MI)  
Hiawatha Behavioral Health (Manistique, Sault Ste Marie, St Ignace, MI)  
Manistique Area Kiwanis Club (Manistique, MI)  
Michigan Public Health Institute (Okemos, MI)  
MSU Extension (St. Ignace, MI)

Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital (Manistique, MI)  
Choose Good Health, Inc. (Alexandria, MN)  
Hopkins Public Schools (Hopkins, MN)  
Trailnet (St. Louis, MO)  
Bike-Walk Alliance of NH (Concord, NH)  
The Alliance for Morris County Parks (Morristown, NJ)  
Catron County Health Council (Reserve, NM)  
New Mexico Department of Health - Diabetes Prevention Program (Santa Fe, NM)  
Outside Las Vegas Foundation (Las Vegas, NV)  
Partners for a Healthy Nevada (Las Vegas, NV)  
Albany County Department of Health (Albany, NY)  
Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition (Albany, NY)  
Community Cradle (Albany, NY)  
Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County (Schenectady, NY)  
Ellis Medicine (Schenectady, NY)  
League of Women Voters of Schenectady (Schenectady, NY)  
Parks & Trails New York (Albany, NY)  
Philip J. Landrigan, MD, MSc (New York, NY)  
Schenectady Community Action Program Head Start (Schenectady, NY)  
Schenectady County Chapter, NYSARC, Inc. (Schenectady, NY)  
Schenectady County Public Health Services (Schenectady, NY)  
Schenectady County Youth Bureau (Schenectady, NY)  
Schenectady Inner City Ministry (Schenectady, NY)  
Transportation Alternatives (New York, NY)  
Gator Spradlin Memorial Nursing Scholarship (Ada, OH)  
Mahoning County District of Health (Youngstown, OH)  
GEARs Education (Eugene, OR)  
Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia (Philadelphia, PA)  
PA Walks and Bikes (Harrisburg, PA)  
Palmetto Cycling Coalition (Columbia, SC)  
Alternative Transportation Oriented Public (Houston, TX)  
League of Bicycling Voters (Austin, TX)  
North Central Texas Council of Governments (Arlington, TX)  
NaNia (Charlottesville, VA)  
Island Hospital (Anacortes, WA)  
Skagit County Healthy Communities (Mount Vernon, WA)  
Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity (Tacoma, WA)  
Greenfield Health Department (Greenfield, WI)