



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

June 17, 2009

Charles D. Connor
President &
Chief Executive Officer

The Honorable Edward Kennedy
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
317 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

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Washington, DC 20004-1725
Phone: (202) 785-3355
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The Honorable Michael Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
379A Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

61 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10006-2701
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Dear Chairman Kennedy and Ranking Member Enzi:

www.LungUSA.org

As the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee begins to mark up healthcare reform legislation this week, I wanted to write to express the American Lung Association's strong support for making prevention and wellness provisions a critical part of health care reform.

Stephen J. Nolan, Esq.
Chair

The provisions requiring minimal cost sharing for preventive services endorsed by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and immunizations approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Title I are especially important to the American Lung Association. This would make preventive services like tobacco cessation and immunizations more available to the people who need them most. The provisions prohibiting annual and lifetime limits are also important as they eliminate additional barriers to accessing health services.

Mary H. Partridge
Chair-elect

By setting aside adequate annual funding to invest in prevention and public health investment funds in Title III, this legislation will make tremendous strides towards improving the health of all Americans. Funding for early detection of chronic diseases such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) will enable prompt treatment – which will lead to more fulfilling lives and reduced health care costs.

Bruce A. Herring
Past-Chair

H. James Gooden
Secretary

Terrence L. Johnston
Treasurer

The inclusion of community transformation grants in the legislation is another strong step towards improving the public health of the nation. Tobacco use costs the United States 393,000 lives and \$96 billion in health care costs annually. By giving grants to state and local health departments to reduce tobacco use, this bill will help reduce the tremendous costs that tobacco causes and save thousands of lives.

Albert J. Rizzo, MD
Nationwide Assembly Speaker

The Lung Association would also recommend clarifying safeguards for consumers regarding HIPAA regulations for workplace wellness programs. First, the definition of such a wellness program must be clarified to ensure evidence-based programs that have a demonstrated efficacy. Second, the Lung Association believes that participation in all wellness programs be voluntary. Next, the Lung Association strongly urges that medical privacy standards should apply to employer wellness programs as well to ensure adequate employee protection and privacy. Finally, savings from wellness programs must be based on actual improvements in employee health.

A central mission of the American Lung Association has been shedding light on lung health disparities in the United States. We are very excited to see a section of the legislation devoted to ensuring that data collection methods paint an accurate picture of the health status of different groups. Having more accurate information down to the community level will enable the government to more efficiently target funds such as the community transformation grants to areas where they will be most helpful.

The American Lung Association thanks you for including prevention and wellness measures in this healthcare legislation, and for beginning this journey to reform the entire healthcare system. With your leadership, all Americans will be able to lead healthier lives and have access to quality, affordable healthcare when they need it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CD Connor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Charles D. Connor
President and CEO