

Attachment #2



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

Dear Communities Putting Prevention to Work colleagues:

On behalf of President Barack Obama and the Department of Health and Human Services, I want to congratulate you and welcome you to the *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* Action Institute. Your community has been given the opportunity to lead the way in the fight against chronic diseases in the United States.

This \$373 million community initiative is the cornerstone of the broader \$650 million *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* initiative – a comprehensive prevention and wellness initiative supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The community initiative funds intensive, proven, and sustainable community approaches to chronic disease prevention in 44 urban, rural, and tribal communities. Over the next two years, your communities will work towards implementing policy, systems, and environmental changes, such as improving physical education in schools, limiting exposure to secondhand smoke, improving safe options for active transportation, and providing access to nutritious foods. Through this work, your communities will tackle the tobacco and obesity epidemics head-on with the goals of increasing physical activity and nutrition, and decreasing obesity, smoking, and exposure to secondhand smoke.

Preventing chronic diseases and improving the health of our nation is a top priority for this Administration. In the United States today, seven out of ten deaths are caused by chronic diseases. Chronic disease is the leading cause of serious illness and disability in our country, and the treatment of chronic diseases disproportionately contributes to rising health care costs. In fact, over 75 percent of health care spending in the United States is related to the treatment chronic conditions.

Research has shown that implementing the policy, systems, and environmental changes described above can result in positive behavior changes related to physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco use, which positively impact multiple chronic disease outcomes. Your community and the other communities funded through this program will serve as an example of how to create environments where the healthy choice is the easy choice.

Over the next few days, you will receive support and assistance from national experts, CDC staff, and, perhaps most importantly, each other on the implementation of your selected interventions. I wish your community the best of luck in this important endeavor, and I look forward to hearing about your success in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Sebelius". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kathleen Sebelius