

The Healthy Michigan Fund Coalition

Olga Dazzo, Director
Michigan Department of Community Health
201 Townsend
Lansing, MI 48909

May 9, 2011

Dear Director Dazzo

There are many organizations in Michigan who for years have been partners with MDCH in its mission to promote health and reduce disease among the residents of our state. Most of these organizations were instrumental in helping convince the citizens of our state to vote for Proposal A in 1996 which created a dedicated source of funds to target disease prevention and health promotion activities. For many years, this fund (entitled by statute “The Healthy Michigan Fund”) was solely dedicated to reducing the rates of chronic disease, promoting maternal and child health (including addressing infant mortality reduction), and addressing obesity in Michigan.

Healthy Michigan Fund Prevention Programs support the MI Dashboard!

Obesity	Infant Mortality
Tobacco	Tobacco
Cardiovascular Disease	Cancer
Diabetes	Teen Pregnancy
Cancer	Family Planning
	Michigan Model

These organizations have effectively leveraged partnerships and federal and non-profit dollars to support prevention and develop direct services to reduce disease and poor health outcomes for the citizens of Michigan. Although the Healthy Michigan Fund steadily decreased since 2002 and been used instead for treatment of medical conditions (Medicaid), we greatly appreciated the fact that the Governor’s budget for 2012 continued some level of support for prevention efforts. Our organizations recognize the value of working in partnership with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) to achieve Michigan’s health goals.

Since the introduction of the Governor’s budget in February, the legislature has voted to eliminate the Healthy Michigan Fund as the primary source of funding for MDCH and its partners’ prevention programs. We are very concerned, despite our best efforts to educate lawmakers, that such elimination will have the following consequences:

- Loss of the single most effective tool available that can best address the Governor’s dashboard objectives (obesity and infant mortality)
- Loss of partner organizations that have historically worked on prevention and disease management and who still can best assist MDCH in its efforts
- Loss of match dollars – over \$12 million

Based on the partnerships and outcomes of programs provided by MDCH and the organizations it works with, we believe that the dollars should be preserved for their intended use—supporting PREVENTION of disease, and promoting health.

Strategically, because of historical baggage and connotations associated with the term “Healthy Michigan Fund” it might be useful to discontinue that verbiage and replace it with something else. We believe, however that if the actual monies that have been directed to this fund are allowed to be totally re-directed away from public health to pay exclusively for medical care, that the administration is missing a significant opportunity to dedicate funding toward the dashboard measures that have been articulated by Governor Snyder. We urge you to continue to invest in the collaborative work of the Department of Community Health and non-profit allies to successfully achieve the Governor’s health goals for Michigan’s citizens. Disinvesting in this important work at a time when you are asking for support from partners throughout Michigan to address obesity and infant mortality is sending the wrong message. It is unrealistic to expect your historical partners to dedicate efforts that will assist you to achieve your dashboard goals without some investment by MDCH. **We want you to know that our organizations are committed to helping you with the legislature and in our networks.** We need your leadership and that of the Governor to help us. PLEASE WORK WITH US TO TARGET FUNDS for public health prevention programs in the FY 2011-12 MDCH budget.

Sincerely,

The Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
The School Community Health Alliance of Michigan
The American Cancer Society – Great Lakes Division
The American Heart Association – Midwest Affiliate
The National Kidney Foundation of Michigan
Planned Parenthood of Michigan
The Governor’s Council on Fitness, Health and Sports
The Michigan Fitness Foundation
The Michigan Primary Care Association