



PHI Insists U.S. Cannot Afford to Lose Ground in Prevention, Public Health in Federal Budget Process

OAKLAND, CA (February 14, 2011) – While President Obama’s newly proposed 2012 budget reflects the difficult choices that must be made in this troubled economic time, it also contains a blueprint for continued advances in public health domestically and globally, the Public Health Institute said today. Significantly, the budget maintains support for health care reform while increasing funding for biomedical research and nutrition programs for underserved communities as well as for low-income women and children.

Nonetheless, it is imperative that Congress not undermine recent gains made in public health and in addressing health inequities among the most vulnerable people as it considers the 2012 budget and funding for the remainder of fiscal year 2011.

“Important progress has been made in the last two years in addressing emerging public health priorities in this country and creating infrastructure support through health care reform, including the establishment of the prevention trust fund,” said Mary A. Pittman, DrPH, president and CEO of PHI. “We must remain vigilant to ensure that the budget process does not lead to program reductions that are disproportionately borne by the most vulnerable and lead to greater costs in the future. We must ensure that individuals and families have the resources to prevent poor health and disease and to access treatment and care when they need it.”

The president’s budget proposal also recognizes the vital importance of global health and development to the United States. American investments in foreign assistance represent just one percent of the total federal budget, but are truly life-saving to millions around the world. Indeed, for decades U.S. global health programs have successfully provided cost-effective interventions to ensure that pregnant women do not die in childbirth, children do not die of starvation and people with HIV receive life-saving treatment. These programs help to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease; to fight against neglected tropical diseases, which affect more than one billion people; and to provide critically needed protection for millions at risk of malaria and tuberculosis.

“As President Obama and Secretary of Defense Gates have said, investments in international development are vital to our national security, and they are critical to our economic interests,” said Suzanne Petroni, vice president of global health at PHI. “They are also a reflection of our values. If we are to continue moving from a world where billions live in deprivation, poverty and ill health, and toward one that is peaceful, prosperous and strong, the U.S. must retain its leadership in supporting global health.”

The 2012 budget proposal was presented against the backdrop of demands for steep cuts by the Republican leadership of the House of Representatives as Congress moves to finalize appropriations for 2011. If enacted, these cuts for 2011 – including to the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development – would significantly compromise public health in this country and around the world.

About the Public Health Institute

[PHI](#), an independent nonprofit organization based in Oakland, California, is dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life for people throughout California, across the nation and around the world. PHI's primary methods for achieving these goals include: sharing evidence developed through quality research and evaluation; providing training and technical assistance; and promoting successful prevention strategies to policymakers, communities and individuals.