



**MPHA 2010/2011
Board of Directors**

Lisa Harvey-McPherson
RN, MBA, MPPM
President

Denise Bisailon, EdD
Vice-President

Bethany Sanborn
MPH, MCHES
Past-President

Anita Ruff, MPH, CHES
Treasurer

Mark Griswold, M.Sc.
Secretary

Emily Rines, MPH

Kala Ladenheim, PhD,
MSPH

Angela Westhoff, MA

Kevin Lewis, MPP

Kate Yerxa, MS, RD

Cheryl Tucker

Dennise Whitley, MHA

Stephen Sears, MD, MPH

Kathleen Cullinen, PhD,
RD, LD

Jamie Comstock

Bill Flagg

Edmund Claxton, MD
Physician Advisor

Tina Pettingill, MPH
Executive Director

Testimony of the Maine Public Health Association

In Opposition to the Cuts to the Fund for a Healthy Maine contained in:

LR 2678—An Act To Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government and To Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2012 and June 30, 2013

Senator Rosen, Representative Flood and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator McCormick, Representative Strang Burgess and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services; I am Tina Pettingill, Executive Director of the Maine Public Health Association, an organization of more than 350 members committed to creating an environment which sustains and improves the health and well-being of Maine residents. Our diverse membership has a common interest in the promotion and protection of the public's health. I am here today to oppose cuts contained within LR 2678 to the Fund for a Healthy Maine and to ask that these limited resources are put toward best practice, evidence-based prevention and health promotion efforts. I should note that MPHA does not receive any funds from the Fund for a Healthy Maine.

Prevention is the cornerstone of public health, and prevention works. Whether it is helping smokers quit, giving kids a healthy start, supporting new parents, helping families get active or teaching students about healthy choices, prevention provides the foundation for a healthier state. That means lower health care costs, and greater workforce productivity. A recent report from the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, demonstrates that for every \$1 spent on prevention in Maine, the return on investment is \$7.50 - the best rate of return

for any state in the country. ⁱ Can you think of any other investment that we can spend \$1 and get a \$7.50 return? It's rare, but in Maine it is possible.

Maine has the best return on investment in the country because we have wisely invested in proven community-based programs through the Fund for a Healthy Maine. Head Start, School Based Health Centers, Healthy Maine Partnerships, Home Visitation, Oral Health are not the political flavor of the month, they are backed by science and recognized by authorities like the US CDC as best practice. The Maine Public Health Association and our members are deeply dismayed at the Governor's proposed budget. It dismantles the Fund and steals health and cost savings opportunities from the people of Maine. Recognizing the tremendous opportunity Maine's tobacco settlement presented, the 119th Legislature designed the Fund specifically to "supplement, not supplant" General Fund expenditures. But for the first time since the Fund was created, the Governor's budget permanently eliminates major FHM programs including the Healthy Maine Partnerships, flying in the face of a decade of bipartisan support.

The Fund is our promise to the people of Maine that we will continue to acknowledge the golden opportunity the tobacco settlement dollars provide for preventing disease rather than paying for it after the fact.

In addition to the legislative support that the Fund has enjoyed over the past eleven-years, Maine people consistently and strongly oppose balancing the budget with tobacco settlement dollars. Using the FHM as it was intended – to prevent disease and promote good health – has been overwhelmingly supported in statewide polls since the Fund was created. A 2011 poll conducted by Kiley & Company shows 91% of Maine voters believe the Fund for a Healthy Maine should be used as it was intended (Attachment A). Also, last year, when the Governor proposed similar cuts, over 160 Maine businesses signed a letter to the Legislature (Attachment B) decrying the cuts. With this in mind, I ask you to listen to reason, to listen to your constituents, and vote with wise investment strategies in mind.

Simply put, this represents our state's opportunity to go back to 1980 and buy Apple or Microsoft Stock. Don't follow the conventional wisdom and put this healthcare investment in the equivalent of Wang, Digital or any number of other companies that failed to innovate and fell by the wayside. The new way of delivering healthcare - the cost effective way of delivering healthcare - lies in investment in the innovative, preventive services that the Fund for a Healthy Maine represents.

Maine's economic recovery depends on bringing down the cost of health care for businesses, and that's what the Fund for a Healthy Maine is designed to do. Maine business leaders consistently identify lowering health costs as the single most important priority for lawmakers to address in their efforts to spur new economic growth. I ask you to use common sense—the best way to get health costs under control for families and businesses is to keep people healthy in the first place.

On behalf of the 350 members of the Maine Public Health Association, I strongly urge you to oppose all cuts to the Fund for a Healthy Maine.

Thank you for your time.

¹ Trust for America's Health. (2008). *Prevention for a Healthier America: Investments in Disease Prevention Yield Significant Savings, Stronger Communities.*