



**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

February 17, 2012

**\*\*\*Media Contact\*\*\***

Rebecca Einhorn: (202) 280-1963

## **Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund Decries Shortsighted Move to Cut Prevention Fund by \$5 Billion** *Congress Set to Vote on Payroll Tax Deal at Expense of Costly Obesity Epidemic*

**(Washington DC)** Taxpayers and the one in three Americans with obesity will likely be dealt a dangerous blow from Congress today, as both chambers are expected to vote on a plan to cut the Prevention and Public Health Fund by \$5 billion. The pending cut—criticized by the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund—is intended to help offset a \$150 billion economic plan to extend a payroll tax holiday, unemployment benefits and the Medicare physician payment fix.

The Campaign Action Fund lamented that the expected cut is a short-sighted measure that would fail to curb costs for taxpayers in the long run. The Prevention and Public Health Fund was created to fill a policy gap in tackling the U.S. obesity epidemic and enacted as part of the Affordable Care Act.

In a statement, Stephanie Silverman, cofounder of the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund, said:

“The Prevention Fund is an essential component to reigning in the profound health care costs associated with obesity and its related chronic conditions. When we consider the amount that taxpayers stand to save by reversing the obesity epidemic, the only logical conclusion is that any decision to undermine preventative efforts is economically backwards. Congressional leaders should take a step back and consider the facts: [New reports show us](#) that if Americans reduced obesity rates just 5 percent, we’d save more than \$158 billion in 10 years—a figure that would more than pay for the full payroll tax bill.”

“The initiatives supported by the Prevention Fund can help our communities to get on track to a healthy weight and achieve more manageable long-term health care costs. Standing pat will not get us there. If we are serious about reigning in health care costs, we must have strategies to change our nation’s current course. Failing to put all of our muscle behind tackling the obesity epidemic will only lead to greater illness for patients and greater expenses for taxpayers in the long run.”

Last year, the Congressional Budget Office reported that per capita health care spending for obese adults (as of 2007) is 38 percent greater than for adults of a “normal weight” — defined as a person with a BMI between 18.5 and 25. This constitutes a more than four-fold increase in obesity-related spending over a mere twenty-year span. Furthermore, obesity and its associated conditions cost

taxpayers as much as \$168 billion annually in medical costs alone. Additionally, according to researchers at Emory University, obesity may account for 21 percent of all health care spending by 2018.

By enabling state and local governmental agencies and community organizations to increase healthy food options in schools; create physical activity programs at the community level; and promote incentives for workplace wellness, the Prevention Fund stands to further a healthier future for the next generation — both medically and economically.

###

**About the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund**

The Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund is dedicated to federal policy changes that can reverse one of America's costliest diseases. The Campaign convenes leaders from industry, academia, public health and associations to speak with one voice for measures to reverse the obesity epidemic and promote healthy weight in children and adults.