



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

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## Campaign Urges Lawmakers to Preserve Cost-Saving Obesity Prevention Measures in Health Law

**(Washington, DC)** As Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius prepares to testify before a House Appropriations subcommittee this morning, and as the current legislative environment remains focused on spending cuts at HHS and elsewhere, the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund urged lawmakers to keep in place vital anti-obesity programs enacted as part of the Affordable Care Act, noting that efforts to address the U.S. obesity epidemic will save taxpayers billions.

The Affordable Care Act made critical progress in tackling obesity and its costs by requiring insurance companies, for the first time, to provide coverage for obesity screening and nutritional counseling and by establishing community-based obesity intervention and treatment programs; new early childhood nutrition initiatives that engage at-risk communities, and a public awareness campaign on nutrition, exercise and obesity reduction.

“If Congress is serious about reigning in health care costs, obesity prevention measures must be on the agenda — we cannot afford to reverse course,” said Stephanie Silverman, senior advisor to the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund. “A failure to tackle the U.S. obesity epidemic will only create greater expenses for taxpayers, to say nothing of the lives that will continue to be jeopardized.”

Without reforms, taxpayers will spend a record \$320 billion on annual obesity-related costs within a decade, according to a recent McKinsey study. In other words, obesity will cost the equivalent of more than 2 percent of our \$14 trillion national debt — and more than the 2010 discretionary budgets of the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, Energy, Interior, State, Transportation and Housing and Urban Development combined.

Silverman added, “The obesity prevention and treatment programs included in the Affordable Care Act are necessary investments in our nation’s economic as well as physical health.”

Secretary Sebelius will speak before the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies at 10:00 am in room 2359 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

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### **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.