



**Washington DC, September 19, 2011** -- President Barack Obama's \$3 trillion deficit reduction package [unveiled Monday](#) would cut the Prevention and Public Health Fund by more than 20 percent — \$3.5 billion over 10 years — a move that may jeopardize efforts to reverse America's \$168 billion per year obesity epidemic, the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund warned.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund — created to fill a policy gap in tackling the U.S. obesity epidemic — was enacted as part of the Affordable Care Act to support efforts by state and local governmental agencies and community organizations to increase healthy food options in schools, create physical activity programs and promote incentives for workplace wellness.

In a statement, Stephanie Silverman, a founding director and senior advisor to the Campaign Action Fund, said:

“If we are serious about reigning in U.S. health care costs, we cannot afford to reverse course on measures like the Prevention Fund, which would play a key role in helping to curb obesity — one of America's most costly diseases. And while there are no easy fixes to balancing our budget, 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. Reducing the Prevention and Public Health Fund is economically backwards.”

Last year, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office reported that nearly 20 percent of the increase in U.S. health care spending (from 1987-2007) was caused by obesity, and researchers at Emory University have found that obesity may account for 21 percent of all health care spending by 2018. Employers alone experience a more than \$73 billion loss each year due to losses in productivity, absenteeism and medical costs attributed to obesity, according to researchers at Duke University.