

Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion and Integrative and Public Health
Washington DC

September 30, 2013

RADM Boris Lushniak, MD, MPH
Acting United States Surgeon General
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear RADM Lushniak:

As you know, at our September 26-27th meeting, deep concern was expressed by the members of the Advisory Group regarding the health implications of proposed cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In a unanimous vote of Advisory Group members present, we passed the following resolution:

Nutrition plays a critically important role in children's brain development and academic performance. And, nutrition is a key determinant of virtually every measure of health and well-being throughout a person's life.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's most important anti-hunger program. In 2011, it helped almost 45 million low-income Americans afford a nutritionally adequate diet each month. Nearly 75 percent of SNAP participants are in families with children. Also, more than one-quarter of participants are in household with seniors or people with disabilities. The average SNAP recipient receives about \$4.45 per day.

Unfortunately, a bill proposing \$40 billion in cuts to SNAP and SNAP-ED over the next 10 years recently passed the U.S. House of Representatives. This bill would cause 3 million people to lose benefits while another 850,000 would see their benefits cut, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office.

At a time when there is more scientific evidence than ever proving the importance of good nutrition, we find it profoundly unwise, morally reprehensible, and economically short-sighted to propose a major reduction in SNAP. **We urge the Administration to continue to oppose cuts in SNAP.** We do not need to balance the budget by mortgaging our children's future.

I hope you will share this resolution with appropriate members of the National Prevention Council and all those concerned about the future of SNAP.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Levi, PhD
Chair
Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion and Integrative and Public Health