June 27, 2012

RE: Funding for Prevention and Wellness Trust

Dear Senate President Murray, Speaker DeLeo, and Payment Reform Conference Committee members:

We are grateful for the leadership and vision demonstrated by both the House and the Senate in moving forward comprehensive legislation to address rising health care costs. We are particularly proud of the House and Senate’s focus on disease prevention as a powerful way to reduce health care spending and promote the health and wellness of all Massachusetts residents.

The Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund, advanced by both chambers, will help lower premiums by preventing people from developing the costly health conditions that are driving up costs – conditions like Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and asthma. Both chambers provide significant funding for the Trust, but the final amount and duration of funding remain to be decided in Conference.

As you deliberate a Conference Committee bill on payment reform, we ask for your support to dedicate $100 million over five years to the Prevention and Wellness Trust.

Further, we ask that you ensure the funds are used for evidence-based community prevention measures and not medical treatment or disease management activities that can be reimbursed through the healthcare financing system.

Data shows that an upfront investment in prevention can save hundreds of millions of dollars within just a few years. In order to make an impact on both health outcomes and aggregate health care costs, evidence indicates that we must invest at a significant enough level and with consistency over multiple years. If we are able to do this, we can generate a positive return on investment – as much as $450 million within five years, according to recent modeling data from the Urban Institute. These are savings we cannot afford to pass up.

We thank you again for your hard work to address the pressing issue of health care costs and for investing in prevention as part of the solution. We stand ready to work with you to advance a final bill to the Governor’s desk and to ensure that the new law is effectively implemented.

Sincerely,

Harriette Chandler
Senator Harriette Chandler

Jason Lewis
Representative Jason Lewis
Representative James Cantwell

Representative James O'Dwyer

Representative Russell Holmes

Senator Stanley Rosenberg

Senator Mike Rush

Christine E. Canavan

Representative Cleon Turner

Representative Antonio Cabral

Representative Angelo Puppolo

Representative James O'Day

Representative Jerald Parisella

Representative Charles Murphy

Representative Tom Sannicandro

Ed Connors

Representative Ed Coppinger

Representative Chris Walsh

Eileen M. Donoghue

Senator Eileen Donoghue

Representative Carolyn Dykema

Representative David Linsky

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem

Representative Marcos Devers

Representative Thomas Calter
Jay R. Kaufman
Representative Jay Kaufman

Susan Fargo
Senator Susan Fargo

Representative Timothy Toomey

Representative Alice Wolf

Representative Denise Garlick

Representative Sean Garballey

Representative Martha Walz

Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier

Representative Tom Stanley

Representative Stephen Kulik

Representative Ruth Balser

Representative Peter Kocot

Representative John Scibak

Representative Gailanee Cariddi

Representative Paul Schmid

Representative Carl Sciortino

Representative Denise Andrews

Representative Jonathan Hecht

Senator William Brownsberger

Senator Jamie Eldridge