

July 16, 2004

Dear Friend,

Today we spend 95 percent of our healthcare dollars on treating chronic and acute illnesses, many of which could be prevented in the first place. In other cases we could at least delay the onset of disease for a number of years and provide a higher quality of life. The dollars we spend on prevention are minuscule, and we do not track the outcomes in a meaningful way. I will continue to support common-sense solutions to this problem and look for innovative ways to increase the attention we pay to preventive healthcare.

One positive approach is to increase dramatically federal funding to promote more physical education programs in our schools. Obesity is a serious problem in our nation, and unfortunately, too few schools offer any physical education courses. I have called for an increase of \$100 million in this critical program. Click [here](#) for more information on this effort.

Another thing we can do is to guarantee that every student has access to the healthiest food in school. Today, students face junk foods at every turn. Providing them healthy alternatives will go a long way to combat poor nutrition and fight child obesity. I was proud to support the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, which recently was signed into law. For more information on this important development, please click [here](#).

This Nation needs a new approach to healthcare, which puts prevention front and center. The key to prevention is personal responsibility and personal action. If people are given the facts and alternatives, they can take charge of their health. We are facing an epidemic of diabetes in New Mexico due to obesity and unhealthy lifestyles. Minority communities are disproportionately impacted. But there is hope in many of our communities, where individuals are taking charge of their health and their future. For more information on preventive healthcare, please click [here](#).

Very Truly Yours,

Tom Udall
Member of Congress