February 24, 2010

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr Frieden:

On behalf of the over 3,000 members of the Population Association of America (PAA) and over 40 population research centers comprising the Association of Population Centers (APC), we want to comment on a recent Federal Register announcement (December 28, 2009) about organizational changes at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Our organizations are aware of these changes as they affect the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

Our members are social and behavioral scientists, including demographers, economists, sociologists and statisticians, who conduct research on the implications of population change. Their diverse set of research interests include, marriage and divorce, aging, immigration and migration, population forecasting, mortality, disability, and adolescent health. Given this range of interests, our members have a stake in all data produced and disseminated by NCHS. As a result, PAA and APC have made NCHS funding one of our organizations’ top legislative priorities and have remained active in the Friends of NCHS coalition.

Since your appointment at the CDC, we have been extremely pleased by your commitment to NCHS. Clearly you value NCHS data and want to ensure the agency receives essential resources to sustain its key surveys and improve its collection of vital statistics. The agency’s Fiscal Year 2011 request is evidence of your dedication.

As part of the recent CDC reorganization, we note that NCHS was moved from one of the defunct coordinating centers to a new Office of Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services. We understand the NCHS Director now has direct reporting authority to the CDC Director through the CDC Deputy Director—an improvement over its previous arrangement. We hope the current configuration will allow NCHS to maintain its mission as the nation’s premiere health statistics agency, giving it appropriate independence to develop and release objective, timely data. As the reorganization plans unfold, we hope CDC will consider how the Leadership and Management account, created as part of the last reorganization, affects the availability of program funding at NCHS.

Once again, thank you for your leadership and support of NCHS.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

President  
Population Association of America

[Signature]

President  
Association of Population Centers