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December 4, 2013

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30333

Dear Dr. Frieden:

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As the president of the Skilled Motorcyclist Association—Responsible, Trained and Educated Riders, Inc. (SMARTER), a national nonprofit association that strives to use quality research as a foundation for recommendations regarding motorcyclist-safety efforts, I am writing to you and the Community Preventive Services Task Force members regarding the issue in the materials published by the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) in a November 21 AMA Action Alert¹ and in the AMA December News and Notes.² The main question posed in these materials and in Representative Walberg’s letter to you, “Is it the goal or strategy of the CDC to reduce the use of motorcycles...?,” is ludicrous. It is obvious the CDC is concerned about and has a responsibility related to injury prevention as well as to disease prevention and control. SMARTER wonders what part of “Saving Lives, Protecting People” does Representative Walberg and the AMA not understand.

The goal for which the Task Force was convened, as described in the “Update to Notice of Meeting” in the *Federal Register*, is clear. And the expertise the Task Force provides in considering the findings of systematic reviews on existing research and providing evidence-based options from which decision makers can choose is an invaluable resource for individual motorcyclists and motorcyclist-safety professionals. Representative Walberg’s question and the AMA’s jumping on his bandwagon are simply more attempts in a long line of actions by biker-rights organizations and their mouthpieces to prevent good work from being completed and valuable information from reaching motorcyclists.

As you and the Task Force know, the research is clear, overwhelming, and undeniable: Wearing a helmet is an effective method to prevent death and prevent or reduce head injury in the event of a crash; and when an all-rider helmet law is in effect, more riders wear helmets.

We want you to know also that Representative Walberg, the AMA, and other biker-rights groups do not represent all motorcycle riders. SMARTER is an association of motorcyclists that supports all-rider motorcycle-helmet laws as a critical component of a comprehensive motorcyclist-safety program. Please continue the valuable work. Responsible motorcyclists and the professionals involved in the fight to save lives and prevent or reduce the seriousness of injuries need all the help available.

Sincerely,

Dan Petterson, Ed.D.
President, SMARTER

¹http://www.americanmotorcyclist.com/News/13-11-21/U_S_lawmaker_Is_Centers_for_Disease_Control_trying_to_reduce_motorcycle_use.aspx

²http://www.americanmotorcyclist.com/News/13-12-02/AMA_News_and_Notes_December_2013.aspx