

Dear Senator/Representative:

As organizations dedicated to improving the health of all Americans, we write today in support of the Prevention and Public Health Fund (the Fund). We thank you for allocating the Fund in the last two appropriations cycles, and urge you to do so again in the Fiscal Year 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Every American should have the opportunity to be as healthy as he or she can be. However, millions of Americans suffer from diseases that can be prevented by addressing common risk factors like tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity. Chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, lung disease, heart disease and stroke, are responsible for seven out of 10 deaths and cost \$1.3 trillion in treatment costs and lost productivity every year. Two thirds of Americans are either obese or overweight and nearly 20 percent of Americans smoke. Obesity costs the country \$147 billion and tobacco use \$130 billion in direct healthcare costs each year.

The Fund is the nation's largest single investment in prevention. Programs supported by the Fund take an innovative approach by supporting cross-sector, public-private partnerships and collaborations to improve health outcomes, reduce the chronic disease burden and lower health costs. Since 2010, the Fund has provided \$5.25 billion to support state and local public health efforts to transform and revitalize communities, build epidemiology and laboratory capacity, track and respond to disease outbreaks, train the nation's public health and health workforce, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, expand access to vaccines, reduce tobacco use, and help control the obesity epidemic.

The Prevention Fund is intended to ensure a coordinated, comprehensive, sustainable, and accountable approach to improving our country's health outcomes through the most effective prevention and public health programs. For example, the Fund has been instrumental in maintaining and increasing support for evidenced-based chronic disease programs funded by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The Fund has made possible the highly successful *Tips from Former Smokers* cessation campaign, which encourages people to quit smoking by highlighting the toll that smoking-related illnesses take on smokers and their loved ones. According to a study published in [The Lancet](#), during its first three months, the national ad campaign led an estimated 1.6 million smokers to attempt to quit smoking and helped more than 100,000 Americans quit smoking permanently. A recent study published in the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#) found that the Tips campaign prevented 17,109 premature deaths in the U.S.

The Fund also supports the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, which provides all 50 states, the District of Columbia, two American Indian tribes, and eight US territories with flexible funding to address their unique public health issues at the state and community level in innovative and locally defined ways. Grantees have the flexibility to use funds to respond rapidly to emerging health issues and to fill funding gaps in programs that deal with leading causes of death and disability as well as support foundational capabilities of health departments. The Block Grant received \$160 million in both Fiscal Years 2014-15 from the Fund.

In addition, the Section 317 Immunization Program plays a critical role in meeting national immunization coverage targets and reductions in disease. In Fiscal Year 2014, the Fund supported \$210.3 million of the total investment in Section 317 grants and expanded the program to help ensure that the right vaccines get to the right people at the right time to protect their health and the health of their communities and prevent resurgences of life-threatening diseases. Section 317 grants have also been key to building the immunization infrastructure, including registries, surveillance, outreach and service delivery.

The Fund provides the first-ever, reliable national funding stream for public health, while creating jobs, bending the health-care cost curve, and prioritizing disease prevention. We urge the Committee to allocate the Fund again in Fiscal Year 2016, which will ensure it is allocated in a manner that will reduce health care costs and help create a long-term path to a healthier and economically sound America.

We look to your continued leadership in promoting the health of all Americans.

Sincerely,