

March __, 2021

Senator Richard Blumenthal
706 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Doris Matsui
2311 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Blumenthal and Congresswoman Matsui:

On behalf of the more than xx undersigned organizations, we are writing to thank you for the introduction of the Public Health Funding Prevents Pandemics Act, a bill that will restore funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Prevention Fund). The Prevention Fund will help expand and strengthen critical prevention and public health activities that improve our nation's health and help reduce health care costs.

The Prevention Fund, established under Section 4002 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA, P.L. 111-148, as amended), is a dedicated funding stream intended to strengthen our country's public health system, invest in proven prevention programs, and directly support states and communities to address their most pressing health challenges. In FY2021, the Prevention Fund supplied nearly 11 percent of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) annual budget, including funding for every state. The Prevention Fund supports the Section 317 Immunization Program and the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity grants, which provide critical investments for states and localities to vaccinate their populations and track emerging health threats, two major areas of need in the COVID-19 pandemic. Other key core public health activities supported by the Prevention Fund include tobacco cessation, chronic disease prevention, infectious disease response, and other critical programs to help states and local organizations keep communities healthy and safe.

Public health programs are life-saving and cost effective: a 2017 systematic review of the return on investment of public health interventions in high-income countries found a median return of 14 to 1.¹ And CDC estimates that every dollar spent on childhood immunization saves society more than \$10 and that they prevented 855,000 early deaths over 23 years.² CDC's Tips from Former Smokers media campaign, funded by the Prevention Fund, has led to over 1 million Americans quitting smoking for good in just 10 years.³

As public health faces 21st century threats – such as the substance misuse and suicide epidemics, infectious disease outbreaks, and increases in chronic disease rates – resources have not kept pace. The Prevention Fund is far from its original funding level. Due to cuts and offsets that do not reflect the original authorized intent of the Fund, the Prevention Fund is scheduled to reach \$2 billion in FY2028, 13 years later than the intended date. Despite funding essential public health work, the Prevention Fund has already been cut by \$11.85 billion from FY2013-FY2027.

¹ Masters R, Anwar E, Collins B, Cookson R, Capewell S. Return on investment of public health interventions: a systematic review. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 71(8):827-34, 2017.

<http://jech.bmj.com/content/jech/early/2017/03/07/jech-2016-208141.full.pdf>

² U.S. Public Health Response. Testimony of CDC before House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. Feb 27, 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/washington/testimony/2019/t20190227.htm>

³ Tips® Impact and Results. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/about/impact/campaign-impact-results.html>

The Prevention Fund is a dedicated investment in prevention and public health activities to counteract the much larger bill – \$3.2 trillion and growing – we pay every year as a country to treat illness and disease. That is why the Public Health Funding Prevents Pandemics Act is a critical step to increase federal investment in public health programs to prevent injury and illness and reduce our health care costs. Specifically, the Public Health Funding Prevents Pandemics Act:

- Restores funding to the PPHF to \$2 billion for FY2021 and all subsequent years;
- Reaffirms the importance of the Prevention Fund’s programs to HHS, and local and state health departments’ efforts to prevent and control the spread of disease;
- Acknowledges the effectiveness of prevention campaigns in preventing disease and death;
- Acknowledges cost savings associated with investments in preventive medicine and community-based prevention efforts; and
- Recognizes that cuts to the Prevention Fund undermine public health and undermine efforts to create an affordable and accessible health care system.

We thank you for sponsoring the Public Health Funding Prevents Pandemics Act in order to strengthen our nation’s ability to develop innovative programs that can respond to new or existing infectious disease threats, help reduce the burden of chronic disease, and enable Americans to live longer, healthier lives.

Sincerely,