

Prevention and Public Health Fund



~~~~~ Protect the Prevention and Public Health Fund ~~~~~

**REQUEST:** *Maintain \$1 Billion of funding in the Affordable Care Act for prevention and health promotion programs, which are vital to sustaining essential core public health infrastructure, the workforce, and our capacity to improve health in our communities.*

## **Background:**

The Prevention and Public Health Fund, the nation's first mandatory funding stream dedicated to public health programs, was created through the Affordable Care Act. It was developed to provide a steady investment in proven prevention efforts that address the spiraling growth in chronic illnesses.

In the past, unpredictable discretionary funding left vital public health programs susceptible to significant annual budget fluctuations. With this investment, the Affordable Care Act helps states and the nation as a whole focus on fighting disease and illness *before* they happen. Since the Affordable Care Act was passed in 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services has awarded \$1.25 billion in Prevention Fund grants.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund is funded at \$1 Billion for FY2013. **In order for this unprecedented Fund to improve individual and population health as it was intended, funding must be retained at this level.** Legislative measures that attempt to reduce or eliminate the Fund will curb progress already being made to end chronic illness, keep workers healthy for employment, and save billions of dollars in health care spending.

## **Why Invest in Prevention:**

- Three of every four dollars spent on health care in the United States are related to chronic diseases.<sup>1</sup>
- Chronic diseases account for 7 out of 10 deaths in America each year.<sup>2</sup>
- Investing in prevention yields long-term health savings and saves lives.<sup>3</sup>
- Prevention shows a 5-to-1 return on investment.<sup>4</sup> **Cutting \$3.5 billion in prevention could cost as much as \$20 billion in potential health care costs savings.**
- Prevention can help reduce illness and keep people on the job thus contributing to a stronger economy<sup>5</sup>.
- A 2011 study in *Health Affairs* showed combination of three strategies – delivering better preventive and chronic care, expanding health insurance coverage, and focusing on protection (enabling healthier behavior and safer environments) is more effective at saving lives and money than implementing any one of these strategies alone.<sup>6</sup>
- According to recent findings from Trust for America's Health, reducing obesity rates by five percent could lead to more than \$29 billion in health care cost savings in five years.<sup>7</sup>
- The United States continues to far outspend other countries in health care costs.<sup>8</sup>

# Prevention and Public Health Fund

FY 2013

\$1.0 B

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Key Facts:

- The Fund is the single largest investment in prevention and the public's health.
- Quality affordable medical care and community prevention must work hand-in-hand. Prevention is critical to fixing our health care system.
- Preventive care helps Americans stay healthy, avoid or delay onset of disease, lead productive lives and reduce health care costs.
- The Fund provides an opportunity to improve the Health of ALL Americans through community and clinical prevention efforts.
- Depleting the Public Health Prevention Fund will weaken public health infrastructure, the workforce, and our capacity.

Threats to the Fund:

Recent proposals and legislation threaten to drastically reduce the Fund, jeopardizing efforts to reduce chronic diseases and their exorbitant costs:

- In 2011, the Fund was met with several attempts of complete elimination, among legislation to repeal the entire Affordable Care Act.
- The President's FY2013 Budget **proposed to cut the Fund by \$4 billion** over the next 10 years.
- Congress passed the "Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012" in February 2012 to extend payroll tax cuts and temporarily patch an impending cut to Medicare physician payments, also known as the "doc fix"; as part of the agreement this bill **will reduce the Prevention and Public Health Fund by more than \$5 billion over the next ten years.**

Reducing or eliminating funding for prevention and health promotion programs will weaken the core public health infrastructure, the workforce, and our capacity to improve health in our communities.

¹CDC Community Transformation Grants Program. Accessed at <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2011pres/09/20110927a.html>

² Kung HC, Hoyert DL, Xu JQ, Murphy SL. Deaths: Final data for 2005 *National Vital Statistics Reports*; Vol 56 no 10. Hyattsville, MD. Accessed at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56/nvsr56_10.pdf

³ Trust for America's Health, *Prevention for a Healthier America*, July 2008. <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/prevention08/>

⁴ Prevention Institute and the Trust for America's Health. *Prevention for a Healthier America: Investments in Disease Prevention Yield Significant Savings, Stronger Communities*. Available at: <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/prevention08/Prevention08.pdf>. Accessed May 31, 2009

⁵ Davis, K. Collins, S.R., Doty, M.M. Ho, A., and Holmgren, A.L., *Health and Productivity Among U.S. Workers*. The Commonwealth Fund, August 2005. Accessed at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16138438>

⁶Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Policy Brief,. *Return on Investments in Public Health: A Summary of Groundbreaking Research Studies*. October 2011 Accessed at <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/72990.prevention.brief.pdf>

⁷Trust for America's Health. *Bending the Obesity Cost Curve*. Jan 2012 Issue Brief. Available at: <http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH%202012ObesityBrief06.pdf>

⁸The Commonwealth Fund. July 2011. *The U.S. Health System in Perspective: A Comparison of Twelve Industrialized Nations*. Retrieved from:

http://www.commonwealthfund.org/~media/Files/Publications/Issue%20Brief/2011/Jul/1532_Squires_US_hlt_sys_comparison_12_nations_intl_brief_v2.pdf