



May 13, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

ALAMEDA COUNTY (OAKLAND)

BALTIMORE CITY

BOSTON

CHICAGO

CLEVELAND

DALLAS COUNTY

DENVER

DETROIT

FULTON COUNTY (ATLANTA)

HOUSTON

KANSAS CITY

LONG BEACH

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

MARICOPA COUNTY (PHOENIX)

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY (MIAMI)

MINNEAPOLIS

MULTNOMAH COUNTY (PORTLAND)

NEW YORK CITY

PHILADELPHIA

SACRAMENTO

SAN ANTONIO

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

SAN FRANCISCO

SANTA CLARA COUNTY (SAN JOSE)

SEATTLE - KING COUNTY

SOUTHERN NV (LAS VEGAS)

TARRANT COUNTY (FORT WORTH)

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Reid:

On behalf of the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC), I write to oppose using the Prevention and Public Health Fund (the Fund) as an offset for a supplemental spending bill to respond to the Zika virus. With 28 member jurisdictions, BCHC is a forum for the leaders of America's largest metropolitan health departments to exchange strategies and jointly address issues to promote and protect the health and safety of the 54 million people they serve.

Though funding Zika response is essential, it does not safeguard the public's health to use other designated public health funding for this purpose. In six years, the Fund has invested nearly \$5.25 billion in resources to states, tribes and community organizations to support community-based prevention of chronic and infectious disease. Currently, 13% of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) budget comes from the Fund. A cut of this magnitude would cripple CDC and its grantees. Furthermore, Congress has allocated the Fund in FY2014, FY2015, and FY2016 spending bills acknowledging the importance of the Fund in supporting core public health programs. Decimating the Fund would dramatically impede federal, state, and local efforts to improve health, including:

- **The Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) program**, which provides \$40 million to improve directly funded cities' and states' ability to detect, diagnose, and contain outbreaks. The ELC program is critical in the midst of the Zika virus outbreak.
- **The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant**, which provides 50 states, the District of Columbia, two American Indian tribes, and U.S. territories with flexible funding for state and local health departments. The Fund provides 100% of the funding for the block grant or \$160 million.
- **The Section 317 immunization program**, which supports state and local health departments to operate immunization programs and purchase vaccines for at-need populations. The program is vital to preventing and responding to vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks, and building epidemiology and laboratory capacity in all states. The Fund provides 53% of the funding (\$324 million) for the 317 Immunization Program, which is 36% of CDC's Fund total.

In closing, the Coalition opposes any effort to repeal or cut the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which would hamper federal, state, and local efforts to protect the public's health.

Sincerely,

Chrissie Juliano, MPP
Director, Big Cities Health Coalition