



November 30, 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

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC), I write to express strong support for the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF). BCHC is a forum for 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 we serve.

For several years running, Congress has exercised its authority to fully allocate the PPHF for public health programs that protect and improve the public's health. I urge you to do so again in any vehicle containing the Labor Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, in Fiscal Year 2017 and beyond. Our member cities have long opposed any proposal that would repeal, cut or divert current or future allocations of the PPHF from its intended purpose: providing for expanded and sustained national investment in prevention and public health programs to improve health and help restrain the rate of growth in private and public sector health care costs.

While BCHC and our member departments support many aspects of the legislative package known as 21st Century Cures, using funds from the PPHF to offset the cost of this legislation is problematic. Upcoming increases in the annual funding available through the PPHF, scheduled to begin in Fiscal Year 2018, must not be re-directed to non-public health activities. The PPHF represents our single best resource to invest in prevention, prepare for and respond to infectious disease outbreaks, reduce rates of chronic illness, save lives, and save money.

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.

The PPHF continues to provide resources to states, communities, tribal 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, with 96% of the PPHF allocation directed to CDC in FY2016.

Eliminating or reducing the PPHF 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 states' and directly funded cities' ability to detect, diagnose and contain disease outbreaks. The ELC program is critical in the midst of the Zika virus outbreak. Six of our member cities receive these funds directly: Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles County, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.
- **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 PPHF provides 100% of the funding for the block grant or \$160 million.
- **The Section 317 immunization program**, which supports state and local health departments for vaccine purchase for at-need populations and immunization program operations. The program is vital to preventing and responding to vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks, and building epidemiology and laboratory capacity in all states. The PPHF provides 53% of the funding (\$324 million) for the 317 Immunization Program, which is 36% of CDC's funding from the PPHF.

Again, the Coalition and our member health departments oppose any effort to repeal or cut the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Elimination of the PPHF would hamper federal, state, and local efforts to protect the public's health. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Chrissie Juliano, MPP
Director, Big Cities Health Coalition