



March 11, 2016

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
House Energy and Commerce  
Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member  
House Energy and Commerce  
Committee  
2322A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of the Public Health Institute (PHI) -- a national nonprofit dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life for people across the nation and around the world – I write in strong opposition to H.R. 4725. As you know, this legislation would, among other things, fully repeal and eliminate current and future funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund (the Prevention Fund). **PHI urges you and the members of the Energy and Commerce Committee to oppose passage of this measure, which would eliminate \$16.5 billion in future funding (FY17-FY26) for critical public health and prevention activities.**

Across the United States, neighborhoods and communities are relying on the Prevention Fund to help turn the tide on the costly epidemic of chronic disease that is undermining our economic and national security. Annually, these conditions are responsible for seven out of 10 deaths in the United States, and cost \$1.3 trillion in treatment costs and lost productivity. Chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, and stroke are now responsible for seven out of 10 deaths and account for 86 percent of health care spending in America. The Prevention Fund is one of the best and most comprehensive tools we have to stem our growing chronic disease rates and skyrocketing healthcare costs. PHI is disappointed that the Prevention Fund is once again being targeted, putting the nation's health and economy at risk.

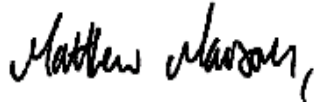
PHI knows firsthand that evidence and community-based prevention efforts work. Our Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP) program worked to reduce diesel emissions in California, a change that is projected to prevent 150,000 cases of asthma, 12,000 cases of acute bronchitis and 9,400 premature deaths. In California communities, Prevention Fund support for vital programs has enabled over 8,000 residents of multi-unit housing to keep second hand smoke out of their apartments through the implementation of smoke-free policies; helped nearly 50,000 children walk and bike to school safely – thanks to Safe Routes to School strategies at nearly 100 schools; and helped over 100,000 people live healthier lives by supporting 252 new Chronic Disease Self-Management Program Leaders.

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Importantly, if this bill passed, states would lose nearly 40 percent of their surveillance funding, which is critical to tracking and responding to infectious disease outbreaks like Zika. As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with state and territorial public health officials, work to better understand and respond to this virus and its health impacts, particularly on pregnant women and infants, we can not afford to reduce our investment in these core public health functions.

Like any good investment, prevention pays off in the end. Our Nation cannot afford to turn its back on this investment now. An approach to deficit reconciliation that cuts prevention may in fact have the opposite effect – less prevention of illness and disease will lead to increased future health care spending, while decreasing our ability to respond to emerging health threats such as Zika. PHI strongly urges that you to oppose H.R. 4725 as well as any measure that would reduce or eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Marsom". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matthew Marsom  
Vice President for Public Policy & Programs