



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 Trust for America's Health, a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to improving the health of every American, I am writing to voice our 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). We urge you to oppose passage of this proposal, which would eliminate \$16.5 billion in future funding (FY17-FY26) for critical public health and prevention activities.

For the past three years, Congress has exercised its authority to allocate the Prevention Fund, directing its resources to address critical public health issues. For example, the Prevention Fund has provided \$40 million to improve states' ability to detect, diagnose and contain disease outbreaks through the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) program. 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.

In the six years since its inception, the Prevention Fund has invested more than \$6 billion in resources to states, communities, tribal and community organizations in support of community-based prevention, including tobacco use prevention, healthy eating and active living, as well as childhood immunizations and clinical prevention. Decimating the Prevention Fund in this manner would dramatically impede efforts underway to improve health, including:

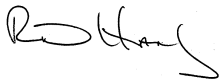
- **The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant**, which was doubled under the Prevention Fund and provides all 50 states, the District of Columbia, two American Indian tribes, and eight U.S. territories with flexible funding to address their unique public health issues at the state and community level.
- **Protecting American children from the dangers of lead poisoning:** Since FY14, the Prevention Fund has provided at least \$15 million annually to the CDC Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention to provide three-year funding to 29 states, D.C. and five cities to identify the highest risk areas of children at-risk of lead poisoning and deploy evidence-based preventive measures.

- **Expanding Access to Cancer Screenings:** In FY 2015, the Fund provided \$104 million for the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, which is helping states across the country provide cancer screenings to high risk women who are uninsured or underinsured.
- **The successful *Tips from Former Smokers*** campaign, which in just its first three months inspired more than 1.6 million people to try to quit smoking, and more than 100,000 smokers have quit for good.
- **Funding for the section 317 childhood immunization program**, which has been vital to preventing and responding to measles outbreaks, and epidemiology and laboratory capacity in all states, which are key to preventing and containing infectious disease outbreaks.

These are just a few examples of the work underway thanks to the Prevention Fund. Massively reducing the Fund would set back public health by a decade, and would slash desperately needed life-saving investments in every state. 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. 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.

It is important to note that [more than 900 state and national organizations](#) have pledged their support for the Fund. We strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 4725. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rich Hamburg
Interim President and Chief Executive Office

Cc: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce