

PROTECT FUNDING FOR PREVENTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

ACTION NEEDED: Urge your Senators and Representatives, especially those serving on the U.S. House Energy and Commerce and U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committees, to protect funding for local prevention and public health services such as the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF). Urge members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to allocate PPHF resources in a manner that enhances counties' efforts to prevent disease and injury, promote health and ultimately reduce healthcare costs.

BACKGROUND: Through 1,592 local health departments, counties play a crucial role in protecting the community's health and safety. Public health departments provide immunizations, conduct surveillance to detect and monitor emerging infectious diseases, protect the food and water supply, prevent disease and prepare for and respond to disasters, acts of bioterrorism and other health emergencies.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) is a critical funding stream designed to support the core public health functions of state and local health departments. It is a mandatory, dedicated investment of \$14.5 billion over the next 10 years in programs that prevent disease at the community level. Congress designed the PPHF to support the core public health functions of state, county, city and tribal health departments.

The PPHF is investing in evidence-based interventions intended to lower disease rates, improve quality of life and ultimately help reduce health care costs for millions of Americans at the local level. Poor public health contributes to the high cost of health care, with 75 percent being spent on the treatment of chronic diseases, many of which are preventable. These diseases cost an additional \$1 trillion each year in lost productivity in the workplace, with obesity alone costing an estimated \$147 billion per year.

The PPHF has been the subject of multiple threats, the most recent of which would cut \$8.5 billion from the fund over the next ten years. The House recently passed H.R. 1190, the "Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2015"—that would use the PPHF to offset the costs of the proposed piece of legislation. Massively cutting the PPHF in this manner would be a blow to already strained public health departments and inhibit counties' efforts to keep their residents healthy and safe.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

- **The PPHF allows local and state health departments to tailor community solutions.** States and localities face unique public health needs and challenges that call for innovative and community-driven solutions. In FY 2015, the PPHF funded all, or \$160 million, of the Preventive Health and

QUICK FACTS

- Through 1,592 local health departments, counties play a crucial role in protecting the community's health and safety
- The PPHF is a mandatory, dedicated investment of \$14.5 billion over the next 10 years in programs that prevent disease at the community level
- 75 percent of all health care costs are spent on the treatment of chronic diseases, many of which are preventable
- Chronic diseases cost an additional \$1 trillion each year in lost productivity in the workplace, with obesity alone costing an estimated \$147 billion per year

Health Services Block Grant. This program provides state and local health departments the flexibility to solve problems unique to their residents, while still being held accountable for demonstrating the local, state and national impact of the investment. States develop health plans, report their activities to CDC and target evidence-based research and interventions to populations in need.

- **The PPHF supports cost-effective and life-saving immunizations.** Immunizations are one of the most cost-effective public health interventions, saving an estimated 42,000 lives and preventing 20 million cases of disease for babies born in a given year with a return on investment of \$10.20 for every \$1 invested (according to the CDC). In FY 2015, the PPHF contributed \$210 million to the CDC Section 317 Immunization program. This program provides funds for vaccine purchase for at-need populations and immunization program operations, including support for implementing billing systems for immunization services at public health clinics to sustain high levels of vaccine coverage.
- **The PPHF funds early and rapid detection of disease and injury.** Local public health infrastructure is crucial to controlling infectious diseases like tuberculosis, once the leading cause of death in the U.S., and responding to outbreaks like salmonella. In FY 2015, the PPHF contributed \$40 million to CDC's Epidemiology and Lab Capacity (ELC) grant program. This is a single grant vehicle for multiple programmatic initiatives that strengthen local and state capacity to detect, track and respond to known infectious disease threats in communities and maintain core capacity to be the eyes and ears on the ground to detect new threats as they emerge.

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