

PROTECT FUNDING FOR CORE LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

QUICK FACTS

- Counties support the majority of America's 2,800 local health departments in order to protect their resident's health and safety and prevent the leading causes of death
- Since 2008, local health departments have lost 51,700 jobs and budget cuts continue to affect 1 in 4 local health departments
- Dedicated funding sources such as the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) are critical to helping counties support core local public health programs
- Local public health programs help prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes, which are responsible for 75% of all healthcare spending and 7 of 10 deaths in the United States

ACTION NEEDED:

Urge your members of Congress, especially those who serve on the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees, to protect funding for local public health services and prevention programs made possible by the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF).

BACKGROUND:

Counties support the majority of America's 2,800 local health departments in order to protect their residents' health, safety and quality of life. In fact, over two-thirds of local health departments are county-based and another eight percent serve multiple counties. Local health departments provide immunizations, conduct surveillance to detect and monitor emerging infectious diseases, protect the food and water supply and prepare for and respond to disasters, acts of bioterrorism and other health emergencies. In addition, local health departments work with community partners to help prevent the leading causes of death and disability and lower health care costs.

Federal investments are responsible for nearly 25 percent of local health departments' revenue. According to the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), since 2008, local health departments have lost 43,000 jobs, a decrease of 23 percent, and budget cuts continue to affect 1 in 4 local health departments. Dedicated funding sources such as the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) are critical to helping counties support core local public health programs such as immunizations and chronic disease grants. In addition, PPHF also invests in new and innovative programs tailored to the unique health problems facing communities, including the underlying social determinants of health.

Local public health programs are essential in preventing chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes, which are responsible for 75 percent of all healthcare spending and are responsible for seven of 10 deaths in the U.S. In addition, 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.

Since its inception in FY 2010, the PPHF has invested over \$6 billion in resources to help our communities face urgent public health challenges and reduce long-term healthcare costs. Future increases to the PPHF were recently cut in the 21st Century Cures Act (H.R. 34), and the approximate \$1 billion in current annual funding is the subject of repeal attempts in Congress. Cutting the PPHF would be a blow to already strained local public health departments and inhibit counties' abilities 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 2016, the PPHF funded all (\$160 million) of the Preventive Health and 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 Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and implement prevention and treatment solutions 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 2016, the PPHF contributed over half (\$324 million) of the funds to the CDC Section 317 Immunization program. This program provides funds for vaccine purchase for at-risk 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 2016, the PPHF contributed almost half (\$40 million) of CDC's Epidemiology and Lab Capacity (ELC) grant program. This is a single grant vehicle for program initiatives that strengthen state and local efforts to detect, track and respond to known infectious disease threats in communities and maintain counties' core capacity to be the eyes and ears on the ground to detect new threats as they emerge.

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