

September 20, 2023

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

As organizations committed to improving and protecting the public's health, we write to express our serious concern regarding language in the Bipartisan Primary Care and Health Workforce Act that would cut \$980 million from the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Prevention Fund). This will put Americans at greater risk for illnesses, injuries, and preventable deaths. We ask you to reject any cuts to the Prevention Fund as you work to reauthorize health programs.

The nation can no longer afford to underfund public health. In addition to losing more than one million Americans to COVID-19, the pandemic will likely have cost the U.S. economy \$14 trillion.¹ The nation spends more than \$4.3 trillion annually on health, yet only about 4.4 percent of that total represents spending on public health and prevention.² Despite spending more than any other high-income nation on treating disease, the U.S. has substantially worse health outcomes, with life expectancy declining in recent years.³ Now is the time to invest in public health and prevention.

The Prevention Fund currently comprises more than 10 percent of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) entire annual operating budget. Cuts to the Prevention Fund will translate into funding shortfalls in programs that states have long relied upon to keep their residents healthy and safe. In its first 14 years (FY2010-23), the Prevention Fund has invested more than \$12.3 billion in resources to states, localities, and tribal and community organizations in support of critical prevention and public health programs. These investments include the 317 immunization program that enables prevention of outbreaks, epidemiologists and public health laboratory grants in every state and territory to detect and investigate outbreaks and prevent further infections, the Preventive Health and Health Services (Prevent) Block Grant that enables states and localities to address their most pressing health concerns, supporting cancer screenings, and other critically important programs. Across the U.S. Department of Health and Human

¹ T Walmsley et al. Macroeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, *Economic Modelling*, Vol. 120, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econmod.2022.106147>.

² The Impact of Chronic Underfunding on America's Public Health System. Trust for America's Health, 2023. [TFAH-2023-PublicHealthFundingFINALc.pdf](#)

³ [U.S. Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2022 | Commonwealth Fund](#)

Services, the Prevention Fund supports programs such as suicide prevention, Alzheimer's disease prevention, and chronic disease self-management.

Funding prevention not only saves lives, but it also saves money. The Prevention Fund's Tips from Former Smokers Campaign alone saved an estimated \$7.3 billion in smoking-related healthcare costs from 2012 to 2018 and helped more than one million Americans quit smoking for good. Public health funding has not kept up with the range of threats that public health must address. For many of these conditions, we know what works, but public health does not have the resources to address these growing health threats.

The Prevention Fund has already been cut by nearly \$13 billion from FY2013-2029. These cuts do not just threaten CDC's budget, but also the ability of Appropriators to maintain funding for the entire Labor-HHS Appropriations bill. As the Committee works toward reauthorizing health programs, we urge you to avoid cuts to the Prevention Fund and ensure that CDC and public health programs across the country can carry out their mission of saving lives and improving health.

Sincerely,

ADAP Advocacy
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association on Health and Disability
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American College of Sports Medicine
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Microbiology
American Society on Aging
American Statistical Association
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Immunization Managers
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Pathology Chairs
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Big Cities Health Coalition
CAEAR Coalition
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of Elders (CARIE)
Children's Environmental Health Network
Christian Council of Delmarva
City-County Health District
Colorado Public Health Association
Community Access National Network
Connecticut Public Health Association
Cook County Department of Public Health
Dorchester County Health Department
Early Impact Virginia
Endocrine Society
Eta Sigma Gamma
Foundation for Healthy Generations
Futures Without Violence
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality
GO2 for Lung Cancer
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, Inc
Health Promotion Consultants
Healthy Weight Partnership Inc.
HIV Medicine Association
HLN Consulting, LLC
Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness
Immunize.org
Institute for Public Health Innovation
International WELL Building Institute
Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Kentucky Voices for Health
Kids and Car Safety
Lakeshore Foundation
Linn County Public Health
Maine Public Health Association
March of Dimes
Marked By Covid
MaryCatherine Jones Consulting, LLC
Mel Leaman Free Clinic
Mental Health America
Minnesota Public Health Association
NASTAD
National Alliance of Public Health Students and Alums

National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Social Workers
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Prevention Science Coalition
Nemours Children's Health
New Jersey Public Health Association
New York State Public Health Association
Peggy Lillis Foundation
Pennsylvania Public Health Association
Population Association of America
Prevent Blindness
Prevent Blindness Georgia
Prevent Blindness Ohio
Prevent Blindness Wisconsin
Prevent Child Abuse America
Prevention Institute
Public Health Foundation
Public Health Institute
Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness
Resolve to Save Lives
RiverStone Health
Safe States Alliance
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Public Health Education
Society for Women's Health Research
Sound Generations
Sound Generations - Project Enhance
Spina Bifida Association
Task Force for Global Health
The 317 Coalition
The Foundation for Sustainable Communities
The Gerontological Society of America
Trust for America's Health
USAgings
Vaccinate Your Family
Voices for Vaccines
Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials
Washington State Public Health Association
Well-Being and Equity in the World

Wisconsin Public Health Association
YMCA of the USA

cc: The Honorable Charles Schumer, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Roger Marshall, Senate HELP Committee
The Honorable Patty Murray, Senate Appropriations Committee Chair
The Honorable Susan Collins, Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member