



November 28, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

It has come to the attention of the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) that Congress will consider using the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) as an offset in the 21st Century Cures legislation. Since its inception, SOPHE has supported the goals of the Prevention and Public Health Fund (the Prevention Fund). We are pleased that Congress has continued to exercise its authority to fully allocate the Prevention Fund, and we urge you to fully allocate the Prevention fund in any vehicle containing the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies in Fiscal Year 2017 and beyond. **While we support many aspects of the 21st Century Cures legislation, the Society for Public Health Education strongly opposes any effort to rescind funds from the Prevention and Public Health Fund for any reason.**

SOPHE is a 501 (c)(3) professional organization founded in 1950 to provide global leadership to the profession of health education and health promotion. SOPHE contributes to the health of all people and the elimination of health disparities through advances in health education theory and research; excellence in professional preparation and practice; and advocacy for public policies conducive to health. Collectively, SOPHE's 4,000 national and chapter members are employed in universities, medical/health care settings, businesses, voluntary health agencies, international organizations, and all branches of federal/state/local government.

Working on the front lines to keep children as well as seniors healthy, SOPHE members have seen firsthand the critical role of the Prevention Fund, which is the single largest investment in our nation's health. High quality preventive care helps Americans stay healthy, avoid or delay onset of disease, lead productive working lives and reduces health care costs. Quality, affordable medical care and community prevention must work hand-in-hand. Prevention has a proven return on investment: Every \$1 spent on prevention saves \$5.60 in health spending; every \$1 spent on childhood vaccines saves \$16.50 in future health care costs. Some 75% of all US health care costs relate to preventable chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, yet only 3 cents of every dollar is spent on prevention. **Prevention Fund activities have been overwhelmingly successful at addressing the costly problem of American's health illiteracy, preventing chronic conditions in elderly and vulnerable populations, and bending the cost curve in the American health care system.**

Shifting funding from prevention and public health funding to treating and curing disease after it has occurred is fiscally irresponsible and may set back public health progress by a decade or more! 7 in 10 deaths in the United States are the result of chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, and stroke and these leading causes of death account for 86 percent of health care spending in the United States. The Prevention Fund supports community-based tobacco use prevention, healthy eating and active living, childhood immunizations and clinical prevention programs that directly address these chronic conditions. Any approach to deficit reduction that cuts programs designed to prevent disease and illness may actually lead to an increase in health care spending as well as immeasurable suffering on the highest burden populations whose chronic diseases could have been prevented.

We urge you to consider the evidence that prevention of cancer and other chronic diseases is less costly and more cost-effective than treatment of these diseases after they have presented and oppose the use of the Prevention and Public Health Fund as an offset to the 21st Century Cures legislation. As you continue to work through the regular appropriations process to allocate existing and future Prevention Fund dollars, we look forward to working with you to ensure that the Prevention Fund continues to fund new and innovative approaches to help states, localities, tribes and communities achieve better health. Please contact Dr. Cicily Hampton at (champton@sophe.org) or 202-408-9804 with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine Auld".

Elaine Auld, MPH, MCHES
Chief Executive Officer