



May 13, 2016

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Public Health Institute (PHI) -- a national nonprofit dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life for people across the nation and around the world -- I write in strong opposition to using any portion of the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Prevention Fund) as an offset for emergency supplemental funding to address the Zika virus. I urge you to vote against any such measure.

Although PHI is fully supportive of the highest possible level of supplemental funds to respond to the Zika virus, we are opposed to efforts that simultaneously undermine critical services and prevention programs supporting communities and at-risk populations. Using prevention money to pay for emergencies is contrary to creating a whole and functioning public health infrastructure and only compounds the problem, putting our nation's health and safety at an even greater risk.

Across the United States, neighborhoods and communities are relying on the Prevention Fund to help turn the tide on the costly epidemic of chronic disease that is undermining our economic and national security. Annually, these conditions are responsible for seven out of 10 deaths in the United States, and cost \$1.3 trillion in treatment costs and lost productivity. The Prevention Fund is one of the best and most comprehensive tools we have to stem our growing chronic disease rates and skyrocketing healthcare costs.

PHI knows firsthand that evidence and community-based prevention efforts work. In California communities, Prevention Fund support for vital programs has enabled over 8,000 residents of multi-unit housing to keep second hand smoke out of their apartments through the implementation of smoke-free policies; helped nearly 50,000 children walk and bike to school safely -- thanks to Safe Routes to School strategies at nearly 100 schools; and helped over 100,000 people live healthier lives by supporting 252 new Chronic Disease Self-Management Program Leaders.

Like all good investments, access to prevention pays off in the end. Our nation cannot afford to turn its back on this investment now. PHI strongly urges you to oppose any efforts that would cut, redirect, or repeal the Prevention Fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Marsom".

Matthew Marsom
Vice President for Public Policy & Programs