November 29, 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:

On behalf of the Public Health Institute (PHI) -- a 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 any proposal that would repeal, cut or divert current or future allocations of the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Prevention Fund). Although PHI is fully supportive of many aspects of the 21st Century Cures package, we are opposed using the Prevention Fund as an offset, an effort that would undermine critical services and prevention programs supporting communities and at-risk populations.

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 available to stem our growing chronic disease rates and skyrocketing healthcare costs.

PHI knows firsthand that evidence and community-based prevention efforts work. In California neighborhoods and communities, Prevention Fund support for vital disease prevention 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.

Upcoming increases in the annual funding available through the Prevention Fund, scheduled to begin in Fiscal Year 2018, must not be redirected for non-public health
activities. 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,

Matthew Marsom
Vice President for Public Policy & Programs