

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

May 13, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Reid:

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and 2,800 local health departments, I write to express strong opposition to use of the Prevention and Public Health Fund (the Fund) as an offset for a supplemental spending bill to respond to the Zika virus. As important as it is to respond to Zika, it does not safeguard the public's health to use other designated public health funding for this purpose.

In six years, the Fund has invested nearly \$5.25 billion in resources to states, communities, tribal and community organizations to support community-based prevention of chronic and infectious disease. Currently, 13% of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) budget comes from the Fund with 96% of the Fund directed to CDC. A cut of this magnitude would cripple CDC. Furthermore, Congress has allocated the Fund in FY2014, FY2015, and FY2016 spending bills acknowledging the importance of the Fund in supporting core public health programs.

Decimating the Fund would dramatically impede federal, state and local efforts to improve health, including:

- **The Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) program**, which provides \$40 million to improve states' and directly funded cities' ability to detect, diagnose and contain disease outbreaks. The ELC program is critical in the midst of the Zika virus outbreak.
- **The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant**, which provides 50 states, the District of Columbia, two American Indian tribes, and U.S. territories with flexible funding for state and local health departments. The Fund provides 100% of the funding for the block grant or \$160 million.
- **The Section 317 immunization program**, which supports state and local health departments for vaccine purchase for at-need populations and immunization program operations. The program is vital to preventing and responding to vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks, and building epidemiology and laboratory capacity in all states. The Fund provides 53% of the funding (\$324 million) for the 317 Immunization Program, which is 36% of CDC's Fund total.

Again, NACCHO and local health departments oppose any effort to repeal or cut the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Elimination of the Fund would hamper federal, state, and local efforts to protect the public's health. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



LaMar Hasbrouck, MD, MPH
Executive Director

