

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 21, 2015

Dear Colleague:

We believe strongly that our focus should be on making sure our health care system works for families and communities and puts their needs first. Wellness and prevention programs, which help people stay healthy and reduce health costs for families and businesses alike, are critical to this effort. But until recently, even though our country spends billions annually to treat chronic diseases such as diabetes, lung disease, heart disease and stroke, we invested very little in preventive efforts to reverse these trends.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund (the Fund or PPHF), the federal government's single largest investment in prevention, takes an innovative approach to improving health by supporting cross-sector and public-private partnerships and collaborations to reduce chronic disease rates and lower health care costs. The Fund is also helping to modernize our public health system to ensure that we are prepared to respond to emergencies that put families' lives and health at stake – including natural disasters, terrorist attacks, infectious disease outbreaks, and unsafe food, air and water.

Here are some examples of work underway thanks to investments from the Prevention Fund:

- In Washington, the state Department of Health received nearly \$10 million from the Fund to partner with local health departments and community groups and convene organizations not traditionally focused on health. These coalitions work together to fight obesity, reduce the frequency of diabetes, and lower the incidence of heart attacks and strokes in the community by focusing on four strategic areas: Tobacco-Free Living, Healthy Eating and Active Living, Safe Physical Environments, and Quality Clinical Preventive Services.
- In Tennessee, the state Department of Health's health care associated infection team receives nearly all of its funding through the Prevention Fund. This team was critical to the collaborative effort that saved 124 lives and averted 153 cases of meningitis or stroke nationwide during the New England Compounding Center fungal meningitis outbreak in the fall of 2012 by quickly identifying cases and sounding the alarm on the outbreak. The swift response by the Tennessee Department of Health and other public health officials allowed for direct contact to be made with 90 percent of the more than 13,500 exposed patients in less than one week, saving many from this deadly disease. Many of these epidemiologists and healthcare acquired infection specialists are directly supported

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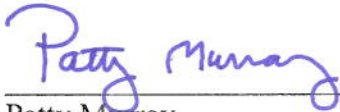
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through Fund investments like the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity program.


- In South Carolina, the state Department of Health and Environmental Control received more than \$3.2 million from the Fund to increase the number of women screened for breast and cervical cancer by providing high-quality screening with tracking and follow-up including patient navigation support services to low-income, uninsured and under-insured women in conjunction with the existing CDC National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection (NBCCEDP) program. Special emphasis was placed on reaching low-income women, rural and frontier populations, inner city low-income communities and those experiencing health disparities.

As we work to strengthen our health care system, it is critical that we maintain investments that help protect families and communities from getting sick in the first place. People must make healthy choices. But government has a critical role in fostering an environment where people have healthy choices available – affordable, healthy food; safe places for children to play outside; access to necessary vaccines. For our country to be economically competitive in the 21st century, we need a healthy and productive workforce, and to achieve that, we must emphasize prevention and wellness. The Prevention Fund is moving us toward that goal. If you are interested in learning more about what the Prevention Fund is doing in your state, please contact Andi Fristedt at andi_fristedt@help.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



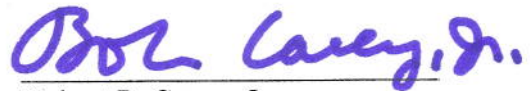
Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



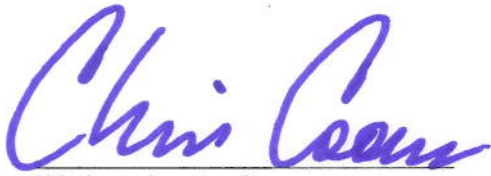
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



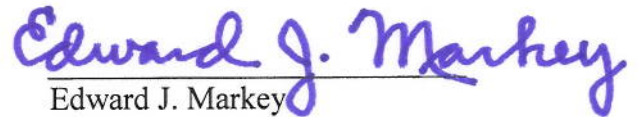
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



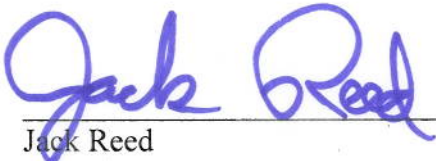
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



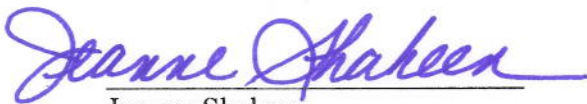
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



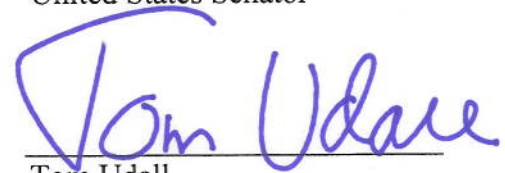
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
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Jeanne Shaheen
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Tom Udall
United States Senator