

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 18, 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.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund, the nation'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 costs. This work has helped make great strides in improving the health of women and families, which will pay dividends in the long run. The Fund is investing in these and other programs to improve women's health and give children a healthy start in life:

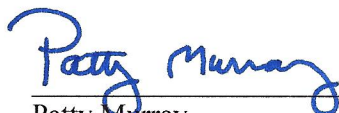
- **Expanding Access to Cancer Screenings:** In FY 2015, the Fund provided \$104 million for the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP). Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women. Cervical cancer is expected to take the lives of more than 4,000 women this year. Many of these deaths could be avoided if cancer screening rates increased among women at risk. The NBCCEDP is helping states around the country provide cancer screenings to high risk women and improve the health of women. In particular, this program is helping keep women healthy who are uninsured, underinsured, or have low-income and do not have access to coverage. For example, in FY 2014 the Prevention Fund provided \$6.2 million to Texas's Breast and Cervical Cancer program, which provides free pap tests to women aged 21 to 64 and mammograms to women aged 40 to 64 who lack coverage and have income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (\$23,540 for a single person, and \$48,500 for a family of four). From 2007-2012, Texas's program detected 785 invasive breast cancers and 2,344 cervical cancers and precancerous lesions. Approximately 80 percent of the women served are racial and ethnic minorities; black women are 40 percent more likely to die of breast cancer than white women.
- **Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice for Kids:** In Washington state, the Fund supported an innovative partnership between Seattle Children's, Public Health — Seattle & King County, and the Healthy King County Coalition to work with local governments, schools, hospitals, low-income housing groups, and childcare and youth organizations to improve opportunities for health where people live, learn, work, and play. For example, the Kent School District found that making small changes in how healthy food is offered made a difference in supporting kids' healthier choices. High school students engaged in the effort too, developing a marketing campaign to help drive youth towards healthier options.
- **Improving Health in Child Care Centers:** A grant from the Fund enabled Nemours Children's Health System to train child care providers in nine states (AZ, CA, FL, IN, KS, KY, MO, NJ, VA) to incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into their daily routines, based on a successful pilot program in Delaware. The first set of participating child care facilities in Missouri documented a 14 percent increase in the healthy eating and physical activity best practices at their child care centers. The program has reached more than 125 child care centers serving more than 12,000 children in that state. In FY 2015, the Fund provided \$4 million to help support the National Early Child Care Collaborative Program, which has impacted over 156,000 children.

- **Promoting the Benefits of Breastfeeding:** The National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality, with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is leading a nationwide effort in close partnership with Baby-Friendly USA to help hospitals improve maternity care and increase the number of hospitals and birthing centers that offer the best care for moms and new babies to support infant feeding. Breastfeeding is one of the most effective measures to protect the health of infants and provides additional health benefits for the mother. In FY 2015, the Fund provided \$8 million to help support Baby-Friendly Hospitals.
- **Protecting Moms and Babies from Tobacco:** Although smoking rates among women have been decreasing, 2011 data showed that approximately 10 percent of women reported smoking during the last three months of their pregnancy. Tobacco use during pregnancy is linked to a host of health problems including premature birth, certain birth defects, and other fetal and maternal complications. To avoid early pregnancy complications, women who smoke should be counseled to quit before they become pregnant. Funding from the PPHF is supporting tobacco prevention programs including the successful *Tips from Former Smokers* campaign and quit lines which help women, and all smokers, quit. Connecticut saw a 546 percent increase in calls to quit lines during the first week of the campaign alone.


Our nation's health and prosperity are inextricably tied. Investing in the health of women and families pays dividends by avoiding future health costs and creating a stronger, healthier workforce for the future. Improving maternal and child health is also important to economic development. Maternal and child healthcare services (e.g., labor and delivery, childhood immunizations) account for \$1 out of every \$5 large employers spend on healthcare. Investing in women and families supports economic growth and helps further contribute to a healthier and stronger household and workforce.

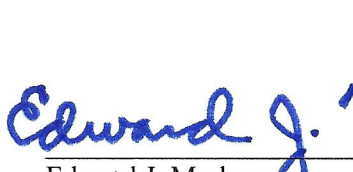
As we work to strengthen our health care system, it is critical that we maintain investments that help prevent Americans, including women and families, from getting sick in the first place. The Prevention Fund is moving us toward that goal. This is why we ask for your support for the Prevention and Public Health Fund, and the critical investments it makes in our communities.

Sincerely,

  
 Patty Murray  
 United States Senator

  
 Richard Blumenthal  
 United States Senator

  
 Christopher A. Coons  
 United States Senator

  
 Edward J. Markey  
 United States Senator

  
 Tom Udall  
 United States Senator

*Sherrod Brown*

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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

*Richard J. Durbin*

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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

*Jeanne Shaheen*

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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

*Al Franken*

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Al Franken  
United States Senator

*Ben Cardin*

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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

*Barbara Boxer*

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Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator

*Bob Casey, Jr.*

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Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator