

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 16, 2015

Dear Colleague:

Lead poisoning is a preventable tragedy that dramatically impacts a child's health and ability to learn. Preventing lead poisoning through screening and detection, education, and lead abatement is a smart investment and a real life saver for families nationwide. The Prevention and Public Health Fund has provided crucial support for CDC's Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, the only federal initiative to provide funding and support to state and local health departments to conduct vital surveillance of where, how, and when children are exposed to lead.

Children under the age of six are especially vulnerable to lead poisoning, which can severely affect mental and physical development. Even low levels of lead cause brain damage, and CDC has determined that there is no "safe" level of lead for a child. The kinds of physical health issues and developmental delays that stem from lead poisoning have long term effects on our children, our communities, and our economy. Indeed, educational system costs are estimated at \$38,000 over 3 years per child with special education needs due to lead poisoning.

The work supported by the Prevention and Public Health Fund is essential for health and housing agencies to best target funds and programs to the highest risk areas. While surveying for elevated blood lead levels, states and localities are also able to look for other home health hazards that cause respiratory diseases and cancer, such as mold, pests, or absence of carbon monoxide detectors.

For example, the Prevention and Public Health Fund has supported the following lead poisoning prevention activities:

- In 2014, the state of Rhode Island received \$367,145 in funding to help coordinate statewide efforts to eliminate lead poisoning, reduce lead exposure in children, and develop and implement policies to enforce healthy housing practices. In addition, the state's program monitors all lead test results and coordinates an immediate response to lead poisoned children.
- In Massachusetts, the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program screened a total of 176,969 children under 4 years of age for blood lead levels in 2014. In one typical example, a child with a high lead blood screen had a subsequent home inspection that identified flaking lead paint, which was remediated in the home with the support of funding from the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. The child was subsequently provided chelation therapy to reduce blood lead levels, but after continual monitoring, it was found that her lead levels continued to fluctuate. The public health team subsequently inspected a family member's home where the child also spent time and found lead contamination that was consequently removed. Thanks to funding from this program, the child is now doing much better and living between two lead-safe environments.
- In March 2015, the North Carolina Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (NC CLPPP) expanded the network of health professionals in North Carolina applying

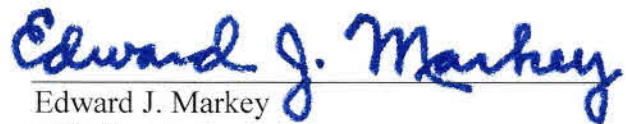
evidence-based approaches to address lead exposure, asthma triggers, and other environmental health hazards in homes. In collaboration with coordinators of the annual NC Asthma Summit, NC CLPPP educators conducted a 6-hour “Healthy Homes for Community Health Workers” training, informing 95 public health professionals about environmental health hazards they may encounter while conducting home visits.

These lead poisoning prevention programs are the kinds of initiatives that help put disadvantaged communities on an even playing field and, ultimately, work to ensure that our children can grow up to contribute to their families and their communities. The Prevention and Public Health Fund is critical to these efforts.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
U.S. Senator



Edward J. Markey
U.S. Senator



Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senator



Al Franken
U.S. Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
U.S. Senator



Tom Udall
U.S. Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator



Patty Murray
U.S. Senator



Richard Blumenthal
U.S. Senator



Brian Schatz
U.S. Senator



Richard J. Durbin
U.S. Senator



Barbara Boxer
U.S. Senator