

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 3, 2015

Dear Colleague:

The Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), the federal government's single largest investment in preventing disease, takes an innovative approach to promoting health by supporting cross-sector and public-private partnerships and collaborations to reduce chronic disease rates and lower health care costs, for the nation and for Indian Country. Tribal communities, needing public health development, have received invaluable support from the Prevention Fund to develop and sustain critical investments in disease prevention and health promotion.

The federal promise to provide Indian health services was made long ago, and the federal government must recognize the nation's obligations to the Tribes and the treaty trust relationship between the United States and indigenous peoples of our nation. The United States assumed this responsibility through treaties with Tribes - exchanging compensation and benefits for Tribal lands and peace. The Snyder Act of 1921 (25 USC 13) and other statutes legislatively affirm this trust responsibility.

Despite these promises, American Indian, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians experience significantly worse health outcomes: higher rates of alcoholism, suicide, cancer, sexually transmitted infections, influenza, viral hepatitis, and maternal deaths. Since Native communities have among the worst rates of preventable chronic disease, these investments in disease prevention have a compelling return on investment.


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

- Last year, the CDC awarded over \$11.3 million to Indian Country under the Comprehensive Approach to Good Health Wellness in Indian Country. Through the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona's (ITCA) grant, they provide leadership, resources, technical assistance and training to American Indian tribes in Arizona, Nevada, and Utah. ITCA assists Tribes to implement a variety of effective community-chosen and culturally adapted interventions to promote policies, systems, and environmental changes targeting key prevention areas, including community tobacco use, increasing healthy food promotion, increasing breast feeding promotion and health literacy.
- The Administration for Community Living (ACL) awarded PPHF dollars to grantees to address elder abuse prevention. The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska provided training and new reporting mechanisms specific to the tribe's needs to ensure that state investigations of alleged tribal elder abuse were properly investigated.
- Through their Community Transformation Grant Program award, the Makah Nation in northwest Washington State developed effective interventions to reduce chronic disease, and used the data collected to obtain additional funding from the Environmental Protection Agency to promote walking and biking among their Tribal members.

The PPHF is a critical opportunity for Tribal communities to create meaningful and long-term public health interventions and systems to respond to the community need around leading causes of death and disease, such as suicide, substance use, diabetes, tobacco use and obesity.

For Native communities as well as the nation to be economically competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need a healthy and productive workforce, and to achieve that, we must emphasize prevention and wellness. The Prevention Fund can move us toward that goal. We urge you to consider the impact that the Fund is having in Indian Country and other communities across the United States and join us in supporting the Fund.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall  
U.S. Senator



Al Franken  
U.S. Senator



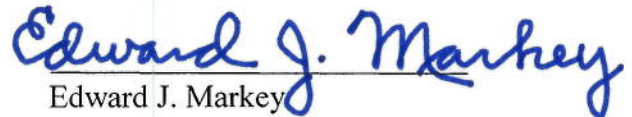
Barbara Boxer  
U.S. Senator



Brian Schatz  
U.S. Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
U.S. Senator



Edward J. Markey  
U.S. Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
U.S. Senator



Sherrod Brown  
U.S. Senator



Patty Murray  
U.S. Senator