

The American Public Health Association strongly supports the Prevention and Public Health Fund, a critical investment that is integral to addressing the burden of chronic and preventable disease in the United States.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund is the nation's first and only mandatory funding stream dedicated to improving the public's health

The United States spends far more on medical care than any other industrialized nation yet is ranked 26 out of 43 in terms of life expectancy. Only 3 percent of our health care spending is focused on prevention and public health, despite the fact that chronic conditions — the most common, costly and preventable of all health problems — account for 86 percent of our health care costs.³

The Affordable Care Act took an important first step toward addressing these issues by creating the Prevention and Public Health Fund. By law, the fund must be used “to provide for expanded and sustained national investment in prevention and public health programs to improve health and help restrain the rate of growth in private and public health care costs.”⁴

The fund is used to support a variety of community prevention and clinical prevention programs, to bolster the public health infrastructure and workforce, and to expand public health research and tracking efforts. Prevention and Public Health Fund dollars go to programs at the local, state and federal levels that fight obesity, curb tobacco use increase access to immunizations and other preventative care services and tracking and preventing infectious diseases like the Zika virus.

The Prevention and Public Health Fund improves the health of our nation and slows the growth of public and private health care costs

The Prevention and Public Health Fund provides critical resources to our state and local health departments to keep our communities healthy and safe from infectious disease, lead poisoning, tobacco-related diseases and much more. For example, every 10 percent increase in funding for community-based public health programs is estimated to reduce deaths due to preventable causes by 1 to 7 percent, and a \$2.9 billion investment in community-based disease prevention programs was estimated to save \$16.5 billion annually within five years (in 2004 dollars).^{5,6}

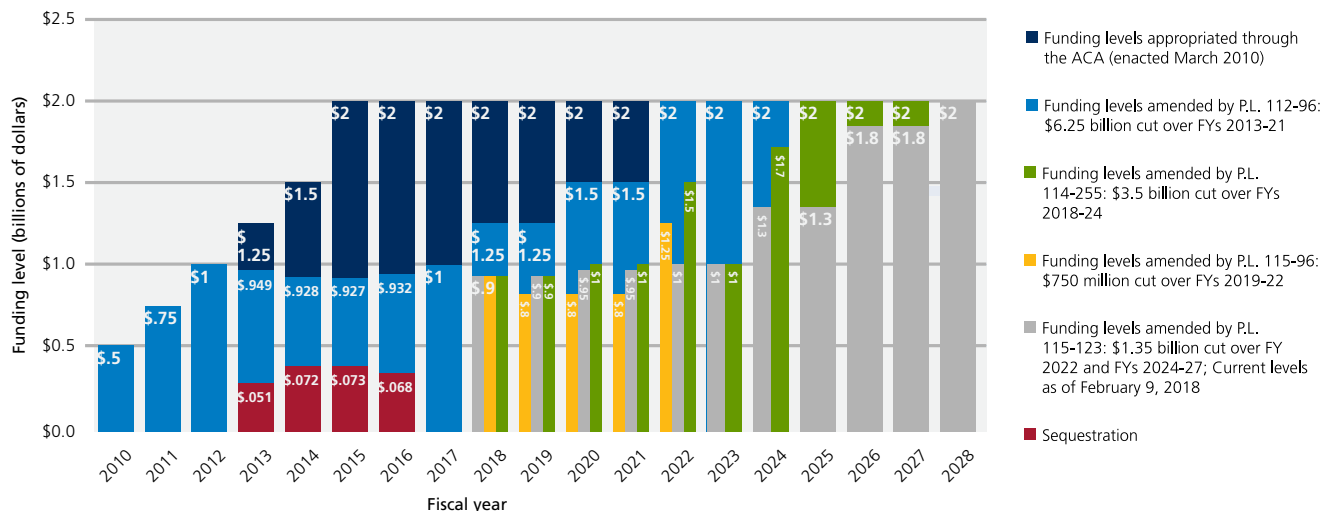
This funding is a critical component of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's budget, supporting programs that improve health outcomes and reduce costs. In FY 2018, Congress directed \$800.9 million to CDC for activities to address heart disease, tobacco control, diabetes prevention and other critical public health priorities. The remaining funds went to programs at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Administration for Community Living's Administration on Aging.

Funding History

The ACA authorized \$18.75 billion for the fund between FY 2010 and FY 2022 and \$2 billion per year after that. Annual funding levels started at \$500 million in FY 2010, and were meant to rise to \$2 billion per year by FY 2015. The mandatory nature was meant to protect the funding stream from reduction or elimination during the annual appropriations process.

However, since 2012, Congress has passed multiple bills that amend the ACA to cut and redirect money from the fund to pay for non-public health legislative proposals:

- In February 2012, Public Law 112-96 cut \$6.25 billion over nine years (FYs 2013-21) in order to offset a scheduled cut to Medicare physician payments.
- In December 2016, Public Law 114-255 cut \$3.5 billion from the fund over seven years (FYs 2018-24) to pay for the 21st Century Cures Act.
- In January 2018, Public Law 115-96 cut \$750 million from the Fund over four years (FYs 2019-22).
- In February 2018, Public Law 115-123 cut \$1.35 billion from the Fund over six years (FY 2022 and FYs 2024-27).



The United States faces significant health and fiscal challenges that could be mitigated by a better and more reliably funded public health system. The Prevention and Public Health Fund is a vital part of the effort to create such a system. APHA urges Congress to support the important work of the Prevention and Public Health Fund and opposes any further efforts to cut or eliminate this critical public health investment.

References

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- ⁶ Prevention for a Healthier America: Investments in Disease Prevention Yield Significant Savings, Stronger Communities. Washington, D.C.: Trust for America's Health, February 2009. Available online at: <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/prevention08/Prevention08.pdf>



The American Public Health Association champions the health of all people and all communities. We strengthen the public health profession, promote best practices and share the latest public health research and information. We are the only organization that influences federal policy, has a nearly 150-year perspective and brings together members from all fields of public health.

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