

March 7, 2016

Senator Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-
Education Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-
Education Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members,

We are writing today to urge your support for \$74,500,000, an increase in funding of \$13,500,000 over Fiscal Year 2016 for evidence-based physical activity programs and strategies, within CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. These additional dollars build off of the current state physical activity strategies and physical activity interventions in early child care. This new increase would support:

- \$2.5 million to support the creation of a National Partnership on Physical Activity at CDC that will assess the highest impact strategies from the National Physical Activity Plan, and identify mechanisms to accelerate the evidence into action;
- \$8.5 million for CDC's State Public Health Actions program to fund states with basic funding at CDC's "enhanced" level of funding in order to sufficiently support state-wide physical activity strategies, including scaling of evidence-based interventions aimed at improving health, health systems, community-clinical linkages and strategies to advance community walkability; and
- \$2.5 million to further disseminate CDC's High Obesity Counties program, which aims to reduce obesity in counties with the highest disease burden, those with more than 40% of adult obesity, by supporting land grant universities and cooperative extensions to improve access to physical activity and healthy food at the local level. Currently 135 counties are eligible to receive this funding but resources only enable a fraction of these counties to be served.

Physical activity has been documented to help prevent chronic diseases, like heart disease, diabetes and cancer, assist in weight reduction, improve mood, reduce symptoms of depression and improve strength and functioning for those living with cancer, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease.

Yet, for a variety of reasons, most Americans are unable to obtain the recommended amount of physical activity necessary to achieve these benefits. Only half of American adults and a quarter of American adolescents engage in physical activity at the level required to reduce and prevent chronic disease. Inadequate physical activity is associated with \$117 billion in annual health care costs in the U.S. Nearly one out of four young adults are too heavy to serve in the U.S. military and top military officials recognize obesity as a national security issue. The military health insurance program spends \$1.1 billion per year treating obesity-related illnesses.

Physical activity builds strong economic communities. Physical activity not only reduces health care costs but it increases levels of retail economic activity and employment, increases local tax revenue, property values and supports neighborhood revitalization. Physically active sick people tend to take fewer sick days, reducing absenteeism.

The National Physical Activity Plan was informed by hundreds of public, private and non-profit partners. The plan describes more than 50 comprehensive, evidence-based strategies that can be used across multiple sectors of society (business, industry, community recreation, education, faith-based, health care, mass media, public health, sport and transportation). These strategies are designed to help maximize the impact of physical activity on health outcomes. The plan was originally launched in 2010 and has been updated and with the latest science and evidence and will be released on April 20th at the National Press Club.

As national organizations fighting to help Americans meet the recommended physical activity standards, we urge the Committee to direct CDC to establish a National Partnership on Physical Activity and Innovation. The Partnership should identify those strategies that have the highest impact on curbing chronic disease and identify the mechanisms that will accelerate taking the evidence and putting it into practice and scale at the individual, organizational, community and societal levels.

Experts say physical activity is the closest thing we have to a wonder drug. Physical activity could prevent one in ten premature deaths, but also one in eight cases of breast cancer, one in twelve cases of diabetes and one in fifteen cases of heart disease. Yet, primary prevention strategies, like physical activity, are severely underfunded. Without sufficient investment in proven strategies, an increasing numbers of Americans will suffer from these costly, disabling, and in many cases, preventable diseases.

Sincerely,