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December 1, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the Society of Behavioral Medicine, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization working to improve public health by changing behavior, we are writing to express our wholehearted support for the Prevention and Public Health Fund. We ask for your help in making sure Prevention Fund dollars are not used to offset the cost of 21st Century Cures legislation.

While we support the goals of the 21st Century Cures legislation, including increased funding for biomedical research, we cannot do so at the expense of preventing chronic diseases. Millions of Americans suffer from chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, and stroke, which are responsible for seven out of 10 deaths and \$1.3 trillion in treatment costs and lost productivity every year. We know the vast majority of chronic diseases can be prevented by addressing the root causes of diseases, which largely stem from unhealthy behaviors such as tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity. The Prevention Fund is already paying for important programs that help people make healthier choices.

Programs that receive funding from the Prevention Fund address obesity, diabetes, smoking cessation, cancer screenings, access to vaccinations, and access to healthy food. Since its inception, the Prevention Fund has provided over \$6 billion in resources to address specific health needs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, two American Indian Tribes, and eight U.S. territories. Funds are especially helping racial and ethnic minority groups, low-income Americans, and tribal communities, which are all disproportionately burdened by chronic disease.

Rescinding this funding would cause detrimental losses in jobs, healthcare services, and Americans' quality of life at a time when federal disease prevention and public health programs are already critically underfunded. Public health spending is still below pre-recession levels. The budget for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has decreased from a high of \$7.07 billion in FY 2005 to \$6.34 billion in FY 2016, even with significant augmentation from the Prevention Fund. Today, Prevention Fund investments supply more than 12% of the CDC budget, including dollars for the 317 immunization program, epidemiology and laboratory capacity grants, and the entire Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant program.

We oppose any proposal that would repeal, cut, or divert current or future allocations of the Prevention Fund. We urge Congress to continue exercising its authority to fully allocate the Prevention Fund in any vehicle containing the Labor Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, in FY2017 and beyond. Upcoming increases in the annual funding available through the Prevention Fund, scheduled to begin in FY 2018, must not be re-directed to funding 21st Century Cures legislation.

We cannot trade away our single best resource to invest in prevention, reduce rates of chronic illness, save lives, and save money. We look forward to working with you to ensure the Prevention Fund continues to promote the health of all Americans.

Sincerely,
Society of Behavioral Medicine Executive Committee Officers