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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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<http://help.senate.gov>

July 21, 2017

Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:

In your role as Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), you now lead the federal government's efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to established and emerging health threats. Your agency is responsible for tackling public health crises both at home and abroad, and it has set a global standard for this work. Experts agree that investment in prevention and public health interventions offers significant benefits. And it's no surprise that previous CDC directors, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, have been outspoken advocates for prevention, both as a mechanism to improve health and lower long-term health care costs.¹

Yet, Republicans in Congress continue to work to pass a Trumpcare bill that would undermine critical public health work and undo significant progress made on prevention efforts. Given your role and responsibilities, we therefore write to seek your assessment of the potential effects of ongoing Republican legislative efforts on CDC's important work.

Republicans are also threatening to fully repeal health care, ripping apart the health care system without any plan to replace it. Based on independent, nonpartisan analysis, this would have disastrous consequences for families across the country. It would leave an additional 18 million people uninsured in the first year of enactment and would leave an additional 32 million people uninsured by 2026. It would dramatically increase premiums and would result in a significant increase in uncompensated care.

In addition to dramatically increasing the uninsured rates and reducing the quality and affordability of health coverage, including clinical preventive services, Trumpcare would directly undermine public health programs now under your purview. It would eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF or "Prevention Fund"), which was created under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and currently accounts for 12% of your agency's budget. According to CDC, the PPHF "has improved the health of Americans and slowed the growth of public and private

¹ <https://blogs.cdc.gov/safehealthcare/three-ways-the-affordable-care-act-makes-a-difference-as-it-turns-3/>;
<http://www.georgiatrend.com/February-2007/Julie-Gerberding-On-the-Public-Health-Frontline/>

healthcare costs”² and is “integral to CDC program operations.”³ Repealing the PPHF would leave a more than \$800 million gap in CDC’s annual funding and would cut \$5.4 billion in public health funding over the next five years. As described by former CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden and former Republican Majority Leader Dr. Bill Frist on July 13th, “eliminating this fund means cutting long-standing public health programs that find, stop, and prevent infectious disease outbreaks in hospitals and in our food supply, reduce the leading causes of death and disability including diabetes, heart disease, and stroke, reduce lead poisoning, prevent birth defects, support early detection of and response to health threats, and improve the health of people throughout the country.”⁴ Eliminating the Prevention Fund would also deprive states of funding they have relied upon to support immunization programs and respond to the opioid crisis.

Through the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, the Prevention Fund provides \$160 million each year for states and territories to address their unique public health needs. Every state would lose substantial funding for prevention efforts if the Prevention Fund were repealed; state losses would range from \$10 million to \$300 million in funding over the next five years. Earlier this month, the Democratic staffs of the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce released a detailed analysis on the funding each state received from the Prevention Fund in FY2016 and how repeal of the Fund would decimate many state public health activities. That information is available online at <https://goo.gl/JN8hZe>. Fourteen senators also joined together to highlight this analysis and bring attention to the critical work of the Prevention Fund in every state and crippling of prevention efforts that would result from repealing the PPHF.⁵

Trumpcare would also drastically cut funding for treatment and addiction services related to the opioid crisis. CDC has done extensive work on responding to the opioid epidemic. Its opioid prescribing guidelines and the promotion of prevention strategies, including increasing access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction, have proven effective.⁶ Yet, Trumpcare would slash expanded Medicaid coverage provided under the ACA that dramatically increased access to addiction services. Experts predict that it will cost more than \$183 billion over the next decade to treat addiction and related illness for low-income individuals who would lose coverage under the latest Trumpcare bill.⁷

Additionally, Trumpcare would ban federal funding for one year for Planned Parenthood, cutting off access to trusted providers where many women and men access critical preventive services, including in many areas with few other health care options. Planned Parenthood provides hundreds of thousands Pap tests and breast exams each year, and they provide more than four million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.⁸ Denying

² <https://www.cdc.gov/funding/documents/cdc-pphf-funding-impact.pdf>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/funding/pphf/index.html>

⁴ <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/healthcare/341933-opinion-6-devastating-effects-of-cutting-cdc-funding>

⁵ <https://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/070617%20-%20Dear%20Colleague%20-%20Prevention%20and%20Public%20Health%20Fund.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/policy/index.html>

⁷ <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/national/article157211624.html>

⁸ <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/who-we-are/planned-parenthood-at-a-glance>

access to these services, especially in rural areas, will leave patients across the country without access to contraception, cancer screenings, testing for and treatment of STIs, and much more.

These are just a few examples of concrete ways in which Trumpcare would be disastrous for public health and run directly counter to the mission of the CDC. As Republicans move forward with Trumpcare, it is important that we recognize the full extent of its effects. To help us better understand Trumpcare's potential effects on disease prevention and public health, including the progress that has been made under the ACA, please respond to the following questions in advance of the Senate floor vote on Trumpcare:

1. Please describe fully how CDC would plan to address the consequences of Trumpcare, were it to become law.
2. Please explain how repeal of the PPHF would affect CDC's work, including both the short- and long-term consequences of repeal.
 - a. Please respond with copies of all data, studies, reports, and analyses prepared by the CDC regarding the impact and effectiveness of the programs funded in part or in full by the PPHF.
 - b. What federal prevention programs or initiatives would be at risk for cuts or elimination if the PPHF were to be repealed?
 - c. What state and territorial programs or initiatives does CDC forecast would be at risk for cuts or elimination if the PPHF were to be repealed?
3. Please explain how Trumpcare would affect the government's efforts to combat the opioid epidemic.
 - a. Please respond with copies of all data, studies, reports, and analyses prepared by the CDC regarding the impact of Medicaid expansion and individual market consumer protections like the essential health benefits and mental health parity and addiction equity on the response to the opioid epidemic.
 - b. What federal prevention programs or initiatives related to the opioid epidemic would be at risk for cuts or elimination under Trumpcare?
 - c. What state and territorial programs or initiatives related to the opioid epidemic does CDC forecast would be at risk for cuts or elimination under Trumpcare?
4. Please explain how Trumpcare's proposal to ban federal funding for Planned Parenthood could limit access to preventive services, including contraception, Pap tests, breast exams, tests and/or treatments for STIs, and cancer screenings.
5. Please explain how Trumpcare's proposal to ban federal funding for Planned Parenthood could result in more unplanned pregnancies, higher rates of cancer, HIV, and STIs, and other adverse health outcomes.
6. Please provide additional information about other ways in which elimination of health care coverage for millions of people would affect or undermine access to clinical preventive services and undo significant progress made on prevention efforts.
 - a. Please respond with copies of all data, studies, reports, and analyses prepared by the CDC regarding the ACA's effects on public health and prevention.
 - b. Please respond with copies of all data, studies, reports, and analyses prepared by the CDC regarding the anticipated effects of Trumpcare on public health and prevention.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this critical matter. If you have any questions, or would like to further discuss compliance with this request, please contact Andi Fristedt (202-224-7675) or Elizabeth Letter (202-224-6403) with Senator Murray's HELP Committee staff.

Sincerely,



PATTY MURRAY
United States Senator



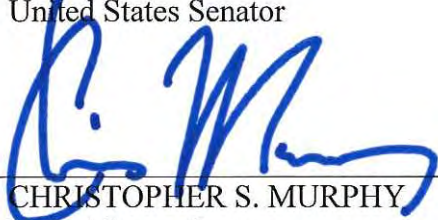
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United States Senator



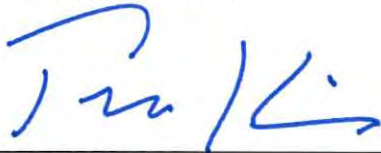
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