



**Jeff Susman, MD**  
Editor-in-Chief

## A rallying cry for the public health fund

**O**n April 13—a day before I sat down to write this editorial—the US House of Representatives passed HR 1217, a bill that, if signed into law, would repeal the Health Reform Prevention and Public Health Fund. This fund—developed under the auspices of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act—has given Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius the latitude to award more than \$500 million in grants to states and communities. In addition, another \$750 million has been allocated for the oversight of preventive services programs.

Opponents of the public health fund have characterized it as a slush fund without adequate oversight. Before condemning it, I would urge our elected officials (and primary care physicians) to consider the services this fund supports:

- training and development of primary care providers to use evidence-based interventions to address tobacco control, obesity prevention, and HIV-related health disparities
- integration of primary care and behavioral health care
- promotion of healthy lifestyles and activities aimed at reducing obesity-related conditions and costs, including the First Lady's "Let's Move!" initiative
- implementation of anti-tobacco media campaigns, telephone-based smoking cessation services, and outreach programs targeting vulnerable populations
- provision of grants to increase the capacity of epidemiology and laboratory services to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks

### Before condemning the public health fund, take a closer look at all the services it supports.

- strengthening the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by supporting community services and expanding public health workforce programs and public involvement
- training public health providers to advance preventive medicine and health promotion and improve the access and quality of health services in medically underserved communities.

Although HR 1217 passed the House by a vote of 236 to 183, the legislation is expected to die in the Senate. Here's hoping that the Prevention and Public Health Fund—an investment in our nation's future—prevails.

*Jeff Susman, MD*  
jfp@neoucom.edu

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Quadrant HealthCom, Inc.  
7 Century Drive, Suite 302  
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