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Impacts of H.R. 1217, Legislation to End the Prevention and Public Health Fund

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Democratic Staff
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Investments in public health and disease prevention are some of the most cost-effective interventions in health and health care. The landmark Affordable Care Act established the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which provides \$500 million in 2010 and \$750 million this year in grants and support to state and local public health entities for activities to prevent smoking, reduce obesity, increase physical activity, reduce alcohol abuse, address bioterrorism and other public health crises, and improve state and local public health infrastructure. In 2012, the investments are scheduled to increase again to \$1 billion, providing even greater benefits to expand and sustain the efforts to reduce preventable deaths.

The Committee will today be voting on H.R. 1217, which would repeal the Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund. Repeal would have a significant impact in Colorado and in Rep. DeGette's district, endangering millions of dollars in public health and prevention funding, and cutting funding to address critical public health problems.

The impacts of the passage of H.R. 1217 in Colorado and in Rep. DeGette's district include:

- **Eliminating critical investments in public health and prevention.** In 2010, Colorado received \$8.7 million from the Prevention and Public Health Fund.¹ About \$0.4 million of this was spent on clinical and community prevention grants for state and local entities, \$1.6 million for public health infrastructure, and \$6.7 million to train primary care providers. Funding will increase in 2011 and 2012.
- **Cutting funding to prevent smoking.** In Colorado, 19% of the adult population smokes – well above the Healthy People 2020 goal of 12%. Adams and Denver counties have the highest smoking rates in Rep. DeGette's district, 22% and 20%, respectively. The Prevention and Public Health Fund's grants provide support for federal, state, and community initiatives to use evidence-based interventions to address tobacco control, such as community quitlines – but would be eliminated under H.R. 1217.²
- **Cutting funding to prevent obesity.** In Colorado, 19% of the adult population is obese. Adams and Arapahoe counties have the highest obesity rates in Rep. DeGette's district, 24% and 19%, respectively. The Prevention and Public Health Fund's grants provide support to meet the Healthy People 2020 goal of reducing the obesity rate by 10% by supporting federal, state, and community initiatives to use evidence-based interventions to address obesity prevention. The Fund can also be used to advance activities to improve nutrition and increase physical activity to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce obesity related conditions and costs – but would be eliminated under H.R. 1217.
- **Eliminating efforts to reduce premature deaths.** The primary focus of public health and prevention is to stop preventable deaths from diseases such as lung cancer, cervical cancer, breast cancer, HIV, and heart disease. In Colorado, there are 13,000 premature deaths annually, a majority of which are preventable. H.R. 1217 would cut funding to reduce these early and preventable deaths.

¹ Department of Health and Human Services, online at <http://www.healthcare.gov/center>

² *County Health Rankings Project*, online at <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>. Data are presented here at the state and county level.

