



March 7, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As the largest purchaser of health care—more than \$1 trillion per year and rising—the federal government has an enormous stake in spending each health dollar wisely. Patients deserve health care that works for them, and taxpayers deserve smart spending. Indeed, in poll after poll, health care costs are consistently top of mind for Americans. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) helps ensure Americans get the best care at the best value.

As you draft the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2020, the **152 undersigned members of the Friends of AHRQ respectfully request \$460 million in budget authority for the agency**, which is consistent with the FY 2010 level adjusted for inflation. This funding level would allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated as a result of years of past cuts and expand its research and training portfolio to address our nation’s pressing and evolving health care challenges. Additionally, with a quarter of the agency’s program level budget supported by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund, a strong investment in the AHRQ appropriation will be essential to sustain the agency’s core activities as the Trust Fund undergoes reauthorization this year.

The vast majority of federally funded research focuses on one specific disease, organ system, or cellular or chemical process. AHRQ is the only federal agency that funds research at universities and other research institutions throughout the nation on health systems—the “real-life” patient who has complex comorbidities, the interoperability of different technological advances, and the interactions and intersections of health care providers. AHRQ also generates data to monitor the health care landscape and ensures the pipeline of new medical findings reaches health care providers and patients, regardless of where they work and live, and provides them with the tools and training they need to use those findings every day in the care of patients.

An example of AHRQ’s successful work includes efforts to reduce hospital acquired conditions. New, preliminary data from AHRQ finds that by implementing transformational, AHRQ-funded research, hospitals, health systems, and other providers have prevented an estimated 20,500 hospital deaths and saved \$7.7 billion in health care costs from 2014 to 2017. In another example, AHRQ funded research grants are finding ways to ensure rural primary care practices are equipped to respond to the opioid

crisis. An explosion in the incidence of opioid addiction and overdoses, particularly in rural areas of the country, has elevated this issue to crisis-level in the United States. Primary care practices are often the first line of defense against this and other substance use disorders.

The Friends of AHRQ recognize the importance of investing federal funds strategically. We strongly believe that AHRQ more than earns a place among your appropriations priorities, and urge you to provide the agency \$460 million in budget authority in FY 2020. Doing so would signal your continued commitment not just to produce discoveries, but to produce science that translates medical progress into better care for patients *today*.

Thank you for considering our recommendation. For more information, including a copy of our report on AHRQ's contributions to improved health and health care over the years, please contact Kristin Rosengren at 202.292.6700 or kristin.rosengren@academyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
AcademyHealth
Alliance for Aging Research
AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Clinical Chemistry
American Association for Dental Research
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc.
American Association of Public Health Dentistry
American Association on Health and Disability
American Board of Medical Specialties
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)
American Chiropractic Association
American College of Cardiology
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Physicians
American College of Rheumatology
American Dental Education Association
American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
American Health Quality Association
American Heart Association
American Liver Foundation
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Optometric Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Pediatric Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Plastic Surgery
American Statistical Association
American Thoracic Society
Association for Clinical and Translational Science
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of University Programs in Health Administration
Association of University Radiologists
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Brown University
Center for Health Care Organizational and Innovation Research (CHOIR)
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Clinical Research Forum
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science

Coalition for Health Funding
Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation
Cutler Institute, University of Southern Maine
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Doctor Evidence
Duke University Health System
Dystonia Advocacy Network
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation
ECRI Institute
Emergency Nurses Association
Epilepsy Foundation
Federation of American Hospitals
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
GBS|CIDP Foundation International
Healthcare Information & Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
Healthy Teen Network
HIV Medicine Association
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
IC & RC
International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis (IFAA)
International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Kaiser Permanente
Lakeshore Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association
Lymphatic Education & Research Network
March of Dimes
Mayo Clinic
METAvivor
National Alopecia Areata Foundation
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Athletic Trainers' Association
National Black Nurses Association
National Coalition on Health Care
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Kidney Foundation
National Partnership for Women & Families
NephCure Kidney International

North American Primary Care Research Group
Northern Illinois University
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Pediatric Policy Council
Prevent Blindness
Prevent Blindness Georgia
Prevent Blindness Iowa
Prevent Blindness NC
Prevent Blindness Wisconsin
Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate
Pulmonary Hypertension Association
Research!America
Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation
RTI International
Scleroderma Foundation
Sleep Research Society
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Public Health Education
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Society to Improve Diagnosis in Medicine
The Johns Hopkins University
The Joint Commission
The Leapfrog Group
The Marfan Foundation
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Tulane University Department of Health Policy and Management
U.S. Hereditary Angioedema Association
UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, Department of Health Policy & Management
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
University of Rochester
UTHealth | The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
Weill Cornell Medicine
Yale University