



March 16, 2020

The Hon. Roy Blunt  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education and Related Agencies  
131 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education and Related Agencies  
156 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

Health spending makes up 17.7 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), touching the life, and wallet, of every American. And, as the largest purchaser of health care, the federal government has an enormous stake in spending each health dollar wisely. As the lead agency for health services research, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) helps make that possible. AHRQ's research is the bridge between cures and care – ensuring 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) 2021, the 89 undersigned members of the Friends of AHRQ respectfully request \$471 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.

The vast majority of federally funded research focuses on one specific disease, organ system, 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 supports transparency and accountability – generating data to monitor the health care landscape and ensuring 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. For example, 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 \$471 million in budget authority in FY 2021. 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](mailto:kristin.rosengren@academyhealth.org).

Sincerely,

AAPACN

Academic Pediatric Association

AcademyHealth

Alliance for Aging Research

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Neurology

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for Dental Research

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 Public Health Dentistry

American Association on Health and Disability

American Board of Medical Specialties

American Chiropractic Association

American College of Cardiology

American College of Nurse-Midwives

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Physicians

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 Pediatric Society  
American Physical Therapy Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society for Nutrition  
American Society of Hematology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
American Statistical Association  
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 Population Centers  
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU)  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of University Radiologists  
Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine  
Center for Health Care Organizational and Innovation Research  
Clinical Research Forum  
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science  
Columbia University Irving Medical Center  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Healthy Teen Network  
Kaiser Permanente  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association  
March of Dimes  
METAvivor  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Athletic Trainers' Association



National League for Nursing  
National Pancreas Foundation  
NextGen Healthcare  
North American Primary Care Research Group  
Northern Illinois University  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Population Association of America  
Project Sleep  
Research!America  
Sleep Research Society  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Pediatric Research  
Society of General Internal Medicine  
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine  
Spina Bifida Association  
The Joint Commission  
The Leapfrog Group  
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
UCLA Fielding School of Public Health  
University of Michigan-Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation  
US Hereditary Angioedema Association  
UTHealth | The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston  
Weill Cornell Medicine