



April 5, 2017

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member Committee on  
Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives Washington,  
DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives Washington,  
DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

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. That means care delivered at the right time, in the right setting, by the right professional. It means that patients receive cutting-edge care, whether that patient lives in South Carolina, South Dakota, or south Jersey – and it means no patient is harmed by the care they receive due to a preventable medical error. It's a tall order and a tough job, but the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) helps achieve such success day in and day out. AHRQ doesn't attract great attention to itself; it's a workhorse. But AHRQ saves money, and AHRQ saves lives.

As you draft the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2018, the **151 undersigned members of the Friends of AHRQ respectfully request \$364 million in budget authority**, which is consistent with the FY 2015 level and would signal your continued commitment not just to produce discoveries, but to produce science that translates medical progress into better care for patients *today*.

AHRQ funds the research needed to change what's wrong and share what's right in day-to-day health care delivery. Universities and other research institutes throughout the nation conduct this critical research. 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 research grants 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. In addition, AHRQ is the federal agency singularly responsible for reducing the nearly 100,000 deaths in the United States each year associated with medical errors. AHRQ's innovative Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections—first applied on a large scale in 2003 across more than 100 ICUs across Michigan—saved more than 1,500 lives and nearly \$200 million in the program's first 18 months. This project has since been expanded to hospitals in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

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 on the “real-life” patient—the one who doesn't have diabetes alone, for example, but also has cardiovascular disease and renal disease; or the patient who has cancer, as well as heart disease. In 2000, an estimated 60 million Americans had such multiple chronic conditions. By 2020, an estimated 81 million people will have multiple chronic conditions and the costs of their care will consume 80 percent of publicly funded health insurance programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid. Unfortunately, the \$30 million cut AHRQ sustained in FY 2016 resulted in the termination of the agency's portfolio aimed at optimizing care for patients with multiple chronic conditions. Restoring AHRQ's budget to the FY 2015 level of \$364 million will support research to supply providers with the tools they need to best serve these patients.

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 restore the agency's funding to at least \$364 million in FY 2018.

Thank you for your stewardship of the appropriations process and for considering our views. For more information, including a copy of our report on AHRQ's contributions over the years, please contact Lindsey Horan at 202.292.6718 or [lindsey.horan@academyhealth.org](mailto:lindsey.horan@academyhealth.org).

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
Academy for Radiology & Biomedical Imaging Research  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
AcademyHealth  
Alliance for Aging Research  
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine  
American Academy of Nursing  
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 and Electrodiagnostic Medicine  
American Association of Nurse Practitioners  
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses  
American Association of Public Health Dentistry  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Board of Medical Specialties  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American College of Clinical Pharmacy  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Health Quality Association  
American Heart Association  
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)  
American Medical Student Association  
American Nephrology Nurses' Association  
American Optometric Association  
American Organization of Nurse Executives  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Pediatric Society  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Hematology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Statistical Association  
Association for Clinical and Translational Science  
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 Public and Land-grant Universities  
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of University Radiologists  
Baylor College of Medicine  
Brigham and Women's Hospital, Department of Emergency Medicine  
Brown University School of Public Health

Cedars-Sinai  
Center for Healthcare Organizational and Innovation Research (CHOIR) UC-Berkeley School of Public Health Research  
Center for Lean Engagement and Research (CLEAR) in Healthcare – UC-Berkeley School of Public Health Research  
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
Clinical Research Forum  
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science  
Coalition for Health Funding  
Columbia University Medical Center  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation  
Department of Health Policy and Management, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health  
Drexel University  
Duke University  
Duke University Health System  
ECRI Institute  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences  
Fight Colorectal Cancer  
Guidelines International Network North America Steering Group  
Harvard University  
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)  
Healthy Teen Network  
HIV Medicine Association  
IC&RC  
Institute for Healthcare Improvement  
John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawaii Manoa  
Kaiser Permanente  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.  
March of Dimes  
Marshfield Clinic Health System  
Mayo Clinic  
Medica Research Institute  
Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Coalition on Health Care  
National Committee for Quality Assurance  
National League for Nursing  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Patient Safety Foundation

New York Medical College  
NextGen Healthcare  
North American Primary Care Research Group  
Northern Illinois University  
Northwestern University  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU)  
Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Penn Medicine  
Penn State University  
Premier, Inc.  
Quad Council Coalition  
Research!America  
RTI International  
Rutgers University  
Sleep Research Society  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Medical Decision Making  
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  
Solve ME/CFS Initiative  
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine  
Stony Brook University  
The American Thoracic Society  
The Heart Rhythm Society  
The Leapfrog Group  
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
Trust for America's Health  
Tulane School of Medicine  
U-M Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation  
University of California System  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
University of Missouri System  
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center  
University of Virginia School of Medicine

University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health  
UPMC Community Provider Services (CPS)  
UTHealth | The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center  
Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University  
Washington State University  
Weill Cornell Medicine  
West Virginia University School of Medicine  
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease  
Yale University