



September 7, 2018

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

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

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray:

As you and your colleagues prepare to negotiate a final spending bill for fiscal year (FY) 2019, the 130 undersigned organizations respectfully request that you fund the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at a level equal to or higher than the House and Senate marks of \$334 million. AHRQ is an essential element of the nation's health care ecosystem, charged with improving the quality and delivery of health care. Nevertheless, nearly a decade of budget cuts and stagnant funding have taken a toll—AHRQ's current discretionary funding is \$120 million below 2010 levels, adjusted for inflation—and as a direct result, important research portfolios and practice tools have been eliminated.

Discovering cures is critical to patients, providers, and our communities. However, understanding how to most effectively *deliver* those cures to patients through health services requires research that is equally critical. AHRQ is the only federal agency whose sole focus is to generate reliable research on how to deliver the highest quality care, at the greatest value, with the best outcomes to all patients. It is the only agency that funds research on the “real-world” 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. AHRQ-funded research allows us to understand where waste, inefficiencies, and gaps exist within the health care system, and allows patients, payers, providers, and others to harness American innovation and make the health care system safer, more efficient, and more effective.

The House and Senate marks of \$334 million ensures the agency can at least continue its current programs. However, \$334 million will not restore funding for critical initiatives that were terminated as a result of budget cuts. As a direct result of a \$30 million cut AHRQ sustained in FY 2016, the agency was forced to end its longstanding HIV Research Network, its multiple chronic conditions portfolio, and most recently, the National Guidelines Clearinghouse—a move

that made headlines given the widespread impact on the health community and providers' ability to access the latest, best evidence on what treatments work best, for whom, in what circumstances.

America spends around \$3.5 trillion a year on health care, and more than \$35 billion a year on biomedical research, but there has been only minimal investment in research that connects the two. Health services research shows that as much as one-third of what we spend on health care each year is waste—care that is inappropriate, ineffective, or harmful. Every dollar invested in generating evidence to eliminate that waste is a sound fiscal investment. AHRQ and the research it supports helps to ensure that our health care system becomes the safest, most effective one in the world for patients. We urge Congress to make funding for AHRQ and its research a priority in the final spending legislation for FY 2019 and consider any opportunity to increase the agency's funding to restore critical programs that have been lost after nearly a decade of funding stagnation.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Academy of Medical Surgical Nurses (AMSN)
AcademyHealth
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing (AAACN)
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Clinical Chemistry
American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association for Dental Research
American Association on Health and Disability
American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine
American Association of Public Health Dentistry
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Board of Medical Specialties
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)
American College of Cardiology
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American College of Rheumatology
American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
American Health Quality Association (AHQA)
American Heart Association

American Liver Foundation
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Pediatric Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)
American Statistical Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association for Clinical and Translational Science
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 for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
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 Healthcare Organizational and Innovation Research (CHOIR), UC-Berkeley
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
Department of Global Health Management and Policy,
School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Tulane University
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Duke University Health System
Dystonia Advocacy Network
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation

ECRI Institute
Emergency Nurses Association
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
Heart Rhythm Society
HIV Medicine Association
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (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, Inc.
Lymphatic Education & Research Network
March of Dimes
METAvivor
National Alopecia Areata Foundation
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Athletic Trainers' Association
National Coalition on Health Care
National Hemophilia Foundation
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Partnership for Women & Families
NephCure Kidney International
NextGen Healthcare
North American Primary Care Research Group
Northern Illinois University
Oncology Nursing Society (ONS)
Pediatric Policy Council
Penn State University
Pulmonary Hypertension Association
Research!America
Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation
Scleroderma Foundation
Sleep Research Society
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA)

Society of Hospital Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Public Health Education
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
The Joint Commission
The Leapfrog Group
The Marfan Foundation
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
U.S. Hereditary Angioedema Association
UCLA Department of Health Policy and Management
University of Michigan-Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
University of Rochester
UNTHSC
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Weill Cornell Medicine
Yale University