



April 5, 2017

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

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
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, 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 Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, 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. 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.

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 Electrodagnostic 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