



March 10, 2016

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

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

With the federal government being the largest purchaser of health care—more than \$1 trillion per year and rising—it has a responsibility to fund research that determines how to make care as effective, efficient, affordable, equitable, and safe as possible. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is the only federal agency with the sole purpose of generating and disseminating such evidence. The health services research, quality improvement protocols, datasets, and tools supported by AHRQ are used in hospitals, medical centers, physician practices, and public health departments in communities across the nation to improve the quality, access, and value of the health care system.

As you draft the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2017, **the undersigned members of the Friends of AHRQ respectfully request \$364 million in budget authority—consistent with the president’s discretionary funding request and FY 2015 level.**

The Friends of AHRQ thank the subcommittee for recognizing that AHRQ plays a critical role in the research continuum—helping patients get the most from new discoveries in basic and clinical research by improving health care delivery. Your stewardship recognizes that indeed, AHRQ is building upon and extending the work of its public and nongovernmental partners to ensure patients get the right care at the right time, every time. More specifically:

- **AHRQ helps providers help patients.** Americans want to take personal responsibility for their health, and they rely on their doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health care providers for guidance in making difficult choices. AHRQ-supported research generates valuable evidence to help providers help patients make the right health care decisions for themselves and their loved ones. For example, AHRQ will soon award a series of three-year research grants to advance implementation of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder in primary care practices in rural areas of the United States. In addition to expanding access to this evidence-based therapy in underserved communities, these research studies will discover and test solutions to overcoming known barriers to implementation of MAT in primary care and create training and implementation resources to support future efforts to expand access to MAT.

- **AHRQ keeps patients safe.** The science funded by AHRQ ensures patients receive high quality, appropriate care every time they walk through the hospital, clinic, and medical office doors. AHRQ’s research provides the basis for protocols that prevent medical errors and reduce hospital-acquired infections (HAI), and improve patient experiences and outcomes. In just one example, AHRQ’s evidence-based Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections (CUSP)—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. The protocols have since been expanded to hospitals in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to continue the national implementation of this approach for reducing HAIs.
- **AHRQ makes the business case for high quality care.** AHRQ helps health care providers – from private practice physicians to large hospital systems – understand how to deliver the best care most efficiently. For example, AHRQ maintains the National Quality Measurement Clearinghouse (NQMC) to provide health care providers, health plans, delivery systems, and others with an accessible resource for quality measures and a one-stop-shop for benchmarks on providing more safe, effective and timely care. The breadth of evidence available from AHRQ empowers health care providers to understand not just how they compare to their peers, but also how to improve their performance to be more competitive.

The Friends of AHRQ appreciate that competing priorities abound and resources are increasingly scarce, and we recognize the importance of investing federal funds wisely. We urge you to restore the \$30 million cut AHRQ sustained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 and provide the agency \$364 million in FY 2017, because it isn’t enough to **develop** cures. Understanding how to most effectively and efficiently **deliver** cures to patients through health services research is a critical component on the health research continuum, and one that has implications for health care quality, cost, access and ultimately patient outcomes.

We thank you for your consideration of our request and look forward to helping you preserve the agency’s unique role in generating evidence on the quality of health care and ensuring the evidence is used in practice. For more information, including a copy of our report, please contact Lindsey Horan at 202.292.6718 or [lindsey.horan@academyhealth.org](mailto:lindsey.horan@academyhealth.org).

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
 Academy of Radiology Research  
 AcademyHealth  
 Adult Congenital Heart Association  
 Alliance for Aging Research  
 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 Physician Leadership  
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 Orthopaedic Surgeons  
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 Cardiology  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Gastroenterological Association  
American Heart Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)  
American Medical Student Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Optometric Association  
American Organization of Nurse Executives  
American Pediatric Society  
American Pediatric Surgical Nurses 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 Statistical Association  
American Telemedicine Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Association for Clinical and Translational Science  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators  
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  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of University Radiologists (AUR)  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
Baylor Scott & White  
BJC HealthCare  
Boston University School of Public Health  
Brown University  
California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals  
Cedars-Sinai  
Center for Healthcare Organizational and Innovation Research (CHOI Uc-Berkeley school of Public Health)  
Chron's and Colitis Foundation of America  
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science  
Coalition for Health Funding  
Coalition for Imaging and Bioengineering Research  
Columbia University Medical Center  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)  
Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals  
Connecticut Certification Board  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Division of Health Policy and Management, University of Minnesota  
ECRI Institute  
Emory University  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences  
Fight Colorectal Cancer  
GBS|CIDP Foundation International  
Global Healthy Living Foundation  
Group Health Cooperative  
Guidelines International Network, North America Community Steering Group  
Harvard University  
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)  
Healthy Teen Network  
HIV Medicine Association  
Illinois Alcohol and Drug Dependence Association  
International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium  
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses  
Johns Hopkins University  
Kaiser Permanente  
Lakeshore Foundation  
March of Dimes  
Mayo Clinic  
Medica Research Institute  
Michigan State University  
Minnesota Population Center (MPC)  
Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine

NAPHSIS  
NASTAD (National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors)  
National Alopecia Areata Foundation  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Athletic Trainers' Association  
National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care  
National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National League for Nursing  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
North American Primary Care Research Group  
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA)  
NYU Langone Medical Center  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Oregon Health & Science University  
Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Penn Medicine  
Penn State University  
Physician Assistant Education Association  
Population Association of America  
Public Health Institute  
Pulmonary Hypertension Association  
Research!America  
RTI International  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School  
Scleroderma Foundation  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Medical Decision Making  
Society for Pediatric Research  
Society for Public Health Education  
Society for Women's Health Research  
Society of General Internal Medicine  
Society of Hospital Medicine  
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine  
Summa Health  
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
The Clinical Research Forum  
The Integrated Health Interview Series (IHIS)  
The Joint Commission  
The Leapfrog Group  
The Marfan Foundation  
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
Trinity Health-New England  
Trust for America's Health

University of California, Davis  
University of Cincinnati  
University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus  
University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System  
University of Michigan  
University of Missouri System  
University of Nebraska Medical Center  
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
University of Rochester  
University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine  
University of South Florida Health  
University of Washington  
UPMC Community Provider Services  
UTHealth - The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston  
Vanderbilt University  
Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Weill Cornell Medicine  
Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine  
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease