



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