



October 12, 2016

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

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice-Chairwoman
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 Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray:

As you work to enact final spending legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2017, the 168 undersigned organizations and institutions representing patients and caregivers, health providers and clinicians, faculty and students, scientists, policy professionals, employers, and insurers **urge you to protect AHRQ's budget from further cuts and provide the agency at least \$334 million in budget authority, consistent with current levels.** We understand lawmakers face difficult choices in funding myriad priorities with increasingly limited resources, but deep cuts to AHRQ in the current environment are pennywise and pound foolish.

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. 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 and other clinician practices, nursing facilities, clinics, and public health departments in communities across the nation to improve the quality, access, and value of the health care system.

The Friends of AHRQ thank you for recognizing AHRQ's unique and critical role in the research continuum that helps patients get the most from new discoveries in basic and clinical research by improving health care delivery. Unfortunately, the proposed cuts in your respective Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bills for FY 2017, to varying degrees, would significantly undermine that role. These cuts would follow upon the 8 percent cut AHRQ sustained in FY 2016 that resulted in the termination of long-standing programs—including the HIV Research Network and the National Quality Measures Clearinghouse, among others—as well as cutbacks in the production of the congressionally-mandated National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Reports that serve as the gold standard in monitoring and improving patient outcomes; each of these

programs and services is uniquely valuable. We worry that further cuts to AHRQ's budget authority would make it harder for health care delivery organizations, health providers, policymakers, and the people they serve to make informed choices about how to obtain the best care while addressing costs and protecting patient safety.

The Friends of AHRQ appreciate that competing priorities abound and resources are scarce, and we recognize the importance of investing federal funds wisely. We urge you to protect AHRQ from additional cuts—providing the agency at least \$334 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 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 of Nutrition and Dietetics
Academy of Radiology Research
AcademyHealth
Adult Congenital Heart Association
Alliance for Aging Research
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
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 Dental Research
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association of Clinical Chemistry (AACC)
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Directors of Nursing Services (AADNS)
American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American Association on Health and Disability
American Board of Medical Specialties
American College of Cardiology
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Nurse-Midwives
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 Heart Association
American Hospital Association
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)
American Medical Student Association
American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Osteopathic Association
American Pediatric Society
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 Perianesthesia Nurses (ASPAN)
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Statistical Association
American Thoracic Society
Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback
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 Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of University Radiologists
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
BJC HealthCare
Boston University School of Public Health
Brown University Center for Long-Term Care Quality & Innovation
California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine
Cedars-Sinai Health System
Center for Healthcare Organizational and Innovation Research, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science
Coalition for Health Funding
Coalition for Imaging and Bioengineering Research

Cognitive Science Society
Columbia University Medical Center
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America
Department of Health Policy and Management, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health
Division of Health Policy and Management, University of Minnesota
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation
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
Harvard University
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
Healthy Teen Network
Heart Rhythm Society
Hepatitis Foundation International
HIV Medicine Association
Illinois Association of Behavioral Health
Integrated Health Interview Series
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium
International Society of Psychiatric Nurses (ISPN)
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Kaiser Permanente
Lakeshore Foundation
Mayo Clinic
Medica Research Institute
Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine
NAPHSIS: National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems
National Alopecia Areata Foundation
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)
National Business Group on Health
National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care
National Coalition on Health Care
National Committee for Quality Assurance
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Patient Safety Foundation
NephCure Kidney International
North American Primary Care Research Group
North Carolina Society for Public Health Education (NC SOPHE)
Oncology Nursing Society
Oregon Health & Science University

Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute
Pediatric Policy Council
Penn Medicine
Penn State College of Medicine
Penn State University
Physician Assistant Education Association
Population Association of America
Public Health Institute
Pulmonary Hypertension Association
Research!America
Scleroderma Foundation
Sleep Research Society
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Medical Decision Making (SMDM)
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Public Health Education
Society for Research in Psychopathology
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Spina Bifida Association
Summa Health
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
The Clinical Research Forum
The Executive Committee of the Guidelines International Network North America Regional Community
The Johns Hopkins University
The Joint Commission
The Leapfrog Group
The Marfan Foundation
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Trust for America's Health
U.S. Hereditary Angioedema Association
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System
University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation
University of Missouri System
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rochester
University of Wisconsin-Madison
UPMC Community Provider Services
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Weill Cornell Medicine
Yale University