



March 7, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chair  
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 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. Indeed, in poll after poll, health care costs are consistently top of mind for Americans. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) helps ensure Americans get the best care at the best value.

As you draft the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2020, the **152 undersigned members of the Friends of AHRQ respectfully request \$460 million in budget authority for the agency**, which is consistent with the FY 2010 level adjusted for inflation. This funding level would allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated as a result of years of past cuts and expand its research and training portfolio to address our nation’s pressing and evolving health care challenges. Additionally, with a quarter of the agency’s program level budget supported by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund, a strong investment in the AHRQ appropriation will be essential to sustain the agency’s core activities as the Trust Fund undergoes reauthorization this year.

The vast majority of federally funded research focuses on one specific disease, organ system, or cellular or chemical process. AHRQ is the only federal agency that funds research at universities and other research institutions throughout the nation on health systems—the “real-life” patient who has complex comorbidities, the interoperability of different technological advances, and the interactions and intersections of health care providers. 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 efforts to reduce hospital acquired conditions. New, preliminary data from AHRQ finds that by implementing transformational, AHRQ-funded research, hospitals, health systems, and other providers have prevented an estimated 20,500 hospital deaths and saved \$7.7 billion in health care costs from 2014 to 2017. In another example, AHRQ funded research grants are finding ways 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.

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 provide the agency \$460 million in budget authority in FY 2020. Doing so would signal your continued commitment not just to produce discoveries, but to produce science that translates medical progress into better care for patients *today*.

Thank you for considering our recommendation. For more information, including a copy of our report on AHRQ's contributions to improved health and health care over the years, please contact Kristin Rosengren at 202.292.6700 or [kristin.rosengren@academyhealth.org](mailto:kristin.rosengren@academyhealth.org).

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses  
AcademyHealth  
Alliance for Aging Research  
AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine  
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing  
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 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 & Electrodiagnostic Medicine  
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc.  
American Association of Public Health Dentistry  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Board of Medical Specialties  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)  
American Chiropractic Association  
American College of Cardiology  
American College of Clinical Pharmacy  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Physicians  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Dental Education Association  
American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)  
American Health Quality Association  
American Heart Association  
American Liver Foundation  
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)  
American Nephrology Nurses Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Optometric Association  
American Organization of Nurse Executives  
American Pediatric Society  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society for Nutrition  
American Society of Anesthesiologists  
American Society of Hematology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology  
American Society of Plastic Surgery  
American Statistical Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Association for Clinical and Translational Science  
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology  
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 Minority Health Professions Schools  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
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 Health Care Organizational and Innovation Research (CHOIR)  
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
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  
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation  
Cutler Institute, University of Southern Maine  
Digestive Disease National Coalition  
Doctor Evidence  
Duke University Health System  
Dystonia Advocacy Network  
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation  
ECRI Institute  
Emergency Nurses Association  
Epilepsy Foundation  
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  
HIV Medicine Association  
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society  
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  
Lymphatic Education & Research Network  
March of Dimes  
Mayo Clinic  
METAvivor  
National Alopecia Areata Foundation  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Athletic Trainers' Association  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Coalition on Health Care  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Kidney Foundation  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
NephCure Kidney International

North American Primary Care Research Group  
Northern Illinois University  
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Prevent Blindness  
Prevent Blindness Georgia  
Prevent Blindness Iowa  
Prevent Blindness NC  
Prevent Blindness Wisconsin  
Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate  
Pulmonary Hypertension Association  
Research!America  
Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation  
RTI International  
Scleroderma Foundation  
Sleep Research Society  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
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  
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  
Tulane University Department of Health Policy and Management  
U.S. Hereditary Angioedema Association  
UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, Department of Health Policy & Management  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus  
University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation  
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center  
University of Rochester  
UTHealth | The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston  
Weill Cornell Medicine  
Yale University