



October 17, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
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 Shelby, 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) 2020, the 154 undersigned organizations respectfully request that you fund the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at a level equal to or more than that included in the House bill of \$358.2 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 still well below 2010 levels—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 funding level of \$358.2 million ensures the agency can at least continue its current programs. However, \$358.2 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 \$39 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 2020 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
AcademyHealth
Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
Alliance for Aging Research
AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology
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 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 Business Group on Health
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
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Weill Cornell Medicine
Yale University