



January 8, 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) 2018, the 150 undersigned organizations respectfully request that you fund the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at a level equal to or higher than the Senate mark of \$324 million. AHRQ is an essential element of the nation's health care ecosystem, charged with improving the quality and delivery of health care.

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.

Today, AHRQ is helping doctors in rural communities fight the opioid epidemic by developing and testing effective medication assisted therapy protocols that could save thousands of lives, something of particular importance as we fight the current opioid epidemic. AHRQ is also providing primary care clinicians and their patients with tools to make evidence-based decisions about which medications to use for treating alcohol use disorder. AHRQ is the federal agency singularly responsible for reducing the nearly 100,000 deaths in the United States each year associated with medical errors and is supporting researchers who continue to search for ways improve patient safety and outcomes.

While \$324 million does not restore AHRQ's budget to its previous funding levels or allow for critical initiatives that were terminated as a result of the cuts to return, it will ensure that the agency can continue its critical mission. Additional cuts to AHRQ will result in the loss of life and cost saving research as was seen in FY 2016, where promising research projects were eliminated. Among those was the agency's research portfolio to optimize care for America's nearly 60 million patients living with multiple chronic conditions. By 2020, an estimated eighty-one million people will have multiple chronic conditions and the costs of their care will consume 80 percent of publicly funded health insurance programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. This research portfolio – maintained solely by AHRQ – was the only source of such information on how to most successfully and cost efficiently treat these patients.

Health services research shows that as much as one-third of the more than \$3 trillion our nation spends on health care each year is waste—care that is inappropriate, ineffective, or harmful. Every dollar we invest in generating evidence to eliminate that waste is a sound fiscal investment. Funding AHRQ will help to ensure that our health care system becomes the most efficient one in the world for both patients and taxpayers. We urge you to make maintaining funding for AHRQ, and its critical research, a priority in the FY 2018 omnibus

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
AcademyHealth
AHIMA
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 Nursing
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Clinical Chemistry
American Association for Dental Research
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American Association of Public Health Dentistry
American Association on Health and Disability
American Board of Medical Specialties
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Chiropractic Association
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Rheumatology

American Gastroenterological Association
American Health Quality Association
American Heart Association
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)
American Medical Student Association
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Optometric Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Osteopathic Association
American Pediatric Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Statistical Association
American Thoracic Society
APIC – Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
ARHP: the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Association for Clinical and Translational Science
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM)
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of University Radiologists (AUR)
Cedars-Sinai Health System
Center for Healthcare Organizational and Innovation Research (CHOI UC-Berkeley School of Public Health)
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science
Coalition for Health Funding
Columbia University Medical Center
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America
Duke University
ECRI Institute
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Fight Colorectal Cancer
Guidelines International Network/North America (G-I-N/NA)
Harvard University

Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
Healthy Teen Network
Heart Rhythm Society
HIV Medicine Association
Institute for Healthcare Improvement
Kaiser Family Foundation
Kaiser Permanente
Lakeshore Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
March of Dimes
Marshfield Clinic Health System
Mayo Clinic
Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Athletic Trainers' Association
National Black Nurses Association
National Business Group on Health
National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care
National Coalition on Health Care
National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Kidney Foundation
National League for Nursing
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Patient Safety Foundation
North American Primary Care Research Group
Northeastern Illinois University
Northern Illinois University
Northwestern University
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA)
Oncology Nursing Society
Oregon Health & Science University
Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute
Penn Medicine
Penn State University
Premier
Public Health Institute
QSI NextGen Healthcare
Research!America
RTI International
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Medical Decision Making
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Public Health Education
Society of General Internal Medicine

Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Spina Bifida Association
The Clinical Research Forum
The Leapfrog Group
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Trust for America's Health
Tulane University
University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus
University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation
University of Missouri System
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
University of Washington
University of Washington
University of Virginia School of Medicine
UPMC Community Provider Services
US Pain Foundation
UTHealth - The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
Vanderbilt University
Weill Cornell Medicine
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women With Heart Disease
Yale University