



AcademyHealth

June 23, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies
United States Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
United States Senate

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray:

AcademyHealth—the professional society representing over 5,000 individuals and 170 organizations producing and using research to improve health care delivery and patient outcomes—is gravely concerned by the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) spending bill now under consideration in the House. This bill would terminate the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and other key research and demonstration initiatives designed to improve the value and quality of our nation’s health care system. It represents a devastating attack on health services research funding at a time when this work is most critically needed by patients, health care providers, and policymakers alike. **It is our hope that you will preserve the existing level of budget authority for AHRQ in your Labor-HHS spending bill for fiscal year 2016.**

AHRQ’s mission is to generate the evidence necessary to build a high-quality, high-value health care system. As such, it plays a central, irreplaceable role in making the care we and our loved ones receive safer and more effective. In fact, AHRQ-funded research is being used in hospitals, private practices, health departments, and communities across the nation to make our health care system less complex and costly. Its research fuels innovation and improves quality, identifies waste, and enhances efficiency in the health care system. It is used by patients, their loved ones, and their health care professionals to make the right health care decisions for themselves and their families. AHRQ research helps Americans get their money’s worth when it comes to health care. We need more of it, not less. To “terminate” AHRQ in the current fiscal environment is pennywise and pound foolish. Our nation spends \$3 trillion annually on health care – the largest share of which are federal purchases through Medicare, Medicaid, the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan, insurance exchanges, TRICARE, and veterans’ health care. Americans deserve reliable

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information on how to deliver the best possible care, at the greatest value, with the best outcomes. AHRQ-funded health services research provides those answers. We are deeply disappointed by the House's Labor-HHS appropriations bill and especially the attack on AHRQ. **We urge you, in the strongest possible terms, to protect this agency and prioritize its important research in your own spending legislation.** For more information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 202.292.6700 or lisa.simpson@academyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Simpson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" and last name "Simpson" clearly distinguishable.

Lisa Simpson, MB, BCh, MPH, FAAP
President and CEO
AcademyHealth