



March 16, 2020

The Hon. Roy Blunt
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
131 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
156 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

Health spending makes up 17.7 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), touching the life, and wallet, of every American. And, as the largest purchaser of health care, the federal government has an enormous stake in spending each health dollar wisely. As the lead agency for health services research, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) helps make that possible. AHRQ's research is the bridge between cures and care – ensuring 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) 2021, the 89 undersigned members of the Friends of AHRQ respectfully request \$471 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.

The vast majority of federally funded research focuses on one specific disease, organ system, 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 supports transparency and accountability – generating data to monitor the health care landscape and ensuring 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. For example, 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 \$471 million in budget authority in FY 2021. 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.

Sincerely,

AAPACN

Academic Pediatric Association

AcademyHealth

Alliance for Aging Research

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Neurology

American Academy of Pediatrics

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 Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine

American Association of Public Health Dentistry

American Association on Health and Disability

American Board of Medical Specialties

American Chiropractic Association

American College of Cardiology

American College of Nurse-Midwives

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Physicians

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 Pediatric Society
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
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 Plastic Surgeons
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
American Statistical Association
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 Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU)
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of University Radiologists
Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine
Center for Health Care Organizational and Innovation Research
Clinical Research Forum
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science
Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Healthy Teen Network
Kaiser Permanente
Lakeshore Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association
March of Dimes
METAvivor
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Athletic Trainers' Association



National League for Nursing
National Pancreas Foundation
NextGen Healthcare
North American Primary Care Research Group
Northern Illinois University
Oncology Nursing Society
Pediatric Policy Council
Population Association of America
Project Sleep
Research!America
Sleep Research Society
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Spina Bifida Association
The Joint Commission
The Leapfrog Group
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
UCLA Fielding School of Public Health
University of Michigan-Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation
US Hereditary Angioedema Association
UTHealth | The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
Weill Cornell Medicine