



January 8, 2018

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

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  
ARHP: the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals  
Association for Clinical and Translational Science  
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology  
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