



October 22, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
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, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The 195 undersigned organizations and institutions representing patients and caregivers, health providers, faculty and students, scientists, policy professionals, employers, and insurers are very concerned about the future of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) given the proposed termination of the agency by the House Appropriations Committee and the proposed 35 percent cut to the agency's base budget by the Senate Appropriations Committee. We understand lawmakers face difficult choices in funding myriad priorities with increasingly limited resources, but deep cuts to AHRQ in the current fiscal environment are pennywise and pound foolish. As you work to enact final spending legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2016, **we hope Congress will work together to enact sequestration relief and restore AHRQ's budget authority to \$364 million.**

AHRQ is the only federal research agency with the sole purpose of producing evidence to make health care safer; of higher quality; more accessible, equitable, and affordable; and to ensure that the evidence is understood and used. AHRQ-funded research, tools, and datasets are being used in health settings across the nation to help us understand and improve a complex and costly health system so that we can achieve better outcomes for more people at greater value. AHRQ's research and data help Americans get their money's worth when it comes to health care. We need more of it, not less.

We know difficult budget decisions must be made, but cutting AHRQ takes our country in the wrong direction. 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 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. Without AHRQ and the health services research that can determine what treatments work best, for whom, and in

what settings, the cures and treatments developed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will fall short on their promise to patients, and effective prevention strategies developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will fail to reach Americans where they live, learn, and work.

We recognize the reduction in AHRQ's budget authority is largely a function of the historically low and grossly inadequate allocation provided for health research and other critical programs under the sequestered spending caps. But without a dedicated funding stream for AHRQ's important work, it's misguided to assume that other agencies would absorb this portfolio given pressures they face in fulfilling their own specific mandates amidst budgetary constraints. Health services research—through AHRQ—needs a dedicated funding stream. It's the optimal way to ensure the generation of evidence and data to make the practice of health care safer, more effective, and more affordable for all Americans.

For more information on the Friends of AHRQ, contact Lisa Simpson at 202.292.6700 or lisa.simpson@academyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

AACC

Academic Pediatric Association

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

AcademyHealth

Adult Congenital Heart Association

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 Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for Dental Research

American Association for Physician Leadership

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists

American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordination (AANAC)

American Association of Occupational Health Nurses (AAOHN)

American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons

American Association on Health and Disability

American Board of Medical Specialties

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Chiropractic Association

American College of Cardiology (ACC)

American College of Clinical Pharmacy

American College of Nurse Midwives

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

American College of Physicians

American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM)
 American College of Rheumatology
 American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
 American Federation of Teachers Nurses and Health Professionals
 American Gastroenterological Association
 American Heart Association
 American Hospital Association
 American Medical Student Association
 American Nurses Association
 American Occupational Therapy Association
 American Optometric Association
 American Organization of Nurse Executives
 American Pediatric Society
 American Pediatric Surgical Nurses 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 Perianesthesia Nurses (ASPAN)
 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
 American Statistical Association
 American Telemedicine Association
 American Thoracic Society
 AMIA (American Medical Informatics Association)
 APLU
 ARHP: the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
 Association for Clinical and Translational Science
 Association of American Medical Colleges
 Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
 Association of Departments of Family Medicine (ADFM)
 Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors (AFMRD)
 Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
 Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
 Association of Population Centers
 Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
 Association of University Radiologists (AUR)
 Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
 Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
 Baylor Scott & White Health
 Billings Clinic
 BJC HealthCare
 Boston University School of Public Health
 Brown University
 Carnegie Mellon University
 Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
 Clinical Research Forum
 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)
Connecticut Certification Board
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Cornell University
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America
Division of Health Policy and Management, University of Minnesota
Doctor Evidence
Duke University School of Medicine
Duke University School of Nursing
ECRI Institute
Emory University
Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences
Fight Colorectal Cancer
GBS/CIDP Foundation International
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Group Health Cooperative
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
Indiana University
Integrated Health Interview Series
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium
International Society of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses (ISPN)
Kaiser Permanente
Lakeshore Foundation
March of Dimes
Mayo Clinic
Medica Research Institute
Michigan State University
Minnesota Population Center
Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Morehouse School of Medicine
Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine
NAPHSIS: National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems
National Alopecia Areata Foundation
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)
National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National Athletic Trainers' Association
National Black Nurses Association
National Business Group on Health
National Center for Health Research
National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care
National Coalition on Health Care
National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)
National Gerontological Nurses Association

National Hispanic Medical Association
 National Kidney Foundation
 National League for Nursing
 National Nursing Centers Consortium
 National Partnership for Women & Families
 North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG)
 North Carolina Society for Health Education
 Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA)
 Oncology Nursing Society
 Oregon Health & Science University
 Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute
 Partners Healthcare / Brigham and Women's Hospital
 Pediatric Policy Council
 Penn Medicine
 Penn State University
 Physician Assistant Education Association
 Population Association of America
 Public Citizen
 Public Health Institute
 Pulmonary Hypertension Association
 QSI NextGen Healthcare
 Research!America
 RTI International
 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
 Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
 Saint Francis Care
 Scleroderma Foundation
 Society for Academic Emergency Medicine
 Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
 Society for Medical Decision Making
 Society for Pediatric Research
 Society for Public Health Education
 Society for Women's Health Research
 Society of General Internal Medicine
 Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
 Spina Bifida Association
 The Center for Healthcare Organizational and Innovation Research (CHOIR), School of Public Health, UC-Berkeley
 The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
 The Johns Hopkins University
 The Marfan Foundation
 The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
 The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
 The Sturge-Weber Foundation
 Trust for America's Health
 University of California
 University of California, Los Angeles
 University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus
 University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Community Providers Services
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
University of Rochester
University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of South Florida Health
Vanderbilt University
Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center
Washington University in St. Louis
Wateree AIDS Task Force
Weill Cornell Medical College
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease
Yale University