



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