



April 3, 2014

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is the only federal agency with the sole purpose of generating evidence to make health care safer; higher quality; and more accessible, equitable and affordable. AHRQ is also working to ensure such evidence is understood and used by patients, health care providers, public health professionals, hospitals, and public and private payers. As such, AHRQ funds health services research and health care improvement programs in universities, medical centers, research institutions, and medical practices across the nation.

To expand AHRQ's capacity to generate this important science, the 41 undersigned members of the Friends of AHRQ recommend you provide the agency \$375 million in base discretionary funding in FY 2015.

The Friends of AHRQ thanks the Subcommittee for its efforts to sustain AHRQ's base budget at a time when competing priorities abound and resources are increasingly scarce. We also appreciate your efforts to collaborate closely with AHRQ to provide the agency stability as it undergoes its first leadership transition in a decade. Your stewardship recognizes that AHRQ plays a critical role in the research continuum—helping patients get the most from new discoveries in basic and clinical research by improving health care delivery. Indeed, AHRQ is building upon and extending the work of its public and nongovernmental partners to ensure patients get the right care at the right time, every time.

In our recent report, *AHRQ: 15 Years of Transforming Care and Improving Health*, we celebrate the agency's contributions to improved health and health care by highlighting the experiences of producers and users of AHRQ-funded evidence and tools. Some examples from our report and other sources show that:

- AHRQ helps providers help patients. Americans want to take personal responsibility for their health, and they rely on their doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health care providers for guidance in making difficult choices. AHRQ's research generates valuable evidence to help providers help patients make the right health care decisions for themselves and their loved ones. For example, the American College of Physicians used AHRQ-funded research to inform their recommendations for treatment of type 2 diabetes. These evidence-informed recommendations give physicians a foundation for

describing what the best care looks like, so patients can determine what the right care might be for them.

- AHRQ keeps patients safe. The science funded by AHRQ ensures patients receive high quality, appropriate care every time they walk through the hospital, clinic, and medical office doors. AHRQ's research provides the basis for protocols that prevent medical errors and reduce hospital-acquired infections (HAI), and improve patient experiences and outcomes. In just one example, AHRQ's evidence-based Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections (CUSP)—first applied on a large scale in 2003 across more than 100 ICUs across Michigan—saved more than 1,500 lives and nearly \$200 million in the program's first 18 months. The protocols have since been expanded to hospitals in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to continue the national implementation of this approach for reducing HAIs.
- AHRQ makes the business case for high quality care. AHRQ helps health care providers – from private practice physicians to large hospital systems – understand how to deliver the best care most efficiently. For example, AHRQ maintains the National Quality Measurement Clearinghouse (NQMC) to provide health care providers, health plans, delivery systems, and others with an accessible resource for quality measures and a one-stop-shop for benchmarks on providing more safe, effective and timely care. The breadth of evidence available from AHRQ empowers health care providers to understand not just how they compare to their peers, but also how to improve their performance to be more competitive.

We thank you for your consideration of our request and look forward to helping you preserve the agency's continued vital role in improving our nation's health. For more information, including a copy of our commemorative report, please contact Lindsey Horan at 202.292.6718 or lindsey.horan@academyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

AcademyHealth
Alliance for Aging Research
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Association for Clinical Chemistry
American Association for Dental Research
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Colleges of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American College of Rheumatology
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Dental Association Health Policy Resources Center
American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
American Hospital Association

American Osteopathic Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Thoracic Society
Association for Clinical and Translational Science
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
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