



April 17, 2013

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Moran:

Health services research tells us that our health care system is not living up to its full potential. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is the federal agency with the sole purpose of improving health care. As the agency for health services research, AHRQ funds science to cure our health system in universities, medical centers, and research institutions across the nation. This research is used by patients, health care providers, public health professionals, hospitals, and public and private payers to enhance consumer choice, improve patient safety, and promote high quality care. To expand AHRQ's capacity to generate this important science, the undersigned members of the Friends of AHRQ urge you to provide the agency **\$434 million** in FY 2014, consistent with the President's budget request.

AHRQ is helping 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 is keeping 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.

AHRQ plays a critical role in the health continuum, 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.

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 please contact Lindsey Horan at 202.292.6718 or lindsey.horan@academyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
AcademyHealth
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association for Clinical Chemistry
American Association for Dental Research
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM)
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Gastroenterological Association
American Heart Association
American Medical Informatics Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Pediatric Society
American Psychological Association

American Society of Nephrology
American Thoracic Society
Arthritis Foundation
Association for Clinical and Translational Science
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 Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)
Clinical Research Forum
Coalition for Health Funding
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Joint Advocacy Coalition of ACTS & CRF
March of Dimes
Marshfield Clinic
National Rural Health Association
North American Primary Care Research Group
Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute
Research!America
RTI International
Society for Pediatric Research
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR)
The American College of Rheumatology
The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative
The Spina Bifida Association