



December 10, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol, S-230
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol, S-221
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
136 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee of Labor-HHS-Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray,

We write today to reiterate the urgent need for increased funding for the Agency on Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) in Fiscal Year 2021. In March, many of us wrote you with the request of \$471 million, equal to the agency's Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 appropriation. Unfortunately, the most recent Senate Labor Health and Human Services (Labor-HHS) package included a 24% cut for AHRQ. AHRQ is an essential element of the nation's health care ecosystem, charged with improving the quality and delivery of health care, and a critical part of our nation's COVID-19 response. As such, we ask that you reconsider this proposed cut and include at least \$471 million in funding for AHRQ.

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 and databases allow 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.

Unfortunately, as the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated, AHRQ's work has never been more relevant or more necessary. Americans with multiple chronic conditions are at a greater risk of developing COVID-19, and as our healthcare heroes and hospitals continue to be stretched thin by a surge of COVID-19 cases, we must look for ways to make our health care

system as efficient as possible. Furthermore, AHRQ, and AHRQ alone, has the tools to study our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure that those findings are reflected in pandemic responses now and in the future. AHRQ has already demonstrated their strength in newly published research on telehealth and vaccine efficacy in the COVID-19 era.

It is critical that AHRQ receive the necessary funding to continue their work, during the pandemic and beyond. Every dollar we invest in AHRQ ensures that our health care system will continue to improve in efficiency and outcomes. We urge you to heed the call of public health experts and researchers in adequately funding AHRQ.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



SHERROD BROWN
United States Senate



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
United States Senate



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
United States Senate



ELIZABETH WARREN
United States Senate



DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senate