Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

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

October 22, 2015

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
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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
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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
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

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