



The Honorable Rosa DeLauro

Chair

House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
2358 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole

Ranking Member

House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
1001 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt

Chair

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
136 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray

Ranking Member

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
160 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs DeLauro and Blunt and Ranking Members Cole and Murray:

We are writing to respectfully request that you include **\$71 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to support evaluations and research related to the health care system's response to the COVID-19 virus** in the next FY20 emergency supplemental appropriations bill.

Our nation's healthcare system is facing an unprecedented challenge as it confronts the COVID-19 virus and seeks to care for tens of thousands of sick and vulnerable Americans. Congress, the states and Native American tribes have responded in real time with sweeping changes to statute, regulations and the provision of care on the ground.

COVID-19 is a watershed moment for our country, and the United States health care system must quickly learn from and adjust to what's happening now so that we can respond better and more quickly in the event of a recurrence or in response to the next pandemic. In particular, we must quickly and carefully conduct assessments of the health care system's response to COVID-19 with a particular focus on identifying successful and scalable measures taken to address this crisis.

We believe the following issues require in-depth research and analysis:

- the rapid expansion of telehealth;
- the deficiencies in the health care system's supply chain; and
- the shortfalls in health care delivery planning, coordination and capacity

AHRQ's research will uniquely focus on how health care systems and professionals responded to this crisis, how they successfully reorganized care delivery and care across a variety of settings, and what unmet delivery needs must be addressed. The results of these investments will guide health care policy making and delivery system operations, helping the nation learn from its experiences meeting the COVID-19 challenge and better preparing us to meet a future crisis.

AHRQ has the mandate and proven track record to deliver timely results that identify what works – and what doesn't – in health care delivery. AHRQ is the federal agency charged with securing the science needed to address

challenges and weaknesses in U.S. health care delivery, while also maximizing the benefits to the American people. No other HHS agency is currently engaged in evaluating the health care sector's response to this pandemic.

AcademyHealth and the health research, policy and advocacy organizations listed below recognize the importance of investing federal funds strategically. We strongly believe that AHRQ more than earns a place among your priorities, and urge you to provide the agency \$71 million in the next FY20 COVID-19 emergency supplemental appropriations bill. Doing so would signal your continued commitment not just to produce discoveries, but to produce science that translates into better care for patients today.

Thank you for considering our recommendation. For more information, please contact Kristin Rosengren at 202.292.6700 or kristin.rosengren@academyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

AcademyHealth
American Academy of Neurology
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association on Health and Disability
American Heart Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Lakeshore Foundation
March of Dimes
North American Primary Care Research Group
Research!America
RTI International
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
The American Health Quality Association
Weill Cornell Medicine