



Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics®

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June 29, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking
Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 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 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 Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As President-elect of the American Statistical Association, I write to express my strong opposition to the proposed elimination of funding for the Agency for Health Research and Quality (AHRQ) in the House FY16 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill—as approved by the House Appropriations Committee on June 24—because of what the absence of its state-of-the-science and evidence-based recommendations for major health care issues would mean to the health of millions of Americans.

Research is a critically important tool in addressing the complex challenges of our health system, which include controlling cost growth, improving the quality of care delivered, and attaining the best outcomes for the greatest number of people. AHRQ is the leading agency in this research.

AHRQ's stated mission is "to produce evidence to make health care safer, higher quality, more accessible, equitable, and affordable, and to work within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and with other partners to make sure that the evidence is understood and used." AHRQ-funded research is used by hospitals, private practices, health departments, and communities across the nation to make our health care system less complex and costly. Its

research fuels innovation and improves quality, identifies waste, and enhances efficiency in the health care system. The research results are used by patients, their loved ones, and their health care professionals to make the right health care decisions for themselves and their families. This research helps Americans get their money's worth when it comes to health care. We need more of it, not less.

To terminate AHRQ in the current fiscal environment is pennywise and pound foolish. 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 and receive the best possible care, at the greatest value, with the best outcomes. AHRQ-funded health services research provides those answers.

I urge you to oppose the termination of AHRQ and its important research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Utts". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Jessica Utts
President-Elect
American Statistical Association