



*Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics®*

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June 29, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Ranking  
Member, Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking  
Member, Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Mikulski, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray,

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 dark ink, reading "Jessica Utts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jessica" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Utts".

Jessica Utts  
President-Elect  
American Statistical Association