

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
H-204, United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

We respectfully request the inclusion of \$71 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) in the next FY20 emergency supplemental appropriations bill for evaluation and research related to the health care system's response to the COVID-19 virus.

COVID-19 is a watershed moment for our country. The U.S. health care system must quickly learn from and adjust to what's happening now in order to respond more effectively and rapidly in the event of a recurrence or another pandemic. Quick and carefully conducted 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 would have immeasurable value and improve future response.

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 for 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. This research and focus make AHRQ indispensable in our efforts to respond to, understand, and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in our healthcare system. No other HHS agency is currently engaged in evaluating the health care sector's response to this pandemic.

In particular, we believe the following issues require in-depth research and analysis:

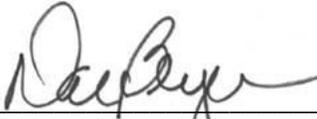
- the expansion and efficacy of telehealth use in response to social distancing policies, including identifying obstacles to access for veteran, the elderly, and low-income communities and gaps in compliance with health care privacy and security rules;

- deficiencies in the health care system’s supply chain that have manifested in ventilator, testing, and personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages, and;
- shortfalls in health care delivery planning, coordination and capacity, including attention to addressing vulnerable communities.

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 of delivering timely results that identify what works – and what doesn’t – in health care delivery. The Agency should have the funds to begin to assess the impact of the changes made to law, regulation and medical practice immediately. We urge you to include the \$71 million in funding for AHRQ within the next COVID19 re-sponse package. Thank you for your time and attention to our request.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

/s/
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

/s/
David Trone
Member of Congress

/s/
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

/s/
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

/s/
Val Demings
Member of Congress

/s/
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/
Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

/s/
Bill Foster
Member of Congress

/s/
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

/s/
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

/s/
Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

/s/
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

/s/
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/
Jason Crow
Member of Congress

/s/
Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

/s/
John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

/s/
Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/
Katie Porter
Member of Congress

/s/
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

/s/
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/
Adam Smith
Member of Congress

/s/
Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress

/s/
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/
Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress