

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 28, 2019

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 Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you and your colleagues begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you fund the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at the level of \$460 million, commensurate with the agency's FY 2010 appropriation.

AHRQ is an essential element of the nation's health care ecosystem, charged with improving the quality and delivery of health care. This funding level would allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated as a result of years of past cuts and expand its research and training portfolio to address our nation's pressing and evolving health care challenges. Additionally, with a quarter of the agency's program level budget supported by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund, a strong investment in the AHRQ appropriation will be essential to sustain the agency's core activities as the Trust Fund undergoes reauthorization this year.

To be sure, discovering cures is critical to patients, providers, and our communities. But understanding how to most effectively deliver those cures to patients through health services research is equally critical. 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 to 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.

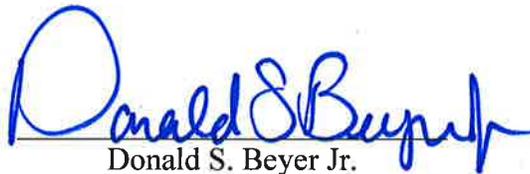
An example of AHRQ's successful work includes efforts to reduce hospital acquired conditions. New, preliminary data from AHRQ finds that by implementing transformational, AHRQ-funded research, hospitals, health systems and other providers have prevented an estimated 20,500 hospital deaths and saved \$7.7 billion in health care costs from 2014 to 2017. In another example, AHRQ funded research grants are finding ways to ensure rural primary care practices are equipped to respond to the opioid crisis. An explosion in the incidence of opioid addiction

and overdoses, particularly in rural areas of the country, has elevated this issue to crisis-level in the United States. Primary care practices are often the first line of defense against this and other substance use disorders.

Restoring AHRQ's budget to the FY 2010 level of \$460 million will allow for reinvestment in critical initiatives that were terminated or have eroded since. Among those terminated was the agency's research portfolio to optimize care for America's nearly 60 million patients living with multiple chronic conditions. By 2020, an estimated eighty-one million people will have multiple chronic conditions and the costs of their care will consume 80 percent of publicly funded health insurance programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. Investing in AHRQ now may help defray those costs.

Health services research shows that as much as one-third of the more than \$3 trillion our nation spends on health care each year is waste—care that is inappropriate, ineffective, or harmful. Every dollar we invest in generating evidence to eliminate that waste is a sound fiscal investment. Just as we fund national war colleges to ensure that our military is the most effective fighting force in the world, funding AHRQ ensures that our health care system becomes the most efficient one in the world. We urge you to make AHRQ, and its critical research, a priority in FY 2020.

Sincerely,



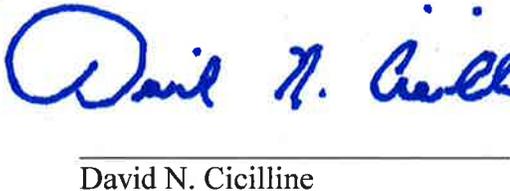
Donald S. Beyer Jr.



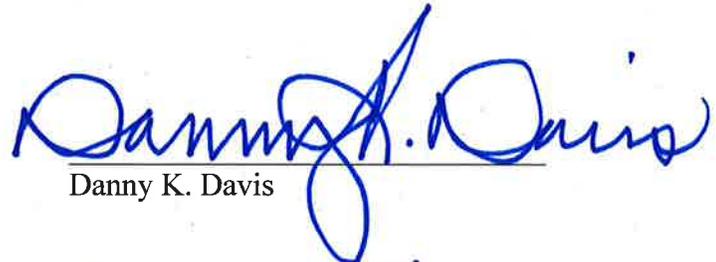
David Scott



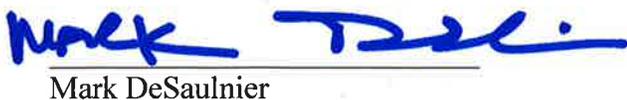
Ben Ray Lujan



David N. Cicilline



Danny K. Davis



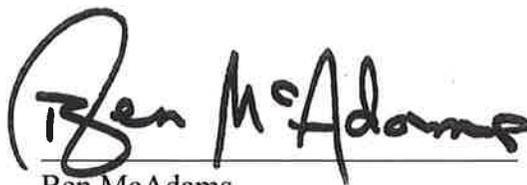
Mark DeSaulnier



Ann McLane Kuster



Daniel W. Lipinski



Ben McAdams



Peter A. DeFazio



Steve Cohen

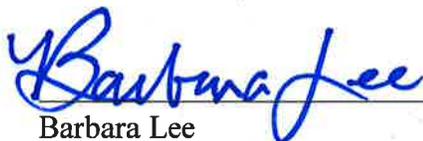
M.C.



Bobby L. Rush



Suzanne Bonamici



Barbara Lee



Tulsi Gabbard



Earl Blumenauer



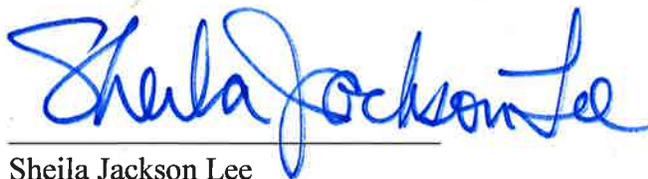
Jackie Speier



Suzan DelBene



Pramila Jayapal



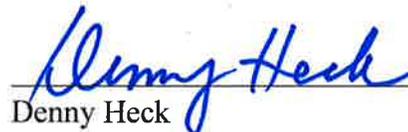
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Susan A. Davis



Denny Heck

  
Jamie Raskin

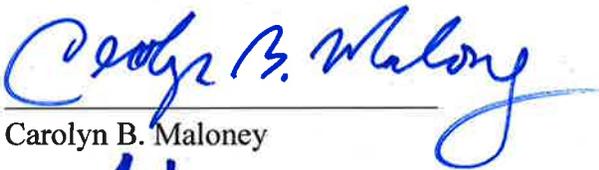
  
Andy Levin

  
Pramila Jayapal

  
Terri A. Sewell

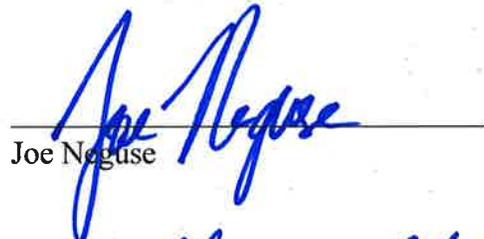
  
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Carolyn B. Maloney

  
Debbie Dingell

  
Jim Costa

  
Joe Neguse

  
Robin L. Kelly

  
Bill Pascrell, Jr.

  
Katie Hill

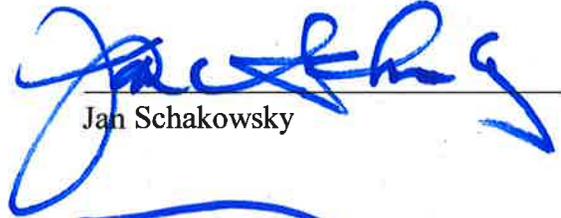
  
John B. Larson

  
Jason Crow

  
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott



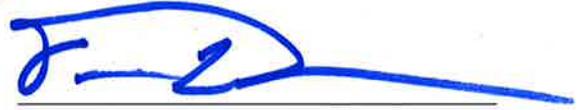
Eddie Bernice Johnson



Jan Schakowsky



John Yarmuth



Cedric L. Richmond



Joe Courtney



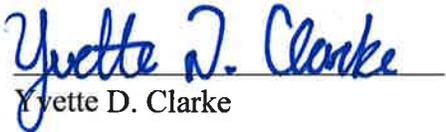
A. Donald McEachin



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.



Diana DeGette



Yvette D. Clarke



David Trone