August 19, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi   The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House   Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives   U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515   Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy,

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) supports research to improve health care quality, reduce costs, advance patient safety, decrease medical errors, and broaden access to essential services. As the lead federal agency for funding health services research, AHRQ is the bridge between cures and care, and ensures that Americans get the best health care at the best value. While the vast majority of federally funded research focuses on one specific disease or organ system, AHRQ is the only federal agency that funds research at universities and other research institutions throughout the nation on health systems—the "real-life" patient who has complex comorbidities, the interoperability of different technological advances, and the interactions and intersections of health care providers.

Our nation's health care system is facing unprecedented challenges and strains as it reacts to the COVID-19 pandemic and cares for millions of infected patients. Over 160,000 Americans have died from this disease already, and many more are facing severe complications as they recover. This pandemic has also laid bare the deep racial and ethnic inequities in health care as people of color are disproportionately being infected and suffering worse outcomes.

COVID-19 is a watershed moment, and the United States health care system must quickly learn and adapt so that we can better care for those affected from this pandemic, and to more quickly and effectively respond to future outbreaks. AHRQ is the vehicle for that learning. It is critical that we quickly and carefully conduct research assessments of the health care system's responses to the pandemic, and identify successful and scalable measures to protect Americans. AHRQ has the expertise and experience to conduct those evaluations.

For this reason, the 95 undersigned members of the Friends of AHRQ are proud to endorse Congressman Don Beyer's AHRQ Funding Bill, H.R. 8067, and urge its rapid consideration and passage.

This bill would direct AHRQ to conduct or support research on the most critical health system issues for COVID-19, including:

- The expansion and efficacy of telehealth, including identifying obstacles to access for veterans, the elderly, and communities of low-socioeconomic status.
- Evaluating and identifying potential weaknesses in the health system that increase racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 infection rates and develop strategies for mitigating them.
- Creating protocols that ensure that vulnerable groups have timely access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, informed by the existing racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 infection rates and health outcomes.

Rep. Beyer's legislation will ensure that health care and health policy decision makers have the information they need to build a health care system that works effectively for everyone. AHRQ has the proven track record of creating pipelines of new medical findings reaching health care providers and patients, and providing them with the tools and training they need every day, and this bill provides AHRQ with resources it needs to take on the COVID-19 crisis.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN)
AcademyHealth
Alliance for Aging Research
AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Association for Dental Research
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Post-Acute Care Nursing
American Association of Public Health Dentistry
American Board of Medical Specialties
American Chiropractic Association
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventative Medicine
American Health Information Management Association
American Health Quality Association
American Heart Association
American Organization for Nursing Leadership
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
Arbor Research Collaborative for Health
Association for Clinical and Translational Science
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health

Brown University
Clinical Research Forum
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science
Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council on Social Work Education
EBQ Consulting, LLC
ECRI
Eta Sigma Gamma
Federation of American Hospitals
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
Healthcare Systems Research Network
Heart Failure Society of America
Heart Rhythm Society
Heathcare Systems Research Network
HIV Medicine Association
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Johns Hopkins University
Kaiser Permanente
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
March of Dimes
Morehouse School of Medicine
Mothers Against Medical Error
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Athletic Trainers' Association
National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care
National Infusion Center Association (NICA)
NextGen Healthcare
North American Primary Care Research Group
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA)
Personal Connected Health Alliance (PCHAlliance)
Population Association of America
Research!America
RTI International
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Participatory Medicine
Society for Women's Health Research
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Spina Bifida Association
The American College of Preventive Medicine
The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
The Leapfrog Group
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

UC Berkeley School of Public Health
University of Massachusetts Medical School
University of Michigan--Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation
University of Utah Health Sciences Center
University of Washington
UPMC
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Wake Forest University School of Medicine
Weill Cornell Medicine