

# \$405 million for AHRQ in FY 2010

Americans spend more on health care than any other nation, but compared to our counterparts overseas, we're in poorer health. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) supports research to improve health care quality, reduce costs, and broaden access to essential services. Targeted funding increases in recent years have gone a long way to expand AHRQ's capacity to do this important work, but more core funding is needed to help AHRQ fulfill its mission. A base funding level of \$405 million in FY 2010 will preserve AHRQ's current initiatives and get the agency on track to a base budget of \$500 million by 2013 (see reverse for details).

## AHRQ Helps Make Our Health Care System More Efficient

AHRQ provides the high quality, unbiased information needed to make educated health care decisions. Through this "evidence base," AHRQ helps eliminate waste, improve health care quality, ensure patient safety, and increase the overall efficiency of our health care system.

Americans agree: A recent opinion survey by Research!America found that 95 percent of Americans say it is important to support research focused on how our health care system is functioning.

## Sustained and Continued Investment Needed

Steady, incremental increases for AHRQ in recent years, as well as the \$300 million provided to AHRQ's comparative effectiveness research in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, have enhanced AHRQ's ability to improve health and health care. Sustained and continued investment over the long term is needed to:

- Bolster the infrastructure needed to increase capacity to produce more and better comparative effectiveness research.
- Support AHRQ's broader research portfolio on health disparities, health care financing and organization, and access and coverage that has languished as AHRQ's base budget has remained relatively flat.
- Expand AHRQ's funding for investigator initiated research grants through the agency's new Innovations Research Portfolio.
- Develop the next generation of health services research through training grants to ensure the field's capacity to respond to the growing public and private sector demand for health services research.

## A \$405 Million Down Payment Is Needed

At a time when policymakers are considering major health reform, AHRQ's research is needed more than ever to build the evidence base to improve health and health care. The Friends of AHRQ recommend an FY 2010 base budget of at least \$405 million for the agency, a \$33 million increase over FY 2009. This funding level would allow AHRQ to continue and restore its critical health care safety, quality, and efficiency initiatives; strengthen the infrastructure of the research field; and reignite innovation and discovery in support of broader health reform.

The Friends of AHRQ is a coalition of more than 200 health professional, research, consumer, and employer organizations dedicated to ensuring the agency's continued vital role in improving our nation's health. For more information on the Friends of AHRQ, contact Emily Holubowich at 202.484.1100 or e-mail at [eholubowich@dc-crd.com](mailto:eholubowich@dc-crd.com).

"To make the right treatment decisions, policymakers, health plans, clinicians, patients and manufacturers alike need more evidence... Funding for health services research is like buying a college education. It is an investment in the future."

— Senator Max Baucus  
2007 National Health  
Policy Conference



## Why Does AHRQ Need \$405 million?

Policy Priority	AHRQ Activity	With funding...	Without funding...
<b>Innovation and Competitiveness</b>	Serves as a key source of funding to support innovative, health system discoveries and young researchers' careers.	AHRQ will expand grants for innovative researchers whose ideas have the promise to uncover new health trends and evaluate policy solutions. AHRQ will also restore training grants to ensure that America stays competitive in the global research market.	We will stifle the workforce and knowledge base needed to respond to the nation's growing health care challenges, including the "perfect storm" brewing around aging baby boomers, unsustainable rising costs, and declining health status.
<b>Value</b>	<b>Effective Health Care Program</b> reviews, synthesizes, generates, and translates the latest science to inform patient and provider decisions on medical treatments.	Americans will receive more of the information they need to make informed decisions across the spectrum of care—from which medicines to take, to when (or) to have surgery, ultimately ensuring they get the best care at the best value.	We will limit our ability to objectively evaluate the myriad treatment options currently available and the emerging innovations flooding the health care market, and to convey findings in a useful way to patients and providers.
<b>Coverage</b>	<b>Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS)</b> of families and individuals, their medical providers, and employers across the United States.	Policymakers can continue relying upon MEPS data for the most complete source of national trends on the cost and use of health care and health insurance coverage.	We will lose our ability to track individual household statistics on our nation's use of medical services, access to care, satisfaction with care, and health insurance coverage status.
<b>Patient Safety</b>	Effective Health Care Program reviews, synthesizes, generates, and translates the latest science to inform patient and provider decisions on medical treatments.	Americans will receive more of the information they need to make informed decisions across the spectrum of care—from which medicines to take, to when (and if) to have surgery, ultimately ensuring they get the best care at the best value.	We will constrain our ability to objectively evaluate the myriad treatment options currently available and the emerging innovations flooding the health care market, and to convey findings in a useful way to patients and providers.
<b>Health Information Technology</b>	Promotes the adoption HIT to produce safer, higher quality, and more efficient delivery of health care.	AHRQ will maintain its assistance to health care institutions in implementing safe practice interventions that show evidence of eliminating or reducing risks, hazards, and harms associated with the process of care.	We will compromise the long-term investment AHRQ has made in identifying threats to patient safety, evaluating effective patient safety practices, teaching, disseminating, and implementing effective patient safety practices, and maintaining vigilance.