

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 16, 2026

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

For months, we have directly raised our concerns about the unacceptable and intentional chaos at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) with you, with Director Roger Klein, and most recently with Deputy Secretary Nominee Chris Klomp. As health care costs continue to rise and patient safety concerns persist, your Department has chosen to dismantle the very agency whose mission is to solve these problems. It is increasingly clear that once again, your Department intends to ignore the law and—through a combination of gross negligence and intentional sabotage—will refuse to spend millions of taxpayer dollars that should be funding research to lower costs in the health care system and protect patients' safety.

Research funded by AHRQ grants has saved tens of thousands of lives and billions of dollars in health care costs, but once again, instead of getting these funds provided by Congress out the door as is required by law, this administration is on track to impound these resources and kill lifesaving research.

At Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, AHRQ research helped reduce the percentage of preventable blood clots after surgery.¹ A critical access hospital in New Mexico used AHRQ research to greatly reduce the incidence of catheter-associated urinary tract infections by more than 90 percent.² The Dayton, Ohio VA used AHRQ research to help veterans manage high-risk diabetes more effectively.³ AHRQ's work is evidence-based first and foremost—it saves lives and money. Sabotaging this agency is a direct attack on both the patients and providers who rely on AHRQ to make our health care system work better.

In fiscal year 2025, under your leadership, AHRQ allowed over \$80 million in federal funding provided by Congress to be wasted. Instead of awarding grants to promote patient safety, support families with children in the hospital, improve autism screening and diagnosis, and provide support for those suffering from chronic pain, the Trump administration intentionally withheld federal funding that Congress provided on a bipartisan basis, disrupting 200 different research programs across nearly 30 states. Over the past year, you have also managed to push out 80 percent of all AHRQ staff, including the majority of those who had previously vetted grants and worked directly with researchers.⁴ From 2020-2024, AHRQ awarded an average of 127 new

¹ Newsroom- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2025, June). *Harborview Medical Center Uses AHRQ's Quality Indicators To Improve Patient Safety*. <https://www.ahrq.gov/news/newsroom/case-studies/202504.html>

² Newsroom- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2024, July). *Sierra Vista Hospital Uses AHRQ Toolkit To Slash Catheter Use and Eliminate Infections*. <https://www.ahrq.gov/news/newsroom/case-studies/202402.html>

³ Newsroom- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2023, March). *Ohio Veterans' Facility Relied on AHRQ Resource to Develop Diabetes Initiative*. <https://www.ahrq.gov/news/newsroom/case-studies/202301.html>

⁴ *Roll Call*. "‘Nobody answers’: The unraveling of a patient care research agency." April 7, 2026. <https://rollcall.com/2026/04/07/nobody-answers-the-unraveling-of-a-patient-care-research-agency/>

grants and 306 continuation grants. In 2025, AHRQ awarded only one new grant and 206 continuation awards. Your Department recently informed us that it intends to award only 90 grants this year. That is unacceptable.

In July, AHRQ terminated over 150 grants via a generic form letter. These grants included research that was clearly focused on addressing the agency's stated priorities, such as patient safety, the use of digital tools to improve health, artificial intelligence, and training future health services researchers. AHRQ discontinued research in Wisconsin testing the use of artificial intelligence to improve the experience of hospitalized children and their families, research that the agency had highlighted in a webinar in May. AHRQ also discontinued the health services research training program at the University of Washington. For reasons we cannot comprehend, these two grants, among many others, were cited as "inconsistent with agency priorities."

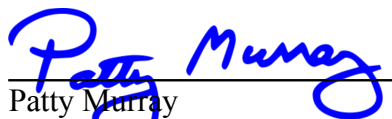
It is now abundantly clear that AHRQ terminated those grants, that were clearly consistent with AHRQ's mission and stated priorities, with no plan on how it would otherwise spend its funding for this year. On September 4th, AHRQ leadership informed the Committee of its "plans" to spend \$100 million on inter-agency agreements (IAAs), which would enable the Department to siphon dollars away from AHRQ to support other initiatives, instead of funding the health care quality and delivery research that Congress specifically set aside resources for. But to date, AHRQ has provided very limited information on how this funding would actually be spent—let alone how it could be spent effectively between now and September 30th. AHRQ supposedly plans to spend \$30 million to support the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and help schools develop strategies for improving school meals. We have received no further information on these plans. So far, it appears the only thing the agency has done is issue a press release, and with 14 days left in the fiscal year there aren't any actual funding opportunities available for schools and school districts to apply for these resources. This continues an alarming pattern by which this administration is seeking to use IAAs to siphon funding away from one agency to fund the administration's priorities at another, without regard for the law and what Congress provided funding for in the first place.

Similarly, while Congress set-aside \$5 million to accelerate evidence-based research and care delivery models into routine clinical practice so that women can get the menopause care they need, all AHRQ has shared is that the funding will be spent on working with two other agencies on "quality improvement activities" addressing menopause. Yet no actual funding opportunities are available for that work. Even more alarming is the fact that AHRQ has provided exactly no information on how the remaining \$65 million provided to it will be spent, again raising the likelihood that funding provided by Congress will simply be wasted.

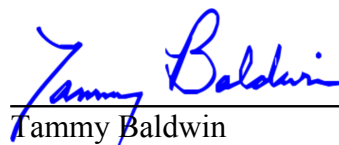
Congress appropriated funding for AHRQ to improve the health of Americans, and to make health care safer, better, and more affordable. Using accounting gimmicks and supposed IAAs as cover for either intentional sabotage or complete incompetence is inexcusable. It is unfortunately only one of many examples of how this administration is willfully choosing to make Americans less healthy and less safe—and raising costs while it's at it.

Within 24 hours, we expect to receive written copies of all IAAs that AHRQ has entered into with other federal agencies, a detailed description of all supported activities, and a list of all grantees that will be supported by such funding in accordance with Public Law 119-75 before the end of the fiscal year.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator
Vice Chair, Committee on
Appropriations



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related
Agencies