

## Fund AHRQ's Primary Care Research Center

**Recommendation:** Request \$5 million for FY2020 for the Center for Primary Care Research at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ.)

**Background:** Basic science and disease-specific research is the historic and current focus of the NIH. Primary care research in contrast has been underfunded within this framework when compared to all other health disciplines. For example, less than 0.5% of NIH funding goes to family medicine researchers, and it is concentrated among a limited number of departments with little funding for new investigators. In comparison, AHRQ supports most primary care research in the US. Unfortunately, reduced funding levels of AHRQ have exacerbated the disparities in primary care research. Therefore, AHRQ has reluctantly reduced its investment in primary care, cutting significant programs such as the multiple chronic disease project and reducing the statutorily authorized Center for Primary Care Research to a virtual clearinghouse under the auspices of the Center for Evidence and Practice Improvement. As such, it provides access to information and resources but has no dedicated funding.

**Funding the Primary Care Research Center at AHRQ:** We are asking for dedicated funding for the Center for Primary Care Research at AHRQ at \$5 million for FY2020. Even with limited resources, AHRQ is uniquely positioned to support best primary care clinical and practice research and to help disseminate the research nationwide.

- There is a need for more research on primary care particularly in rural areas.
- There is a need for the development of new primary care researchers.
- There is a potential loss of approximately \$100 million annually to AHRQ from the PCORI trust fund when its authorization is up in fiscal year 2019.

**History of Primary Care Research Center at AHRQ:** The Health Care Research and Quality Act of 1999 authorized the Primary Care Research Center within AHRQ to serve as the principal source of funding for primary care practice research in the Department of Health and Human Services. AHRQ maintained the Center for many years but changed the center to a virtual center, under the auspices of another Center.

### Center for Primary Care Research Appropriation's and Report Language Request:

- Request \$5 million for the Center. The report language below would supplement bill language.

Primary care clinical research is a core function of AHRQ. Primary care research includes: translating science into patient care, better organizing health care to meet patient and population needs, evaluating innovations to provide the best health care to patients, and engaging patients, communities, and practices to improve health. AHRQ has proved to be uniquely positioned to support best primary care clinical and practice research and to help disseminate the research nationwide. In rural or other underserved areas primary care physicians are often the main providers of care. AHRQ's Center was established to further primary care clinical research as well as the implementation science to identify how to deploy new knowledge into the hands of primary care providers and systems in communities. The Committee supports the statutorily authorized Center for Primary Care Research and encourages AHRQ to prioritize the work of the Center.