

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Fast Facts About AHRQ

- AHRQ is an agency within the [Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#). Its director reports to the Secretary of HHS, a member of the President's Cabinet.
- The agency's work is carried out by a staff of scientists and other professionals who conduct and support health systems research and the production and distribution of provider and consumer resources.
- Founded in 1989 as the "Agency for Health Care Policy and Research," the agency was reauthorized, renamed, and restructured under its current name in 1999.

What is AHRQ?

As the federal agency charged with advancing health care progress (continuous improvement in healthcare quality, safety, accessibility, affordability, and outcomes), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality ([AHRQ](#)) plays a unique and essential role in our nation's health and research ecosystem. The health and well-being of patients (and we are all patients) depends on a healthcare system that translates medical progress into better health for each of us, and for all of us.

How does AHRQ achieve health care progress?

AHRQ funds, conducts, and empowers the application of several different kinds of health research, including (but not limited to) health services research, health economics research, and primary care research. Collectively known as "[health systems research](#)," these disciplines provide evidence that, when applied, can make healthcare affordable, safe, effective, equitable, accessible, and patient-centered.

AHRQ produces and shares tools that providers use to improve the quality and safety of the care they deliver. In addition, it supports training programs for providers on ways to improve the quality of care they deliver. AHRQ also provides information and tools to help consumers make informed decisions about their health care.

AHRQ In Action

[Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes \(Project ECHO\)](#) – Specialized care for those living in rural communities has long been a tough challenge to tackle. Launched in 2003, this program is designed to help rural doctors and nurses connect with specialists via the Internet to provide state-of-the-art care involving newer therapies and treatments. Utilizing Project ECHO, Lehigh Valley Health Network was able to [use up-to-date treatments](#) to improve outcomes for those suffering from opioid addiction; 72% of patients have remained in treatment past 120 days compared to the usual 20 to 30% nationally.





[Re-Engineered Discharge \(RED\)](#) is a structured set of procedures and tools that help hospitals rework their discharge processes to reduce readmission rates. The Wisconsin Hospital Association reports that AHRQ hospital quality and safety initiatives, including the application of RED resources, saved an estimated \$34.1 million, avoided 30-day readmissions for an estimated 3,556 patients, and reduced readmissions by 22% in a variety of clinical settings across 108 Wisconsin hospitals in only 18 months.

[Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program \(CUSP\)](#) is an effective tool for preventing health care-associated infections and other patient harms by focusing on safety culture, teamwork, and communication for clinical teams. Tampa General Hospital [utilized several elements of CUSP](#) to reduce its catheter utilization ratio by 23%, as well as decrease its insertion-related catheter associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI) by 75%. The hospital went from 6.9 infections per 1,000 catheters inserted to 1.7 per 1,000 in 18 months.

[TeamSTEPS®](#) is a patient safety program created by AHRQ, in conjunction with the Department of Defense, focusing on improving the teamwork and coordination of health care professionals. Utilizing these tools, [SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital in St. Louis](#) was able to reduce cesarean-section (C-section) rates for low-risk, first-time mothers to just 12%. The hospital also improved outcomes for women who have had C-sections for their first deliveries; it can now successfully deliver subsequent children naturally about 75% of the time. This also applies to those that have had multiple C-sections.

By The Numbers

Since its founding more than 30 years ago, AHRQ has led the nation in improving the safety of health care.

**\$484.5
MILLION**

In 2022, AHRQ received \$484.5 million in funding, which accounted for 0.02% of the total federal budget.

**20,700
LIVES**

AHRQ's efforts contributed to a 13% reduction in hospital-acquired conditions, 20,700 lives saved, and \$7.7 billion in savings from 2015-2017.

**92,000
PARTNERS**

Since Project ECHO's conception in 2003, it has grown to have over 92,000 partners across 194 countries.

**45%
HIGHER**

A 2020 study of 4 midwestern Skilled Nursing Facilities found that those that didn't use RED saw readmission rates 45% higher at 30 days, 50% higher at 60 days, and 39% higher at 180 days than those who embraced the RED system.

**41%
REDUCTION**

The 1,000 ICUs that use CUSP, reported a 41% average reduction in central line-associated bloodstream infection rates.

**90%
OF LEADERS**

Nearly 90% of medical center leaders at the Private Diagnostic Clinic, a multispecialty physician practice affiliated with Duke Health, reported fewer communications breakdowns and better handling of disagreements after using AHRQ's TeamSTEPS® team training curriculum.

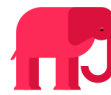
Public Opinion Supports AHRQ Investment

AHRQ leverages research to advance health care quality, affordability, accessibility, safety, and outcomes. For more than 30 years, Research!America has commissioned public opinion surveys to gain insight into the views of the American people on research-related topics, and we know from those surveys that the health care-focused research AHRQ conducts and supports addresses concerns that are front and center for the American people. For example:

- Even though our nation spends more than any other on health care, only 39% of Americans believe the U.S. has the best health care system in the world according to a [January 2021 survey](#) commissioned by Research!America. We have work to do.
- Health care costs top the list of most important health issues facing the nation according a January 2023 survey commissioned by Research!America.
- Americans believe our nation should do more to address disparities in health and health care. Research!America's [America Speaks Poll Data Summary, Volume 23](#) shows that **85% of people support research to address health disparities.**



How important do you feel it is to conduct research to combat health disparities?



REPUBLICANS

79%
"Say Yes"



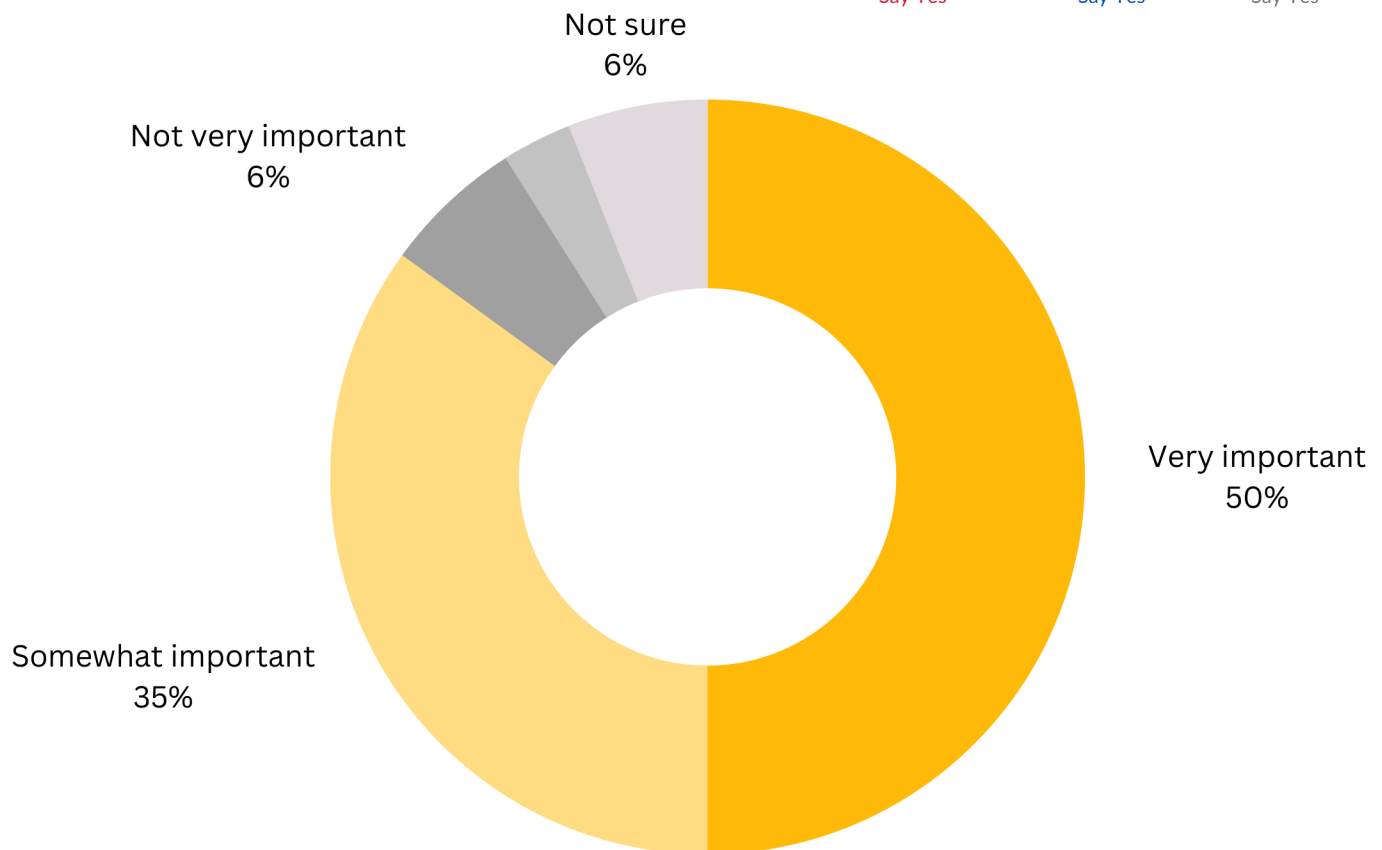
DEMOCRATS

95%
"Say Yes"



INDEPENDENTS

84%
"Say Yes"



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