



Better health through
laboratory medicine.

May 24, 2022

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

RE: Request for Information: AHRQ's Proposed Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund Strategic Framework

Dear Sir/Madam:

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) proposed strategic framework for Patient Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund investments. AACC supports the agency's efforts to promote evidence-based, patient-centered care with a focus on underserved populations.

AACC offers the following suggestions for inclusion within the AHRQ strategic plan:

- The healthcare system needs to better utilize patient data to improve the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Achieving this objective requires gathering and analyzing data from differing providers and health networks. AHRQ should promote the development and adoption of standardized interoperability standards, which are necessary in harmonizing these data and creating better clinical guidelines.
- AHRQ should incorporate language that promotes greater patient awareness and advocacy, including a renewed emphasis on digital literacy. As technology advances in the healthcare field, populations with an existing digital gap may fall further behind, thus expanding rather than narrowing existing health disparities.
- AHRQ states that it wants to promote research that can help the most patients. If this is a desired goal, the agency should promote an interdisciplinary research approach, which includes all relevant stakeholders (e.g., laboratorians, physicians, payers, public-health, and data science). The proposals should also include achievable and measurable outcomes in terms of patient health and healthcare costs.
- AHRQ should provide targeted training for underrepresented minorities within the field of healthcare research. The agency should also promote networking opportunities for these individuals as well as occasions to participate in research projects affecting their communities.

May 24, 2022
Page Two

AACC is a global scientific and medical professional organization dedicated to clinical laboratory science and its application to healthcare. AACC brings together more than 50,000 clinical laboratory professionals, physicians, research scientists, and business leaders from around the world focused on clinical chemistry, molecular diagnostics, mass spectrometry, translational medicine, lab management, and other areas of laboratory science to advance healthcare collaboration, knowledge, expertise, and innovation.

On behalf of AACC, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this proposal. If you have any questions, please email Vince Stine, PhD, AACC's Senior Director of Government and Global Affairs, at vstine@aacc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. R. Master', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stephen R. Master, MD, PhD
President, AACC