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July 30, 2012

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers:

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the national non-profit association of health information management (HIM) professionals. With over 64,000 members, AHIMA works to meet health information needs and implement standards throughout the healthcare industry, government and educational systems. *We are opposed to language in the FY 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS) funding bill that would eliminate funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).*

AHRQ has a key role in setting health measures to meet federal initiatives for improving quality and safety in healthcare delivery. The agency is at the center of multi-stakeholder efforts to standardize measures which can be used to reduce waste and abuse in the healthcare system. HIM professionals work to meet mandates on health information technology (HIT), electronic health records (EHRs) and health information exchanges (HIEs)—all of which require uniform health measures to increase the effectiveness of the data that is collected. The collaboration that takes place between AHIMA, AHRQ and other stakeholders is imperative to health initiatives which- in addition to EHRs and HIEs- include patient safety, quality and the privacy and security of medical information.

As a non-profit organization, our membership understands the need to use resources effectively, collaborate with other stakeholders, and work to control the rising cost of healthcare. Therefore, we respectfully recommend the following:

- *Reinstate language providing full funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in the FY 2013 LHHS funding bill;*
- *Vote against any committee amendments that would further reduce funding for programs that relate to patient safety, quality, HIT, HIE, EHRs and other essential healthcare initiatives.*

AHRQ is an essential component of multi-stakeholder efforts to increase quality healthcare while effectively managing health spending. The current health system cannot afford to lose the valuable contributions this agency provides for the improvement of healthcare. If you have any questions regarding this matter, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Margarita Valdez, manager, congressional relations at margarita.valdez@ahima.org.

Sincerely,

Patty Thierry Sheridan, RHIA, MBA, FAHIMA
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