

PRIORITY RESEARCH AGENDA

One of SGIM members' core competencies is the conduct of high-quality research to enable the creation of a high-value health care delivery system – one in which the maximum benefit is delivered for the minimum amount of dollars. To be effective and comprehensive, funding for this research must span from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). Each agency has a unique mission, complimentary of the others and all merit the support of a Congress intent on providing quality programs to the American people.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

AHRQ fills a critical void nationally by providing the scientific evidence needed to improve patient safety, reduce waste, and enable healthcare delivery systems to bring the maximum benefits to the public. Specifically, evidence provided by AHRQ has led to a 17% reduction in adverse events in hospitals since 2010, saving an estimated 50,000 lives and \$12.0 billion. AHRQ research is also critical to implementing the evidence on treatment decisions that PCORI produces (see below) to assure the health care system is focused on patients. *SGIM supports strengthening AHRQ now, given the dramatic ongoing changes in the healthcare system and believes that Congress should provide not less than \$364 million in appropriated funds plus \$105 million in the statutory transfer from PCORI. Additionally, Congress should encourage AHRQ to increase the portion of its funding used for investigator-initiated research, which often allows for testing and dissemination of innovative approaches to improving quality and reducing waste, and for the career development of young investigators.*

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

NIH is renowned for funding the best, peer-reviewed biomedical, behavioral and translational research through a system in which approximately 85 percent of all funds appropriated are used for research project grants, chosen by merit, in universities and research centers in every state in the nation. About ten percent goes to high-quality research on the NIH campus. This research has enormous implications for economic development and ensuring the nation's preeminence in biomedical innovation. In spite of an increase in FY16 and some funding from the 21st Century Cures Act, the decline in purchasing power exceeds 20 percent since FY03. *SGIM strongly supports an NIH budget that is robust and sustainable over a period of years and believes that an increase of not*

less than \$2.0 billion plus the release of funds included in the 21st Century Cures Act is needed to sustain the progress being made.

Within NIH, SGIM strongly supports the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) program at the National Center for Advancing Translational Science (NCATS), which ensures that medical discoveries are translated into clinical practice. SGIM is pleased that Congress has recognized that the CTSA program must support the full spectrum of translational research, including community-engagement and comparative effectiveness research. *Congress should set appropriations for the CTSA program at not less than \$500 million so that it can have a major impact on real-world medical care and the public's health. SGIM urges Congress to continue to assure that the full-spectrum research mission of the 62 CTSA's, as detailed in their approved grant applications, is continued in FY18 and beyond.*

VA Medical and Prosthetics Research

Some of the most important health services research conducted by the federal government is undertaken at the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). SGIM strongly support the DVA's research mission in its entirety. SGIM also recognizes the critical importance of the DVA's health services research and development (HSRD) program to improving the health and welfare of America's returning war and other service veterans. *SGIM strongly supports a budget of \$713 million for Medical and Prosthetics Research in the VA that is proportionate to the growing challenges of providing the best care to our veterans and that provides the evidence needed to improve the quality, cost, and access of VA healthcare.*

Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)

PCORI was created by Congress to fund research to enable patients and their physicians to make the best possible, scientifically-based treatment decisions, taking patient preferences and other factors into account. This research is essential to building patient-centered healthcare delivery systems and to identifying the best possible treatment decisions for individual patients. While PCORI was developed from scratch and is now fully operational, legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act could have the negative effect of ending PCORI just as its research programs are beginning to show results and could even disrupt current, but incomplete, research being conducted. *SGIM opposes any such legislation and urges Congress in the strongest possible terms to allow PCORI to meet its mission and enhance the focus of the health care systems on patients.*

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