

**Official Written Testimony in Support of
Fiscal Year 2022 Science and Research Funding at the
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health**

Submitted by

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Addressing:

Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

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On behalf of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES), we are pleased to provide this written testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies for the official record. **HFES urges the Subcommittee to provide no less than \$500 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and a minimum of \$375.3 million for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), including \$34 million for the Education and Research Centers (ERCs), in fiscal year (FY) 2022.**

AHRQ supports research to improve health care quality, reduce costs, advance patient safety, decrease medical errors, and broaden access to essential services. As the lead federal agency for funding health services research (HSR) and primary care research (PCR), AHRQ is the bridge between cures and care, and ensures that Americans get the best health care at the best value. The RAND Corporation released a [report](#) in 2020 as called for by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018, which identified AHRQ as “the only agency that has statutory authorizations to generate HSR and be the home for federal PCR, and the unique focus of its research portfolio on systems-based outcomes (e.g., making health care safer, higher quality, more accessible, equitable, and affordable) and approaches to implementing improvement across health care settings and populations in the United States.”

HFES requests a minimum of \$500 million for AHRQ, which is consistent with the FY 2010 level adjusted for inflation and reflects the demonstrated needs of pandemic response. This funding level will allow AHRQ to rebuild portfolios terminated after years of cuts. AHRQ is the federal vehicle for studying and improving the United States healthcare system, and it needs the resources to meet its mission and this moment. Through this appropriation level, AHRQ will be better able to fund the “last mile” of research from cure to care.

Additionally, HFES requests \$375.3 million for NIOSH, including \$34 million for the Education and Research Centers (ERCs). NIOSH supports education and research in

occupational health through academic degree programs and research opportunities. With an aging occupational safety and health workforce, ERCs are essential for training the next generation of professionals. The Centers establish academic, labor, and industry research partnerships to achieve these goals. Currently, ERCs are responsible for supplying many of the country's OSH graduates who will go on to fill professional roles.

HFES strongly believes that investment in scientific research serves as an important driver for innovation and the economy as well as for protecting and promoting the health, safety, and well-being of Americans. We thank the Subcommittee for its longtime recognition of the value of scientific and engineering research and its contribution to innovation and public health in the U.S.

The Value of Human Factors and Ergonomics Science

HFES is a multidisciplinary professional association with over 3,000 individual members worldwide, including psychologists and other scientists, engineers, and designers, all with a common interest in designing safe and effective systems and equipment that maximize and adapt to human capabilities.

For over 50 years, the U.S. federal government has funded scientists and engineers to explore and better understand the relationship between humans, technology, and the environment. Originally stemming from urgent needs to improve the performance of humans using complex systems such as aircraft during World War II, the field of human factors and ergonomics (HF/E) works to develop safe, effective, and practical human use of technology. HF/E does this by developing scientific approaches for understanding this complex interface, also known as "human-systems integration." Today, HF/E is applied to fields as diverse as transportation, architecture, environmental design, consumer products, electronics and computers, energy systems, medical devices, manufacturing, office automation, organizational design and management, aging, farming, health, sports and recreation, oil field operations, mining, forensics, and education.

With increasing reliance by federal agencies and the private sector on technology-aided decision-making, HF/E is vital to effectively achieving our national objectives. While a large proportion of HF/E research exists at the intersection of science and practice—that is, HF/E is often viewed more at the "applied" end of the science continuum—the field also contributes to advancing "fundamental" scientific understanding of the interface between human decision-making, engineering, design, technology, and the world around us. The reach of HF/E is profound, touching nearly all aspects of human life from the health care sector to the ways we travel and to the hand-held devices we use every day.

Conclusion

HFES urges the Subcommittee to provide \$500 million for AHRQ and \$375.3 million for NIOSH, including \$34 million for the Education and Research Centers (ERCs) in FY 2022. These investments fund important research studies, enabling an evidence base, methodology, and measurements for improving healthcare, safety, and public health for Americans.

On behalf of the HFES, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions about HFES or HF/E research. HFES truly appreciates the Subcommittee's long history of support for scientific research and innovation.