

United States Senate

October 18, 2018

Mr. Gopal Khanna
Director
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Mr. Khanna:

I write today to inquire about your agency's decision to end support for the National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC) effective July 16, 2018 and ask for an update about the transition of the NGC to the ECRI Institute. The NGC is a valuable resource, and I want to ensure it remains accessible.

As you know, the NGC provides single-source, public access to evidence-based clinical practice guidelines through www.guideline.gov. Clinical practice guidelines promote patient care that is informed by rigorous review of relevant medical evidence, as well as meet defined criteria for inclusion. The NGC is an important tool for providers, patients, and others to inform health care and treatment decisions. The NGC website also contains syntheses of guidelines, expert commentaries, links to guideline resources, and NGC-specific technical assistance videos.

According to the AHRQ's own data, the NGC's website averages 300,000 sessions from 200,000 visitors each month, clearly demonstrating the value that clinicians, researchers, payers, and others see in this resource. As such, I request a response to the following questions about AHRQ's decision to no longer support the NGC.

- Who was involved in the decision to end AHRQ support of the NGC? Additionally, please describe the decision-making process.
- How long was AHRQ's initial contract with ECRI to maintain the NGC? When did the contract end?
- When does AHRQ's funding for NGC expire? How will any remaining funding be reallocated?
- Will AHRQ maintain an archived version of www.guidelines.gov?
- How much did AHRQ spend annually operating the NGC? How much would it cost AHRQ to maintain the website as an archive?

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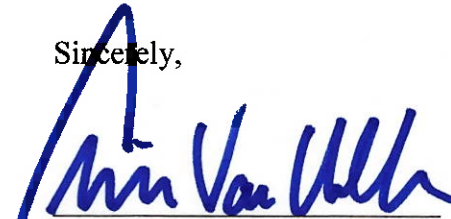
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- Should AHRQ decide to begin supporting the NGC again, how long would it take the Agency to resume control of www.guidelines.gov?
- It has been reported that ECRI will run the NGC privately. Given that the NGC will be housed outside of the federal government, it is imperative that it remains a science-driven resource free of bias or undue influence. Please explain the role of AHRQ now that the NGC is being maintained by another entity.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate