

February 3, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Speaker
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
House Democratic Majority Leader
H-107, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James Clyburn
The Office of the Majority Whip
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
The Office of the House Republican Leader
H-207, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor
The Office of Minority Whip
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Majority Whip Clyburn, Minority Leader Boehner, and Minority Whip Cantor:

We are writing to ask that the comparative effectiveness research (CER) provisions included in the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act” establish a legislative framework that is strong and patient-centered. The goal of CER should be to arm individual patients and their health care providers with the best available information to help assess the relative clinical outcomes of various treatment strategies and alternatives, recognizing that this will vary with circumstances. When used appropriately, comparative clinical effectiveness information can serve as a valuable tool that can contribute to improving health care delivery and outcomes by informing clinical decision making. By focusing on quality of patient care, such research also can help us achieve better health care value.

We appreciate the provisions in your bill that take steps in this direction, but believe additional changes to the bill and report language will give patients, doctors, and other caregivers confidence that the CER program is focused on their needs.

As you work with your colleagues in the Senate on final bill language, we ask you to adopt language in the bill approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on January 27. The adjustments made ensure that CER will focus on medical outcomes and contain the flexibility to take into account variations among different patient populations. We also ask that you take steps to ensure the transparency of such research by including patients and providers in this process.

We firmly support funding for research to understand what works best in health care, and helping patients and providers in making optimal decisions about their medical care.

We look forward to working with you in support of these goals and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research
The AIDS Institute
Alliance for Patient Access
Alpha-1 Association
Alpha-1 Foundation
The Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation

American Association for Cancer Research
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
American College of Cardiology (ACC)
American Urological Association
Association of Clinical Research Organizations (ACRO)
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Californians for Cures
Celiac Disease Center at Columbia University
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Colon Cancer Alliance
C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
COPD Foundation
Easter Seals
Friends of Cancer Research
Interamerican College of Physicians & Surgeons
International Cancer Advocacy Network (ICAN)
International Myeloma Foundation and Prostate Cancer International, Inc.
Kidney Cancer Association
Malecare Cancer Support
Men's Health Network
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Kidney Foundation
National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias
National Alliance for Hispanic Health
National Hemophilia Foundation
National Hispanic Health Foundation
National Hispanic Medical Association
Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association
RetireSafe
Society for Women's Health Research
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance
United Spinal Association
Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network
VHL Family Alliance
Virginia Prostate Cancer Coalition

Cc: The Honorable David Obey

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
The Honorable Charles Rangel
The Honorable Dave Camp
The Honorable Henry Waxman
The Honorable Joe Barton