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CONTACT: CHRISTINA PEARSON
(866) 961-3730
media@improvepatientcare.org

Tony Coelho Is Named New Chair of Coalition for Comparative Effectiveness Research

Patient advocate and former congressman to lead debate on improving patient care

WASHINGTON, March 12, 2009 – The Partnership to Improve Patient Care (PIPC) today announced that Tony Coelho will serve as chairperson of the partnership. Coelho is a former congressman and primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and has worked on behalf of patients and people with disabilities for 40 years.

“I’m excited about the opportunity to lead PIPC in its work to advance comparative effectiveness research (CER) that is focused on meeting patient and provider needs and improving health care quality,” Coelho said. “PIPC brings together a wide range of diverse stakeholders committed to patient-centered comparative effectiveness research, and I am looking forward to advancing their common cause.”

Comparative effectiveness research has the potential to transform health care and better inform patient and provider decision-making. Focusing on improved quality is the best way to achieve a more sustainable, affordable health care system, and comparative clinical research can help us reach this goal. At PIPC, I will work to make sure CER achieves this potential, and does not become a basis for denying patients access to the care they need.”

Coelho will bring to his leadership of PIPC a life-long dedication to ensuring all patients receive the best possible care for their needs. In particular, he will work to amplify the voice of the partnership’s diverse members, including people with disabilities, racial and ethnic communities and the elderly, among others. “Too often, these voices are overlooked in policy debates,” Coelho stated.

“One of PIPC’s near term priorities,” Coelho said, “will be working to ensure the new CER research funding by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is implemented in ways that meet the needs of patients and providers. As the federal government moves quickly to set research priorities and implement this program, we need to make sure it does so through an open, transparent process that is inclusive of all healthcare stakeholders. This is essential to ensuring CER actually meets the goal of supporting good decision-making by patients and providers.”

Tony Coelho is a former United States congressman and House Majority Whip from California and the primary author and sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

About PIPC

The Partnership to Improve Patient Care was formed in November 2008 to support proposals to expand the government’s role in comparative effectiveness research that are centered on patient and provider needs; raise awareness about the value of well-designed CER; and promote the important role of continued medical innovation as part of the solution to cost and quality challenges in health care. Partnership members include a wide range of health care organizations representing patient, provider and industry advocacy groups.