

ABHC

Alliance for Better Health Care

May 14, 2007

The Honorable Tom Allen
United States House of Representatives
1127 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jo Ann Emerson
United States House of Representatives
2440 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Allen and Congresswoman Emerson,

We the undersigned members of the Alliance for Better Health Care (ABHC) want to thank you for your continuing support of comparative effectiveness research (CER) on new and existing drugs, devices, and medical procedures as a way to move toward a high quality, cost-effective, and efficient health care system. The ABHC is a coalition of consumers, employers, health care providers, health plans, pharmacists, research organizations, and other interested stakeholders that believe—as you do—high quality health care requires sound evidence to improve medical decision-making.

As you may know, the ABHC developed the following principles for prioritizing, conducting, validating, disseminating, and using CER to inform ongoing policy discussions.

- CER has the potential to benefit the health of all Americans and is a true public good.
- Significant and stable investment is needed in CER—in the development of research methods and researchers, the design and conduct of studies, the scientific review of research, and the dissemination and communication of results—for it to reach its full potential.
- The scope of CER should address the full spectrum of health care treatments, including pharmaceuticals, devices, medical and surgical procedures, and other interventions.
- Scientific integrity and independence are paramount.
- CER should be based on scientific evidence employing an array of appropriate methods, such as randomized clinical control trials, observational studies, meta-analyses, and systematic technology assessment reviews.

- The processes for identifying research priorities, conducting research, validating the science, and disseminating results should be transparent.
- Any entity that commissions or conducts CER should involve stakeholders in setting research priorities and disseminating research.
- Board governance should assure accountability in the conduct and dissemination of comparative effectiveness research.

CER holds the promise of improving health care quality and outcomes for all patients, but this can only be achieved if it is sound and trusted. It is imperative that legislation to expand our nation's CER portfolio include these basic principles outlined by the ABHC, and we praise you for recognizing the importance of each in your new bill, "Enhanced Health Care Value for All Act of 2007." By doing so, you have taken a positive first step in ensuring a credible, viable, and sustainable program that will be palatable to the myriad stakeholders.

We look forward to working with you as you strive to ensure Americans get the best care at the best value through better information. If you have any questions, please contact Emily Rowe by phone at 202.292.6743 or by e-mail at emily.rowe@academyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

AARP • Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy • Aetna
Alliance of Community Health Plans • American Academy of Family Physicians
American Osteopathic Association • American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
Blue Cross Blue Shield Association • Blue Shield of California
Coalition for Health Services Research • DaimlerChrysler Corporation
General Motors Corporation • Group Health Cooperative • Kaiser Permanente
Marshfield Clinic • National Business Group on Health
Service Employees International Union • The Dow Chemical Company
The Joint Commission • UnitedHealth Group • WellPoint, Inc.

Joined by,

Consumers Union