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National Business Group on Health Endorses Bill Promoting Better Information about Health Care Options

H.R. 2184 Boosts Research on Which Medical Treatments Work Best

WASHINGTON, DC. (May 15, 2007) – The National Business Group on Health today applauded Representatives Tom Allen and Jo Ann Emerson for introducing the Enhanced Health Care Value for All Act. If approved, the bill would vastly increase the funding for studies comparing the effectiveness of prescription drugs, medical devices, procedures, and other medical treatments.

Speaking on Capital Hill today with Representatives Allen and Emerson and other health care leaders, Helen Darling, President of the National Business Group on Health, said, “The National Business Group on Health and employers nationwide applaud Representatives Allen and Emerson for their leadership in proposing this unprecedented, much needed, and long overdue initiative to close the information gap that doctors and patients all too frequently face when determining the best course of treatment. Patients deserve nothing less than to receive care based on the latest research and the best available evidence.”

The bill (H.R. 2184) would provide \$3 billion over five years to fund new comparative effectiveness research and syntheses of existing research sponsored by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The bill would also create an advisory board comprised of employers and consumers as well as health care representatives to recommend research priorities, and work with independent clinical experts to assure the transparency and scientific validity of the research.

“Too often, doctors make health care decisions and patients receive care with little or no evidence that the alternative chosen is better than other courses of treatment. As Americans become increasingly involved in their health care decisions, they need reliable information about options and alternatives that are best for them,” said Ms. Darling. “With so many new medical advances and many unproven existing treatments in use, doctors also need better information to ensure that patients receive the most effective care. For an industry that costs the American people over \$2.2 trillion, this proposed amount can help us reduce waste and improve quality care.”

“We pledge to do all we can to support this initiative to assure that credible comparative clinical information becomes readily available,” said Steven Wojcik, Vice President, Public Policy, of the National Business Group on Health.

The widespread availability of comparative information on the effectiveness of medical treatments is a key element of the National Business Group on Health’s comprehensive position on national health care reform, which is available at this link:

<http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/pdfs/nationalhealthcarereformpositionstatement.pdf>.

About the National Business Group on Health

The National Business Group on Health, representing over 265 mostly large employers, is the nation’s only non-profit organization devoted exclusively to finding innovative and forward-thinking solutions to large employers’ most important health care and related benefits issues. The Business Group identifies and shares best practices in health benefits, disability, health and productivity, related paid time off and work/life balance issues. Business Group members provide health coverage for more than 50 million U.S. workers, retirees and their families. For more information about the Business Group, visit www.businessgrouphealth.org