

The Honorable Harry Reid
522 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

December 3, 2009

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

The current debate on health care reform presents an unprecedented opportunity to improve the health of the nation. The over 40 organizations that have signed this letter, representing patients, survivors, advocacy organizations, professional societies and associations, caregivers, and academic research centers, believe that the expansion of comparative effectiveness research (CER) has the capacity to enhance medical decision-making, and ultimately improve the quality of the American health care system.

The undersigned groups respectfully ask that the CER provisions in the “Senate Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” be retained as a part of the final Senate health reform bill.

This diverse group believes comparative effectiveness research is imperative to generate additional evidence, and objective information, allowing health care providers and their patients to make the best individualized decisions possible.

A strong federal commitment to CER will help improve and expand much-needed data on the outcomes associated with the use of different medical interventions and examine factors that contribute to variations in outcomes.

Not only do we believe CER will generate data about what works best for certain subpopulations, we feel it will also spare patients from treatments that may not work for a specific subset of Americans. Ultimately, scientifically rigorous CER presents an enormous opportunity to accelerate progress toward more tailored or personalized medicine.

We acknowledge that evaluating the effectiveness of medical treatment alternatives is complex, and will require the flexibility to use various methods like randomized clinical trials, observational studies, the development of new and innovative research and study methods, as well as systematic reviews of existing data.

Therefore, in order to establish a robust CER program, we ask that the multiple health-related Federal agencies, which have strong scientific foundations, have a prominent role in study prioritization, methodology, dissemination and, in particular, the conduct and funding of trials which generate new clinical evidence.

On behalf of hundreds-of-thousands of patients, advocates, health care providers, researchers, and all Americans who seek enhanced information regarding their own health care options, we ask that the United States Senate retain Comparative Effectiveness Research as a vital part of the monumental Senate health care reform legislation (H.R. 3950) to give hope to patients and make much-needed improvement to the health of all Americans.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research
Alzheimer's Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Association for Cancer Research
American Association for Dental Research
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Emergency Physicians
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Heart Association
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society of Nephrology
Association of American Cancer Institutes
The Autism Society
C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition
Californians for Cures
CancerCare
CANN - Community Access National Network
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Friends of Cancer Research
Kids With Heart National Assn for Children's Heart Disorders, Inc
Komen Advocacy Alliance
Lance Armstrong Foundation
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Men's Health Network
MLD Foundation
Men's Health Network
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Coalition for Cancer Research (NCCR)
National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Patient Advocate Foundation
National Spinal Cord Injury Association
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
PanCAN
Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Pull-thru Network, Inc.
Research!America
Research for Cure
Society for Women's Health Research
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal Association