

July 25, 2007

The Honorable John D. Dingell
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe L. Barton
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell and Ranking Member Barton,

As you prepare for markup of the "Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act" (H.R. 3162) the Coalition for Health Services Research commends the Committee for recognizing the promise of comparative effectiveness research. The Coalition's mission is to support research that leads to accessible, affordable, high-quality health care. As the advocacy arm of AcademyHealth, we represent the interests of 3,800 researchers, scientists, and policy experts, as well as 135 organizations that produce and use health services research.

As you know, health care in the United States has the potential to improve people's health dramatically, but often falls short and costs too much. Comparative effectiveness research—where pharmaceuticals, medical devices and medical procedures used to treat the same conditions are evaluated for their relative safety, effectiveness, and cost—has great potential to improve health care quality and patient outcomes while ensuring that consumers receive the best care at the best value.

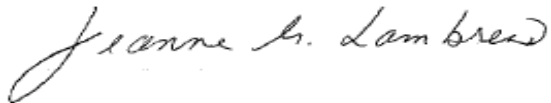
The Coalition supports the comparative effectiveness provisions contained in the "Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act." A robust, adequately-funded comparative effectiveness program will provide a much needed basis for improvements in our health care system that benefit the general public. As such, we believe broad-based funding for comparative effectiveness research is needed to assure the independence and scientific integrity of the program.

We also believe that increased investment in comparative effectiveness research must be coupled with greater investment in the research infrastructure—the data, methods, and researchers needed to conduct this work. The field of health services research has experienced an erosion of investment in its data, methods, and researchers. If left unchecked, these declining investments in the next generation of researchers could threaten the field's capacity to address the nation's research needs. The establishment of a Coordinating Council for Health Services Research—as authorized in the "Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act"—would help in this regard by taking stock of the field's current needs and preparing a strategic plan to strengthen the infrastructure for the future.

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The Coalition thanks the Committee for its efforts to make a serious—and needed—investment in comparative effectiveness research and the health services research infrastructure. If you have any questions, please contact Emily Rowe, Director of Government Relations at 202.292.6743 or emily.rowe@academyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne L. Lambrew".

Jeanne Lambrew, Ph.D.
Chair
Coalition for Health Services Research

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Helms".

David Helms, Ph.D.
President & CEO
Coalition for Health Services Research