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December 9, 2009

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

The Personalized Medicine Coalition (PMC) strongly supports the inclusion of comparative effectiveness research (CER) policies that recognize and promote personalized medicine in health reform legislation. The PMC believes that CER has the potential to advance science and help patients and their doctors make better choices about the medical options available to them.

We are pleased that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act currently under consideration by the United States Senate includes provisions based on legislation introduced earlier this year by Senators Max Baucus (D-MT) and Kent Conrad (D-ND). Thank you for recognizing the critical role that personalized medicine must play in any CER initiative. Importantly, your legislation incorporates research on patient preferences, including quality of life, into the government's work. It also would improve the quality of the science developed by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute to include primary research on molecularly-informed trials, define differences among patients to include genetic and molecular subtyping, and instruct the government to periodically update evidence and methods in comparative effectiveness research, among other provisions. By considering how individual patients respond to different therapies, healthcare reform can help facilitate care that is higher quality with systemically lower costs.

Well-designed CER studies, such as those promoted by your bill, can determine not only what works best, but also what works best for whom. Done right, CER can help realize the goals of healthcare reform and personalized medicine by getting the right therapy to the right patient, the first time.

The approach outlined in the bill will ensure research grounded in strong study methods and scientific standards. By including scientists, medical researchers, providers and patients on the governing body, the Senate's CER language will reflect the latest advances in science as well as practical information to address the needs of patients and physicians.

CER that helps improve our understanding of differences in patient response can do more to improve the quality of health outcomes and contain costs than any other policy recommendation under consideration. While we are pleased that the provisions in the House-passed legislation acknowledge personalized medicine, we favor those included in the Senate bill. We look forward to working with you to develop a CER policy that will advance personalized, evidence-based medicine as part of healthcare reform.

Sincerely yours,



Edward Abrahams  
Executive Director

cc: Republican Leader Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Max Baucus  
The Honorable Kent Conrad  
The Honorable Charles Grassley  
The Honorable Chris Dodd  
The Honorable Tom Harkin  
The Honorable Michael Enzi