



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

December 11, 2009

Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Chris Dodd
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support of Sen. Shaheen and Merkley Amendment #3157

Dear Sen. Reid, Sen. Baucus, and Sen. Dodd:

As the Alliance of Specialty Medicine (Alliance), our mission is to advocate for sound federal health care policy that fosters patient access to the highest quality specialty care and improves timely access to high quality medical care for all Americans. As patient and physician advocates, the Alliance believes that true health reform should be enacted through a responsible and transparent process. As patient and physician advocates, the Alliance writes to express our support of Sen. Shaheen's and Sen. Merkley's amendment #3157 to HR 3590.

As you know, the Alliance is pleased that the underlying "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" includes a provision to expand comparative effectiveness research (CER). Like you, the Alliance believes appropriately designed CER conducted by an independent entity with full participation of all relevant stakeholders should enhance information about treatment options and outcomes for patients and physicians, helping them to choose the care that best meets the individual needs of the patient. CER needs to recognize the diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, of patient populations and subpopulations and communicate results in ways that reflect the differences in individual patient needs. It should not be a vehicle for making centralized coverage decisions or recommendations. The Alliance is also pleased with the specific revisions to the CER provisions outlined in amendment #3157. Specifically, the Alliance fully supports additional physicians being added to the CER panel.

Thank you for commitment and leadership on this issue. Physicians are an integral part of the health care system and are on the front lines of patient care. The Alliance hopes you will work with us to improve the Senate health reform package.

Sincerely,

American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Urological Association
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Heart Rhythm Society
National Association of Spine Specialists
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions