



January 14, 2010

Chairman Tom Harkin
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin:

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC), representing more than 9,000 professional laboratory scientists, supports Administration and congressional efforts to improve the quality of our health care system. We believe that expanded use of evidence-based data is critical to achieving this objective.

AACC is particularly pleased that both the House and Senate health care reform measures address this issue through the promotion of comparative effectiveness research (CER). This research tool can play a key role in providing health care professionals with more up-to-date and reliable information for making patient care decisions.

AACC strongly recommends that the final bill retain the Agency for Healthcare, Research and Quality (AHRQ) as the leading federal agency for CER. We believe that AHRQ has the expertise, infrastructure, and existing relationships needed to advance this field of study. AACC urges you to defer to the House language on this provision. We look forward to working with you on this issue.

By way of background, AACC is the principle association of professional laboratory scientists—including MDs, PhDs and medical technologists. AACC's members develop and use chemical concepts, procedures, techniques and instrumentation in health-related investigations and work in hospitals, independent laboratories and diagnostics industry worldwide. The AACC provides international leadership in advancing the practice and profession of clinical laboratory science and its application to health care. If you have any questions, please call me at (919) 966-3724, or Vince Stine, PhD, Director, Government Affairs, at (202) 835-8721.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Hammett-Stabler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Catherine A. Hammett-Stabler, Ph.D., DABCC, FACB
President, AACC