



February 23, 2011

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 RHOB
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Dear Chairman Upton:

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) opposes H.R. 556, the "Preserving Patients' Choices Act," which would eliminate the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) created by last year's Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). The measure would also rescind the remaining funds allocated to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) for comparative effectiveness research (CER) under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We are concerned that this legislation, if enacted, would hinder ongoing efforts to improve clinical decision-making and patient outcomes.

AACC strongly supports public-private efforts to expand the use of comparative effectiveness research (CER). We believe that generating additional data on the utility of medical treatments and services, particularly as they effect differing subpopulations, will result in more timely, accurate medical decisions. PCORI can play a key role in generating this much needed information. Under PPACA, the Institute is responsible for identifying research priorities, funding studies, developing research data networks, and ensuring the findings are disseminated to the practitioners—all critical to better patient care and outcomes.

AACC also believes that AHRQ should retain a key leadership role in CER. AHRQ is currently using much of its stimulus funding to fill the void in CER until PCORI is fully implemented, including researching the needs of care givers, funding CER studies for key clinical conditions and identifying and implementing innovative approaches for integrating CER into clinical practice and health care decision-making—all worthy and useful endeavors. We believe these important efforts should continue to go forward. Therefore, AACC opposes H.R.556, which could stifle ongoing advances in this important, growing field.

Chairman Upton
February 23, 2011
Page Two

By way of background, AACC is the principal 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 the 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 (314) 362-0194, or Vince Stine, PhD, Director, Government Affairs, at (202) 835-8721.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann M. Gronowski". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Ann M. Gronowski, PhD
President, AACC