

March 15, 2012

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute
Public Comments
1701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20006

Re: Comments on Draft National Priorities for Research and Research Agenda

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I am pleased to offer comments on the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute's (PCORI) first National Priorities for Research and Research Agenda.

AACOM represents the administrations, faculty, and students of the nation's 26 colleges of osteopathic medicine and four branch campuses that offer the doctor of osteopathic medicine degree. Today, more than 18,000 medical students are enrolled in osteopathic medical schools, comprising 20 percent of new U.S. medical students.

AACOM applauds PCORI for its vision of advancing scientific research on much needed patient-centered care in health care delivery and its dedication to seeking public input on its critical National Priorities for Research and Research Agenda. PCORI's mission of providing patients with a superior understanding of the prevention, treatment and care options available is compatible with osteopathic medicine's priorities of enhancing patient-centered primary care.

AACOM commends PCORI on its five national priorities of assessment of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment options; improving healthcare systems; communication and dissemination; addressing disparities; and accelerating patient-centered and methodological research.

When discussing meeting the needs of "all patient populations," we encourage PCORI to ensure the inclusion of underserved populations including the aging populations, veterans, and at-risk populations such as underrepresented minorities, economically depressed populations, and individuals with disabilities.

PCORI's agenda rightfully acknowledges the importance of patient preferences in decision-making. If PCORI is to improve patient-centered care, AACOM believes patients must be actively engaged throughout the research process. Effective tools must be developed to help patients articulate the issues that are important to them in order to validate and improve the quality of research performed. By giving patients an active voice as stakeholders in PCORI's research, they may be empowered to help PCORI succeed.

AACOM agrees with PCORI's agenda in researching patient-centered care on patient outcomes by assessing an array of system-level strategies to incorporate new and extended roles for allied health professionals. AACOM encourages PCORI to assess the important role that interprofessional education plays in quality patient-centered outcomes as well as the role it plays in developing a prepared allied health care workforce and its positive impact on the health care delivery system.

AACOM agrees that effective communication and dissemination of its research is vital to PCORI's success. We encourage PCORI to actively strive to communicate its goals and research findings in patient-centered care in a comprehensive manner to provider and consumer organizations in order to

maintain stakeholder engagement in PCORI's development process. PCORI's messaging should be tailored to be easily understandable by the general public. In order to perpetuate patient-centeredness in its approach, careful attention should be given to the specific technologies used to reach and communicate with underserved populations. Because economically depressed populations often lack reliable and regular access to internet sources, a focus solely on electronic or internet messaging may not be adequate in reaching these at-risk populations.

AACOM recognizes the need for research on often understudied and complex issues such as changing the behaviors of providers, patients and health care delivery systems with input on research design from a wide array of stakeholders. Research on the medical conditions and co-morbidities most frequently witnessed by providers is also imperative in order to improve health care outcomes. Equally important is the need to have patient-centered research easily accessible by providers at the point of care in order to allow patients to benefit from PCORI's research. AACOM also promotes expanded patient-centered care research in areas such as manipulative/manual medicine and body-based practices as amiable with the osteopathic profession's focus on holistic primary care using a patient-centered approach.

Colleges of osteopathic medicine continually strive to train medical students to work in partnership with patients to help them achieve a high level of wellness by focusing on health education, injury prevention, and disease prevention. Therefore, osteopathic medical education's goals echo PCORI's goals of helping people to make informed health care decisions and of improving overall health care delivery.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on PCORI's National Priorities for Research and Research Agenda. AACOM looks forward to working with PCORI on building the capacity for patient-centered outcomes research through the implementation of this agenda.

Sincerely,

Stephen C. Shannon, D.O., M.P.H.
President and CEO
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine