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Federal Coordinating Council on Comparative Effectiveness Research  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Submitted via email to: [coordinatingcouncil@hlseamon.com](mailto:coordinatingcouncil@hlseamon.com)

Subject: Merck Comments on Comparative Effectiveness Research

Dear Council Members:

Merck & Co. Inc., a research-based pharmaceutical company, has a long record of supporting a national comparative effectiveness research (CER) effort. We support the recent funding of CER through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and appreciate the opportunity to comment on the research priorities for this two year funding cycle. However, for the longer term, we believe that an enduring investment is needed in a more transparent and collaborative process where all health system stakeholders can come together to decide on research priorities of importance to society. We look forward to working on legislation in the context of health care reform that can create and support such a long term process.

Merck believes that high quality comparative effectiveness research can improve patient outcomes and can help create greater value for the health care system by improving efficiency and informing the health care choices made by patients, providers, and health plans. We know that the knowledge of how to conduct high quality research will continue to grow and evolve as the country invests more effort and attention toward CER. Nevertheless, we believe that, even with state of knowledge and existing methodologies, great progress can be made. As our collective knowledge develops, we will need to continue to refine and validate the research methods to ensure robust findings, better understand how the results can be appropriately used to inform both technology adoption decisions and individual patient treatment decisions, and, specifically in the area of pharmaceuticals, better incorporate data from drug development programs into the overall evidence base for comparative effectiveness assessments.

For more details on Merck's position on comparative effectiveness research, see our previous testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee in June 2007 (<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=view&id=6114>). If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard K. Murray MD".

Richard K. Murray, M.D.