

# Modern Healthcare

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## Commentary: The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute has lived up to its name

Dr. J. Phillip Gingrey and Tony Coelho



Dr. J. Phillip Gingrey, left, an obstetrician-gynecologist, is a senior adviser at the District Policy Group in Washington, D.C. He was a six-term Republican congressman from Georgia who held multiple leadership positions and founded the GOP Doctors Caucus in 2009. Tony Coelho is chair for the Partnership to Improve Patient Care. He was a six-term Democratic congressman from California.

If we're to continue to make progress on improving patient care and outcomes, clinicians and patients need access to more reliable, useful information to help determine which healthcare options are best for them. PCORI has helped meet that need.

In survey responses and election outcomes, Americans have made it clear that they want a healthcare system that works better for them, is more patient-centered and efficient, and delivers better outcomes.

As former members of Congress, each proud members of different parties, we know this isn't an easy goal, and we often have different opinions about the best way to get there. Beyond policy questions, as one of us is a physician and the other a patient advocate living with a disability, we also bring different points of view to doctor-patient conversations.

But we strongly agree on this: If we're to continue to make progress on improving patient care and outcomes, clinicians and patients must have access to more reliable, useful information to help determine which healthcare options are best for them. And in order to ensure that evidence is relevant and accessible to them, patients need a seat at the table in developing it.

That's why we're among a growing number of members of the healthcare community who want to see the work of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, or PCORI, continue. In fact, over 200 organizations and individuals have sent a letter urging Congress to pass legislation to reauthorize PCORI for another decade. Bipartisan bills are expected to be introduced in both the House and Senate in the coming weeks. With a number of health programs' authorizations in need of extension this year, PCORI reauthorization is primed for inclusion in an extenders package.

PCORI's work is producing evidence that fills a major unmet need—answering real-world treatment questions that patients, clinicians and others ask daily for conditions that impose major burdens on individuals and their families. Established by Congress as a private, not-for-profit research funder in 2010, PCORI is the only organization dedicated to supporting comparative clinical-effectiveness research, or CER, studies, which compare what treatment approaches work best, for which patients, given their needs and preferences.

The goal of its more than \$1.9 billion in research investment across the nation since 2012 is to help healthcare providers and payers better understand treatment options and to help patients and those who care for them make better-informed healthcare decisions. Delivering care that is most clinically effective and incorporates outcomes that matter to patients is both cost effective and essential to our well-being as a nation. It's so important in fact, that private health insurers and self-insured health plans generously help fund PCORI each year.

PCORI has had its share of skeptics. Some physicians feared its work would interfere with the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship. Additionally, physicians and patient advocates both wanted to be sure it would listen carefully to patients in deciding which studies to fund, and that the results of those studies would not be used to restrict their care choices.

We're pleased to report that such concerns were never, in fact, realized. Indeed, PCORI has lived up to its name and its mandate to drive patient-centeredness. We both feel strongly that the funding that supports its work should be reauthorized before it expires at the end of fiscal 2019, so the valuable investment in its efforts to date can produce even more useful evidence for healthcare decisionmakers well into the future.

Inline Play

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