



*American Journal of Respiratory
and Critical Care Medicine®*

*American Journal of Respiratory
Cell and Molecular Biology®*

*Proceedings of the American
Thoracic Society®*

We help the world breathe®

PULMONARY • CRITICAL CARE • SLEEP

NICHOLAS S. HILL, MD
President

MONICA KRAFT, MD
President-Elect

DEAN E. SCHRAUFNAGEL, MD
Immediate Past President

PATRICIA W. FINN, MD
Vice President

THOMAS W. FERKOL, MD
Secretary-Treasurer

STEPHEN C. CRANE, PhD, MPH
Executive Director

March 15, 2012

Joseph V. Selby, M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director
Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute
5185 MacArthur Blvd. NW Suite 632
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Dr. Selby:

On behalf of the American Thoracic Society (ATS), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)'s draft National Priorities for Research and Research Agenda. The ATS is an international education and scientific multi-disciplinary society of 15,000 members focused on respiratory, critical care and sleep medicine and we have a keen interest in patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR). We appreciate the PCORI Board's efforts to promote a transparent process that allows stakeholders, including medical specialty societies, researchers and patients, to play a key role in PCORI's important work.

The ATS looks forward to continued engagement with PCORI on the development of priorities for PCOR, particularly in areas that relate to respiratory diseases, critical illnesses and sleep disorders. We believe the draft National Priorities for Research and Research Agenda priority areas are appropriate and that each area is suitably weighted in terms of budget priority.

As the draft agenda does not specify priorities in disease areas we recommend that PCORI focus initial research efforts on chronic disease areas that have the highest population impact. Within respiratory disease, we urge PCORI to support PCOR studies in the following specific high impact areas:

- studies on smoking cessation interventions, including studies examining the consequences of smoking on the development and progression of COPD
- Asthma control
- Expanded investigation into therapies for sleep disorders, as this area is currently under-represented in PCOR
- Studies of interventions/strategies to reduce healthcare disparities in health outcomes in children with asthma, particularly in urban communities, pneumonia, chronic lung diseases related to prematurity, and pulmonary complications of sickle cell disease.

25 Broadway, 18th Floor
New York, NY 10004
P. 212.315.8600
F. 212.315.6498
www.thoracic.org

ATS 2012 • International Conference • May 18 - 23 • San Francisco • California

In particular, is important that PCORI prioritize end-of-life care, including advanced care planning, as this area holds potential for dramatically improving the quality of healthcare for patients with life-limiting illness or injury. The ATS supports PCORI's focus on "comparisons for which new knowledge could address individual differences in patient values and preferences and support shared decision making." Few studies have focused on patient- and family-centered care in the ICU, including participation of family and advocates in care decisions, and the impact this may have on decision making and outcomes, so this an area that is ripe for more investigation.

Comparative Assessment of Options for Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment

The ATS supports the draft agenda's focus on "situations in which the effectiveness of strategies for prevention, treatment, screening, diagnosis, or surveillance have not been adequately studied against alternative options and better evidence is needed to support decision making by patients, caregivers, and health care professionals." Many standard interventions used in ICU's, including types of mechanical ventilation, have not been adequately evaluated. We know that more comparative clinical care treatment data would enable better patient outcomes.

Improving Healthcare Systems

The ATS was pleased to note the draft agenda's prioritization of research that will demonstrate the most effective system level strategies to support patients, including the coordination of care. There are significant gaps in knowledge about the most effective organizational structure to optimize care for critically ill and injured patients. The ATS is particularly concerned about care transitions and transfers, of patients to and from the ICU, or between different health care institutions, including hospitals, nursing homes, and emergency departments. Several studies have illustrated the failure of the health care system in handling transitions for vulnerable patients, which increases the risk of medication errors and hospital readmissions. The ATS feels that patient outcomes can be significantly improved by the development of effective strategies for care coordination of patients with critical illnesses and we urge PCORI to expand study in this area.

Patient access to care within healthcare systems is also an important area for PCORI to study. Although implementation of the Affordable Care Act will gradually increase access over the next few years, there are currently many barriers to care, including affordability and provider shortages. The consequences of these barriers can result in poorer outcomes for patient such as delayed diagnosis and treatment, and higher healthcare costs. The ATS also urges PCORI to prioritize studies assessing barriers to care.

The ATS appreciates the opportunity to comment on PCORI's draft National Priorities for Research and Research Agenda. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Nicholas S. Hill, M.D.
President
American Thoracic Society