

CONTACT:

Sarah Little or Sean Fitzpatrick 202-224-4774

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 25, 2013

Senator Roberts Introduces Bill to Protect Patients from Rationing

Stops Comparative Effectiveness Research from Limiting Options for Treatment

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senator Pat Roberts today introduced legislation to block a rationing tool known as comparative effectiveness research (CER) from denying or delaying coverage of health care treatments for patients in federal health programs such as Medicare.

“Health care is not one size fits all. Research such as comparative effectiveness can be used to limit a patient’s options for treatment and effectively ration care. The government should not attempt to interfere with decisions that should be made between a patient and their doctor.” Roberts said.

The bill, S. 133, called the “Preserving Access to Targeted, Individualized, and Effective New Treatments and Services (PATIENTS) Act of 2013” prohibits the Secretary of Health and Human Services from using data obtained from comparative effectiveness research to deny or delay coverage of an item or service under a federal health care program. It also requires the Secretary to ensure that any CER conducted or supported by the federal government accounts for those factors that contribute to differences in treatment response as well as patient preference, including patient-reported outcomes, genomics and personalized medicine, the unique needs of health disparity populations, and indirect patient benefits.

We have seen how comparative effectiveness research works in Canada and the United Kingdom, and it is the patient who ends up paying the price for increased government intervention in the doctor patient relationship, Roberts said. Americans do not want the federal government limiting their treatment options and deciding what is best for them. They want to be informed and work with their doctor to decide the best treatment for them.

During the health care reform debate in 2009, Senator Roberts was an outspoken opponent of rationing care as a way to cut costs. As a member of both the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee, Roberts fought the use of rationing in the new health care law during both committees’ consideration of the bill.

Cosponsors include Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK), John Barrasso (R-WY), Rob Portman (R-OH), Mike Crapo (R-UT), David Vitter (R-LA) and James Inhofe (R-OK).