



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

---

## Specialty Doctors Host AHRQ, CMMI Leadership During First Annual Physician Policy Roundtable

*Alliance of Specialty Medicine calls for greater emphasis on specialty medicine issues in value based payment and research initiatives*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MARCH 15, 2012

**CONTACT: [INFO@SPECIALTYDOCS.ORG](mailto:INFO@SPECIALTYDOCS.ORG)**

**WASHINGTON** — The Alliance of Specialty Medicine (Alliance) today called on the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) to engage the specialty physicians on efforts to promote quality driven healthcare through comparative effectiveness research and value based payment initiatives.

At the Alliance's first ever Physician Policy Roundtable, Dr. Carolyn Clancy, the Director for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and Sean Cavanaugh, the Acting Director of Programs and Policies for the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) made presentations and fielded questions from Alliance physicians who represent a variety of specialties from around the country.

"Given the emphasis the Congress and the HHS Secretary are placing on primary care, how will AHRQ balance its research activities to ensure its work gives adequate attention to conditions where specialty medicine intervention improves patient health and outcomes, and saves the healthcare system money?" asked Dr. Greg Schimizzi, a Rheumatologist who practices in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Dr. Clancy acknowledged that while AHRQ is agnostic when it comes to endorsing or funding different means of care, she made it clear that she knew the value specialty care brings to the healthcare system in terms of outcomes and cost savings. She recommended that the specialty community be more aggressive in conducting research and sharing its results.

"The great work and expertise of specialists needs to be highlighted more on the research side," Dr. Clancy said. "There is a need to develop better evidence for your specialties as well as ways to enhance feedback to your primary care colleagues and policymakers here in Washington."

Sean Cavanaugh echoed this sentiment when asked what efforts are underway at CMMI to ensure that quality improvement initiatives are actionable and meaningful for a range of patients and specialty physicians.

"We are constantly and rapidly evaluating measures when it comes to our National Quality Strategy," Cavanaugh said. "We seek guidance from groups like the Alliance."

Specialty physicians are active participants in quality improvement efforts. Through participation in the National Quality Forum (NQF) and American Medical Association's Physician Consortium for

---

American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery • American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Gastroenterological Association • American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery  
American Society of Echocardiography • American Society of Plastic Surgeons • American Urological Association  
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations • Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Heart Rhythm Society • National Association of Spine Specialists • Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

Performance Improvement (AMA-PCPI), the vast majority of Alliance members are engaged developing clinically-relevant performance measures developed from evidence-based guidelines to address performance gaps in their relevant disciplines.

Alliance members are also investing in the development of clinical registries, a well-recognized quality improvement tool used to collect and provide feedback to physicians on their performance relative to a national standard.

-30-

*The Alliance of Specialty Medicine is an organization of national medical societies, based in Washington, DC, which represents specialty physicians in the United States. This non-partisan group is dedicated to the development of sound federal health care policy that fosters patient access to the highest quality specialty care.*