

# Special Emphasis Notice: AHRQ Announces Interest in Career Development (K) Grants focused on Comparative Effectiveness Research

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**Notice Number: NOT-HS-08-003**

## Key Dates

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## Issued by

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

The mission of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of healthcare for all Americans. AHRQ achieves this mission by supporting a broad program of health services research and by working with partners to promote improvements in clinical and health systems practices that benefit patients.

In FY 2008, AHRQ intends to support research career development grants focusing on comparative effectiveness of different treatment and practices, as authorized in the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act (MMA) Section 1013. The intent of these grants is to support the career development of clinical and research doctorates focusing their research on the generation and translation of new scientific evidence and analytic tools in an accelerated format. In particular, the emphasis is on developing and enhancing the research and methodological capacities for conducting comparative clinical effectiveness research and for the integration of evidence into practice and decision-making in the health care system. Applicants are encouraged to partner with institutions well versed in systematic review methodologies or with research centers capable of performing accelerated clinical effectiveness and outcomes research and the translation and dissemination of evidentiary information for health care decision-making. Existing examples of such AHRQ networks include,

NOT-HS-08-003: Special Emphasis Notice: AHRQ Announces Interest in Development (K) Grants focused on Comparative Effectiveness Research the Evidence-based Practice Centers (EPCs), the Developing Evidence to Inform Decisions about Effectiveness (DEcIDE) network, the Centers for Education & Research on Therapeutics (CERTs), and the John M. Eisenberg Clinical Decisions and Communications Science Center. A listing of these research networks under AHRQ's Effective Health Care program can be found at: <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/aboutUs/index.cfm>.

The grants can have either a clinical or methodological emphasis, but must focus tightly on the study and/or the use of comparative effectiveness research. For grants with methodological emphasis, the goals should be to advance methods that serve to fill specific knowledge gaps and to enhance the consistency, applicability, and generalizability of the comparative effectiveness studies. Examples of methodological issues of particular relevance include the identification, role, and assessment of observational studies in the systematic review and synthesis of evidences on comparative effectiveness; design, analytical tools, and statistical techniques for reducing confounding and to mitigate the impacts of potential bias inherent in the observational studies of effectiveness and comparativeness effectiveness; and the communication of risk and benefit and contextual information that enhance the use of evidence in decision-making. For grants with clinical emphasis, the goals should be to develop new scientific evidence that fills important knowledge gaps and to generate critical insights on the clinical effectiveness of health care interventions for which randomized controlled trails may not be feasible or timely, or would raise ethical concerns that are difficult to address. Such clinical research projects also need to be informed by the information needs and inputs from various stakeholders (e.g., policy-makers, providers, and patients), and be organized around a set of priority conditions of importance to the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP programs as mandated by the MMA section 1013. The current list of conditions is targeted toward Medicare beneficiaries and includes:

1. Arthritis and nontraumatic joint disorders
2. Cancer
3. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma
4. Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease
5. Depression and other mood disorders

6. Diabetes mellitus
7. Ischemic heart disease
8. Peptic ulcer/dyspepsia
9. Pneumonia
10. Stroke, including control of hypertension

Subsequent lists will include conditions relevant to the Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Once they are developed and published on AHRQ's Effective Health Care Program site (<http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov>), applicants may choose to focus their clinical research projects on these conditions.

#### **Further guidance:**

*Use of Funding Mechanisms.* AHRQ will use its current career development mechanisms – the K01, K02, and K08.

*Timeline Limitations.* Applications will be funded for 3-5 years.

*Application Submission.* With this notice, AHRQ is providing information about one of the highest research priorities for unsolicited applications for fiscal year 2008. AHRQ will continue to provide regular updates of research priorities as research budget information becomes available. Applications focused on areas identified in this SEN should be submitted on regular research career development grant receipt dates and will be reviewed by AHRQ's standing study sections. Information about the grant application process, including e-grant applications and the funding mechanisms noted above, can be found at <http://www.ahrq.gov/fund/>.

## **Inquiries**

The AHRQ designated contacts for this SEN are:

AHRQ's Effective Health Care (EHC) program:

Yen-pin Chiang, Ph.D.

Center for Outcomes and Evidence

Phone: 301-427-1493

E-mail: [yen-pin.chiang@ahrq.hhs.gov](mailto:yen-pin.chiang@ahrq.hhs.gov)

K01, K02, and K08 inquiries:

Kay Anderson, Ph.D.

Office of Extramural Research, Education, and Priority Populations

Phone: 301-427-1555

E-mail: [kay.anderson@ahrq.hhs.gov](mailto:kay.anderson@ahrq.hhs.gov)

Applicants are encouraged to contact the designated AHRQ staff early in the process of preparing applications in order to clarify questions and discuss potential research projects.

## Reference

Clancy, C.M. and Slutsky, J.R. Advancing Excellence in Health Care: Getting to Effectiveness. *Journal of Investigative Medicine*. 2005 March; 53(2):65-66.

Clancy, C.M., and Slutsky, J.R. Commentary: A Progress Report on AHRQ's Effectiveness Health Care Program. *Health Serv Res*. 2007 Oct; 42(5):xi –xix.

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Department of Health

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National Institutes of Health (NIH)

9000 Rockville Pike

Bethesda, Maryland 20892