

Primer: PCORI and ICER Background, Funding, and Impact on Patient-Centered Care

Updated November 2020

Amidst the debate around value driven health care, it is important to understand what organizations can support such a system. Two prominent organizations, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) and the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER), are positioned to help decision makers compare available treatment options. However, their approaches differ significantly.

PCORI		ICER
<p>PCORI is a quasi-government organization that conducts comparative clinical effectiveness research. PCORI’s mandate dictates that all research must be guided by patients with patients engaged and included throughout the process.</p>	<p>Mission and Mandate</p>	<p>ICER is a private, non-profit organization that conducts cost-effectiveness analyses, with a particular focus on drugs. It uses the controversial Quality-Adjusted Life-Year (QALY) and evaluates the value of a treatment from an insurer perspective.</p>
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Nakela L. Cook, MD, MPH, is Executive Director of PCORI. She is a cardiologist and health services researcher. Prior to joining PCORI, Dr. Cook served as Senior Scientific Officer and Chief of Staff at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).</p>	<p>Leadership</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Steven D. Pearson, MD, MSc is the Founder and President of ICER. Dr. Pearson is an internist, health services researcher, and ethicist who has served in advisory roles in both academia and government, including as a senior fellow at the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).</p>
<p>The multi-stakeholder Board of Governors is mandated to include leaders of other federal health care agencies (e.g. FDA, NIH), patients, providers, payers, industry, and researchers.</p>	<p>Governance</p>	<p>The Governance Board has fiduciary responsibility for the overall operations of ICER. There are no patient representatives within the Governance Board.</p>

Primarily supported by a government Trust Fund designed to produce new scientific patient-centered outcomes research.	Funding	Single largest funder is Arnold Ventures, a politically active LLC. It also receives funding from health insurers and drug manufacturers.
Guided by patients, focused on improving and accelerating patient-centered comparative effectiveness research, addressing health care disparities, and empowering patients and the public to have information that can help them make educated treatment decisions.	Research Priorities	Determined by ICER staff, evaluates new pharmaceutical treatments and interventions that have attracted attention due to their high cost. Often reviews drugs before FDA approval, with the goal of providing payers with information to make formulary decisions.
Patients, payers, clinicians, caregivers, and policymakers	Intended Audience	Payers and policymakers
PCORI has an explicit mandate to meaningfully engage patients through each phase of the research process. Patients and other relevant stakeholders are invited to contribute feedback to help identify, measure, and evaluate patient-centered outcomes.	Opportunities for Patient Engagement	ICER's Patient Engagement Program seeks input from patients and advocacy organizations but provides few details describing how and when patient perspectives are incorporated into its analyses.
Publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals	Peer Review	Research rarely published in peer-reviewed scientific journals
Statutorily required to be robustly transparent, including full public availability of its methods, process, and findings	Transparency	Models are not fully transparent
The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is required by law to review activities and financial statements and report on the findings.	Oversight	None
Clearly outlined evaluation activities to assess the impact of its patient-centered approach	Evaluation Plan	No plans to evaluate the impact of its research on patient access