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The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322A Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of the Houston Methodist Research Institute, I want to convey our institutional support for H.R. 6, the 21st Century Cures Act. This landmark legislation will build upon the United States' worldwide leadership in medical innovation by reforming medical research and development policies to keep pace with rapidly changing scientific breakthroughs. Since the very beginning, 21st Century Cures has focused on improving the bench to bedside continuum to give doctors more tools, and give patients more hope.

Houston Methodist is foremost a nationally-ranked hospital system dedicated to providing the highest quality care to our patients. As part of that commitment and our clinical excellence in specialties including cancer, cardiology, neurology, orthopedics and pulmonology, we expanded our research enterprise by building translational research facilities adjacent to our main hospital. This uniquely streamlined medical research environment is translational, transformational, multidisciplinary and patient-focused. HMRI is currently producing clinical grade experimental materials for preclinical and clinical studies, and is overseeing 700 clinical trials in a wide variety of chronic diseases afflicting millions of Americans.

Given our extensive expertise in the discovery, development and delivery of medical breakthroughs, we see great promise in the 21st Century Cures Act through provisions that will facilitate more cures to more diseases. Among the many improvements, we are pleased to see: greater involvement of patients in the development and approval of drugs and devices; permitting translational investments in Phase III trials to help bridge the "Valley of Death"; the expansion of surrogate endpoints and drug repurposing; facilitating collaborative research; priority review for breakthrough innovations that will help those in urgent need of clinical solutions; and many more.

Along with our support, we also propose additional steps be taken in recognition of the need for strategic approaches to research funding. To expedite delivery of medical breakthroughs to patients, encouraging translational research that bridges innovation to a successful hand-off to industry is critical. We particularly support cultivating the qualities that make truly translational research

unique from bench or scientific research and the capabilities that are required for efficient and seamless continuation through the FDA approval process. This will ensure that taxpayer dollars appropriated for translational research are used in a manner that supports its purpose. In addition, we suggest a discussion on rebalancing our national portfolio to foster a more patient-centered and solution-oriented focus through increased funding for translational research at the NIH.

At Houston Methodist we believe in an ethical imperative to find solutions to the illnesses and injuries that we see in our hospitals every day. We are dedicated to providing exceptional health care to improve and prolong the lives of our patients. We are proud to be home to many of the best doctors and surgeons in the world and the availability of innovative new drugs, therapies, technology and devices gives them the tools they and other providers need to turn today's treatments into tomorrow's cures. †

Your 21st Century Cures legislation is a landmark opportunity to impact families in profound ways and we are eager to see it passed. Your leadership, along with all of your cosponsors, is highly valued in the medical and research community. The United States has always held the legacy of being a pioneer of medical innovation and together we can continue our helm at the forefront of bringing drugs and devices to patients more quickly than ever before. We applaud your achievement and support the continuation of your excellent work.

Sincerely,



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Ernest Cockrell Jr. Presidential Distinguished Chair
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Houston Methodist Research Institute

Director
Institute for Academic Medicine at Houston Methodist Hospital

Executive Vice President
Houston Methodist Hospital System