

CMPI: Health Reform Must Support Rather than Impede Medical Innovation
Health Leaders Launch "The Odyssey Project" to Foster Continued Medical Progress

Washington, DC (May 14) -- Today, the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest (CMPI) launched **The Odyssey Project**, a new initiative to ensure that support for medical innovation remains a top priority in any healthcare reform effort.

"The Odyssey Project will provide a forum for discussing medical progress over the past half century," said Peter Pitts, President of CMPI. "It will also create a roadmap for ensuring that public policy continues to offer patient-centered prescriptions for America's healthcare challenges and that policymakers understand that support for innovation is the path to more efficient and better health care."

The Odyssey Project is a multiyear effort focused on bringing comprehensive information into the reform debate to educate the public and national policymakers about how biomedical innovation, far from being a major source of rising health care costs, has been and will continue to be the most important source of solutions to the challenges facing our health care system. . The Project will propose fundamental changes in attitudes, regulations, health policies and health care financing that focuses on the near- term potential of new technologies and services that advance personalized medicine and allow individuals to save money while improving their health.

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.), a member of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health and a leading advocate for high-quality, accessible health care said that The Odyssey Project is about improving health care.

"The Odyssey Project is exciting because it is ultimately about saving lives and improving health care for American families," Rogers said. "Medical innovation is an American trademark. America does innovation better than anywhere else in the world, but the support of policymakers is crucial if we are to continue finding solutions and developing life-saving medicines and treatments."

CMPI Vice President Robert Goldberg highlighted the importance of technology to saving lives. "Medical technology is not a costly burden to be contained, but the solution to humanity's greater challenges," Goldberg said. "It's counterproductive to reduce health spending by diminishing access to innovative new therapies. . Indeed, over the past 50 years, the commercialization of medical discoveries and the development of more effective ways of integrating the use of these products to sustain individual health has produced enormous economic benefit to our nation and added to the health status of countless Americans. . Policy changes that impede innovation will not save money or provide for better health."

Elijah Alexander, a former NFL star who is currently the president of the Tackle Myeloma Foundation, spoke of the importance of medical innovation in his own life, as a cancer patient. "Drugs come from private companies, and that requires years of trial and error by dedicated researchers," Alexander said. "Profits drive investment, and investment supports research. If I

had been diagnosed with multiple myeloma 10 years ago -- before the drug that has saved my life, Revlimid, was developed -- I would probably not be here today."

Mark Thornton, the President of the Sarcoma Foundation of America, called on policymakers to protect America's standing as the epicenter of medical research. "The SFA heartily endorses the goals of The Odyssey Project -- to keep the United States at the forefront of medical innovation and to help develop a range of new treatment options for the diseases that plague our people. We look forward to working with CMPI to accomplish those goals."

Reporters interested in speaking with CMPI President Peter Pitts or CMPI Vice President Robert Goldberg should contact them at 212-417-9169.

About CMPI

The Center for Medicine in the Public Interest, a non-profit public policy group dedicated to research-based free market reforms for the health care industry.