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Upcoming *World Kidney Day* Underscores Role of Low-Cost Lab Tests in Combating High-Cost Kidney Disease

Washington, DC -- Inexpensive, well-established lab tests may hold the key to combating the epidemic of chronic kidney disease (CKD), which is the focus of World Kidney Day, March 12.

Kidney disease costs about \$60 billion annually and often results in kidney failure, cardiovascular disease and anemia. Some 27 million Americans have CKD—an increase of 30 percent over the past 10 years. But kidney disease can be slowed down or stopped through early detection and treatment made possible by information from two key laboratory tests.

- A \$10 lab test that determines how well the kidneys remove waste from the blood -- called the estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate, or eGFR.
- A \$7.25 lab test that identifies excess protein in the urine—called the urine albumin test.

These tests tell physicians how severe the disease is and give clues to its likely cause. That helps doctors select treatments that can halt the disease for many patients and prevent it in others—a critical fact since kidney dialysis today costs \$72,000 per patient per year.

“Two inexpensive laboratory tests may be all it takes to detect chronic kidney disease early in many patients,” said Alan Mertz, president of the American Clinical Laboratory Association. “Even if a patient already has the disease, testing and medication can help keep it under control and slow down some of its deadly complications, such as heart disease and kidney failure.”

Routine testing strategies for groups that are at higher risk of CKD are important clinically because CKD is usually a silent condition until its late stages. It can develop from diabetes or high blood pressure – or even from urinary stones or infections.

But laboratory tests can halt or slow CKD’s progress by identifying individual problems – or health risks – often before the disease gets out of control. They point clinicians toward individualized solutions – ranging from medications to lifestyle modifications to careful monitoring.

The American Clinical Laboratory Association is a non-profit group representing the nation's clinical reference laboratories. See www.clinical-labs.org The group's educational campaign, *Results for Life*, reflects a collaboration of laboratory professionals, clinical labs and lab test makers focused on the value of laboratory medicine. See www.labresultsforlife.org

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