

## ACLA Supports Physician Guidance in Patient-Centered Genetic Testing

- Genetic testing is a cornerstone of personalized medicine, bringing us better-targeted and more patient-centered care. This approach is translating into longer lives and better quality, as we speak, for patients with leukemia, breast cancer, heart disease, and HIV, among others. Members of the American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) are proud to be at the forefront of delivering these innovative tests in partnership with healthcare providers and the patients they serve.
- However, when genetic services are marketed and delivered directly to the consumer—without important input before and after testing from a personal healthcare provider and genetic counselors—gaps in understanding can result in serious negative consequences. In using or interpreting tests that are important for disease prevention, diagnosis, and monitoring, consumers should rely upon an ordering physician with whom they have a personal relationship, and results should not be communicated via long-distance consultations.
- Many direct-to-consumer genetic testing companies are not testing individuals for disease – they are testing for the propensity of developing disease conditions. This type of testing can be helpful and informative but requires enhanced communication between patient and healthcare provider so that meaningful action to reduce the chance of developing disease can be taken.
- ACLA opposes irresponsible direct-to-consumer testing—genetic or otherwise—and supports rigorous state and federal investigation of such testing to determine whether it is in full compliance with regulatory requirements. Clinical laboratories are currently regulated by both federal and state agencies.
- There are additional safeguards that the American Clinical Laboratory Association requires of its member laboratories, including the requirement that its members gain accreditation by an independent organization, such as the respected College of American Pathologists (CAP). Such independent accreditation provides important additional assurance that patients are receiving the highest quality test result information and, moreover, that there is a strong patient-physician interaction in connection with testing.