



American
Clinical Laboratory
Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JUNE 24, 2008
CONTACT: ALAN MERTZ (202-637-9466)

ACLA LAUDS HOUSE PASSAGE OF “MEDICARE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS ACT”

REPEAL OF LAB COMPETITIVE BIDDING INCLUDED IN BILL

Washington – The American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) applauded the House of Representatives for overwhelmingly passing HR 6331 – “The Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act of 2008.” The legislation repeals the ill conceived laboratory competitive bidding demonstration project.

“Medicare beneficiaries can thank the House for recognizing the negative impact this program would have on seniors’ access to high quality laboratory services,” said Alan Mertz, President of ACLA. The bill also extends the ‘Technical Component Grandfather clause’ for 18 months, and averts a 10.1% cut in the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule which is due to occur on July 1.

“We have long opposed the competitive bidding project not only because of the concern for beneficiaries care, but because it imposes unworkable requirements and ignores the complexity of laboratory services and the differences in types of tests and laboratories,” Mertz said. “Ironically, ‘competitive bidding’ for laboratory services would have resulted in *less* competition and lower quality of services.”

In April 2008, a federal district court in San Diego issued a preliminary injunction halting the competitive bidding demonstration slated to begin in San Diego on July 1, 2008. The District judge cited the potential for “irreparable harm” to Medicare beneficiaries and the laboratories who serve them.

The U.S. Senate is expected to vote on similar legislation this week.

ACLA represents local, regional and national clinical laboratories throughout the United States and has been a leader in the campaign to repeal the Medicare competitive bidding demonstration project. ACLA has also backed legislation permanently extending the “TC grandfather” clause.

#