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Senate HELP Committee Accepts Amendment to Enhance Prevention and Wellness

The American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) applauds the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee for unanimously accepting an amendment to their proposed health reform bill “American Health Choices Act” which will enhance prevention and wellness. Specific recognition goes to Senators Kay Hagan (D-NC) and Richard Burr (R-NC) who offered the amendment to the committee. The amendment will improve and enhance the ability of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) to include best practice screening recommendations from a number of government and private sector entities.

Alan Mertz, President of ACLA, said passage of this amendment is consistent with ACLA’s proposals for health care reform. “A reformed health care system must make screening, wellness and prevention of equal importance to treating disease. The result will be more complete health care, healthier Americans and significant cost savings to the system” Mertz said.

ACLA finds reliance on the A and B recommendations of the USPSTF to determine inclusion of preventive laboratory services a concern for providers and their patients. As one of many examples, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists recommends annual diabetes screening for adults over 30 years, at risk of diabetes and to screen all patients with diabetes for chronic kidney disease. Neither of these recommendations would be implemented under current USPSTF recommendations.

The specific language of the adopted amendment is “USPSTF recommendations should consider clinical preventive best practice recommendations from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Institute of Medicine, specialty medical associations, patient groups and scientific societies.”

ACLA represents local, regional and national clinical laboratories throughout the United States.

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