



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **ACLA Supports “Patient Access to Critical Lab Tests Act”**

(Washington, DC) - The American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) announced its strongest support for S.1220 the *Patient Access to Critical Lab Tests Act*, introduced in the U.S. Senate today. This bill, which is co-sponsored by Senator Arlen Specter (D-PA) and Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) will ensure improved access to innovative, life-saving lab tests. The same bill was introduced in the House of Representatives in March.

Alan Mertz, President of ACLA said “Genetic and molecular diagnostics are at the cornerstone of the important and emerging field of personalized medicine. This bill corrects an antiquated Medicare rule so that patients can receive cutting edge genetic and molecular diagnostic tests in time to make a difference.”

Advancements in laboratory medicine have enabled providers to be far more effective in targeting treatment for patients or in determining a patient’s predisposition to a disease or condition. Many of these tests are not only helping to save lives but also substantial money in the delivery of care.

Specifically, this legislation will allow independent laboratories offering complex, advanced diagnostic laboratory tests to bill Medicare directly without forcing the hospital into an unnecessary middleman role they do not wish to perform. Under current Medicare regulations, the date of service for a laboratory test ordered less than 14 days after a patient’s discharge from a hospital is the date on which the specimen was collected. The effect of this rule is to treat a lab test ordered less than 14 days after a patient is discharged as having been performed when the patient was *in* or *at* the hospital. Hospitals must bill Medicare directly for services furnished when the patient was in or at the hospital. Today, when a lab test is ordered within 14 days of discharge, the hospital, and not the laboratory, must bill Medicare for the service. The practical effect of this rule is that access problems have arisen for this category of tests that are ordered after the patient’s stay in the hospital.

ACLA is a Washington, DC-based non-profit association representing the leading national, regional, and local clinical laboratories.

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