

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**SENATE PASSES MEDICARE PACKAGE, LAB COMPETITIVE BIDDING
REPEAL –
ACLA THANKS SENATE FOR PASSING HR 6331 & URGES PRESIDENT
BUSH TO SIGN THE BILL**

Washington – The Senate voted by an overwhelming 69-30 vote today to invoke cloture to allow consideration of “The Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act of 2008” (HR 6331), then immediately passed the legislation by unanimous consent. The bill now goes to the President. The House passed HR 6331 on June 24th by a vote of 355-59.

The legislation reverses the 10.6% cut in physician reimbursements that took effect on July 1st, repeals the laboratory competitive bidding demonstration project and extends the so-called “TC Grandfather clause” for 18 months.

“This is a great day for laboratories and the Medicare beneficiaries who rely on critically important laboratory services,” said Alan Mertz, President of the American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA). “We now urge President Bush to sign this much needed legislation into law as soon as possible.”

ACLA has long opposed the laboratory competitive bidding project not only because of concern for beneficiaries, but because it imposes unworkable requirements and ignores the complexity of laboratory services and the differences in types of tests and laboratories. Ironically, ‘competitive bidding’ for laboratory services would result in *less* competition and lower quality of services.

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.

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