



PRESS ADVISORY
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**CMS' SELECTION OF SAN DIEGO FOR LAB COMPETITIVE BIDDING DEMO
CHANGES LITTLE – ACLA REMAINS COMMITTED TO CONGRESSIONAL REPEAL**

Washington D.C. – The American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) reacted to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) selection of the San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, California metropolitan area as the first of two locations for a competitive bidding demonstration for clinical laboratory services reiterating that the entire project is ill-conceived, is unfixable, and should be repealed by Congress.

“While the demo has immediate negative ramifications in the San Diego area, the long-term implications for beneficiaries and laboratories nationwide are unchanged – less access, lower quality, and less competition,” said Alan Mertz, President of ACLA. “CMS’ announced that the initial bidder’s conference for the project will take place on October 31st, Halloween. Unfortunately, for beneficiaries, the demo project is more ‘trick, than treat’ as they will find access to high quality laboratory services compromised.”

CMS announced San Diego as the first of two sites for the demonstration project in today’s Federal Register. ACLA has long opposed the project from the outset as an inappropriate because laboratory services are complex services, not interchangeable commodities.

Mertz said “it is impossible for me to understand why CMS would move forward on the competitive bidding project given the significant number of unanswered questions and heavy criticism this year from Capitol Hill”. There is bipartisan support for legislation to repeal the competitive bidding demonstration project in both the Senate and the House.

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.

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