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ACLA Asks CMS for a One Year Extension for Full Compliance with NPI

(Washington, D.C.) – In a letter to Leslie V. Norwalk, Acting Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the American Clinical Laboratory Association urged CMS to permit the continued use of legacy identifiers in both electronic standard transactions and paper transactions for one year beyond the current compliance date of May 23, 2007.

ACLA stated that without the implementation of such a contingency plan, potential disruptions in claim processing due to a lack of National Provider Identifier (NPI) readiness throughout the healthcare industry could threaten access to critically important laboratory services to millions of patients, including but not limited to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

Alan Mertz, President of ACLA, said that the issues go beyond the cost and considerable time involved. “Without an extension, there will be significant disruptions in claim processing. ACLA members could incur millions of dollars in delayed or unpaid claims despite their best efforts to implement the NPI, and such disruptions in cash flow to laboratories could result in adverse consequences for both ordering providers and their patients.”

ACLA also urged CMS to publish a NPI Dissemination Notice that includes online access to provider NPIs through a centralized database. Without this access, Mertz predicted, providers and payers will continue to focus their efforts and resources on exchanging NPIs with each other, but it is unlikely these efforts will be sufficient to avoid potentially significant disruptions in claim processing.

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

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