



American
Clinical Laboratory
Association

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ACLA Calls CMS Request for Competitive Bidding Comments ‘Putting Cart Before the Horse’

(Washington, D.C.) – In response to a CMS request for comments on a new form for laboratories to bid on the federal competitive bidding demonstration project, the American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) said that this request is premature because the rules for the demonstration project have not yet been announced.

“We would expect this form to have been the last thing to be drafted so it would have actually reflected the bidding process,” said Alan Mertz, President of the ACLA. “The current process seems to be putting the ‘cart before the horse’ inasmuch as we are being asked to comment on a form that is implementing a program that has yet to be formulated or subject to public comments by stakeholders.”

ACLA pointed out that it is impossible to actually envision submitting a bid without knowing such factors as the geography, the approximate testing volume and mix, or the potential number of winners.

“CMS has also significantly underestimated the time and cost of completing the form,” Mertz said. “For example, CMS claims the estimated time for completing the application annually will be 100 hours, yet the form will require the calculation of an individual price to be bid for each of 1,000 CPT codes – a process that would take far more than 100 hours by highly skilled employees.”

ACLA has long questioned the advisability of moving to competitive bidding for laboratory services because of the potential for adversely impacting both the quality of, and access to, critically important laboratory services.

The comments ACLA submitted on the proposed form are available at www.clinical-labs.org. ACLA is an association that represents local, regional and national clinical laboratories throughout the United States.

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