

September 13, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Minority Leaders McCarthy and McConnell:

As organizations representing patients who depend on access to clinical laboratory testing to diagnose and manage a variety of conditions and diseases, we urge Congress to take immediate action to pass S. 4449 / H.R. 8188, *the Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA)*. This bicameral, bipartisan legislation would update Medicare's payment system for laboratory services, ensuring our laboratory infrastructure is equipped to support the full range of testing that patients need every day and in times of public health crisis, and fostering innovation in future diagnostics.

Without congressional action, Medicare reimbursement cuts – a fourth round scheduled to begin January 1, 2023 – could jeopardize access to many clinical laboratory tests that are used to diagnose, monitor, prevent, and manage common diseases for more than 50 million seniors.

Clinical diagnostic tests play a critical role in health care and inform 70 percent of medical decisions. For example, in 2020 more than 17 million hemoglobin A1C tests to assess the risk of developing diabetes, 28 million tests to diagnose and monitor heart disease, and 90,000 tests to diagnose leukemia and hereditary breast and colon cancer were provided to Medicare beneficiaries to support their care.

A strong, national laboratory infrastructure is critical to ensuring that testing can be rapidly developed and made widely available when pathogens of concern are identified. For example, clinical laboratories remain committed to continuing to provide COVID-19 testing while expanding testing for Monkeypox and being prepared for whatever new pathogen may emerge.

Furthermore, a healthy laboratory industry is essential to protect continued innovation in advanced diagnostics, which has not only led to earlier detection of disease but has also become a crucial tool in how care is delivered. In cancer, early detection and diagnosis of cancer and cancer biomarkers facilitate an understanding of disease progression and selection of an appropriate treatment regime for each patient.

Between 2017 and 2022, payment for common tests for diseases like diabetes, cancer, and heart disease were cut by 27 percent. The next round of Medicare cuts would slash reimbursement up to another 15 percent for more than 800 laboratory tests, resulting in up to a 38 percent cut to tests that are widely used to screen and manage many serious diseases. **It is essential that Congress protect patients by acting this year to fix the Medicare payment model for clinical diagnostic tests.**

Because of the serious implications for patients who rely on routine as well as advanced diagnostic laboratory services, Congress has acted three times to delay these cuts in recent years, but permanent reform is needed now. Fortunately, *the Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act* would update Medicare's payment system, which would help protect access to clinical laboratory testing, support investment in innovation, and strengthen America's clinical laboratory infrastructure.

On behalf of patients across the country, we urge you to pass *the Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act* before the end of the year.

Sincerely,

A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation
Alliance for Aging Research
Alpha-1 Foundation
American Sexual Health Association
AnCan Foundation
California Life Sciences
California Society of Pathologists
Cancer Support Community
CancerCare
Caregiver Action Network
Caregiver Voices United
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation
Chronic Disease Coalition
Community Liver Alliance
Down Syndrome Association Of Orange County
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
Global Liver Institute
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
HealthCare Institute of New Jersey (HINJ)
Healthcare Leadership Council
Heart Valve Voice US
HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute
International Foundation for AiArthritis
LUNGeVity
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Lupus Foundation of America

Men's Health Network
Minority Health Institute
National Consumers League
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Patient Empowerment Network
RetireSafe
The Kidney Foundation of Central PA
The National Grange
Triage Cancer
ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer