

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