September 13, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Speaker

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy

Minority Leader

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer

Majority Leader

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510

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

Cancer*Care*

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