



June 19, 2007

The Honorable Barak Obama
United States Senate
SH-713
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Obama:

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) shares your interest in advancing personalized medicine and improving patient care. We believe your legislation, S.976, the Genomics and Personalized Medicine Act of 2007, has been instrumental in garnering congressional and public interest in this matter and serves as an excellent starting point for discussing this issue. Our comments on S.976 follow.

Genomics Interagency Working Group and Duties

AACC supports the creation of the “Genomics and Personalized Medicine Interagency Working Group,” which would coordinate the genomic activities of the federal health agencies. This collaboration among the agencies is vital to creating a uniform, streamlined federal response to advancing personalized medicine.

IOM Study and Decision Matrix

AACC supports conducting an Institute of Medicine (IOM) study to assess the current level of federal oversight for genetic testing and to make recommendations for improvement, if necessary. We believe this evidence-based approach is critical to ensuring that policymakers have the most accurate information available for making any legislative or regulatory changes affecting this area. AACC recommends, however, that Congress take no action on the ‘Decision matrix’ provision until the study is completed. We believe it’s very important that IOM clearly identify the problem(s) that need to be addressed before any remedy is prescribed.

Reimbursement

AACC strongly agrees that genetic tests and genomic treatments and services should be adequately reimbursed. We do not, however, support increasing the payment rates for one laboratory sector at the expense of another. AACC recommends that the budget neutrality provision be eliminated. Any increase in payments for genetic testing should come from new funding sources.

Senator Obama
June 19, 2007
Page Two

By way of background, AACC is the principal association of professional laboratory scientists--including MDs, PhDs and medical technologists. AACC's members develop and use chemical concepts, procedures, techniques and instrumentation in health-related investigations and work in hospitals, independent laboratories and the diagnostics industry worldwide. The AACC provides international leadership in advancing the practice and profession of clinical laboratory science and its application to health care. If you have any questions, please call me at (504) 568-4281, or Vince Stine, PhD, Director, Government Affairs, at (202) 835-8721.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Broussard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry Broussard, PhD
President-Elect, AACC