

January 7, 2010

Majority Leader Harry Reid
United States Senate
S-221, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Max Baucus
Senate Finance Committee
511 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Tom Harkin
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
Committee
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
S-231, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Charles Grassley
Senate Finance Committee
135 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member John Enzi
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
Committee
379A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Grassley, Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

The undersigned laboratory organizations, which together represent the many sectors of the clinical laboratory industry, would like to congratulate you and your colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives on your hard work and efforts to pass your respective health reform bills - the Affordable Health Care for America Act and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. We are committed to ensuring access to affordable high-quality health care for all Americans.

As health care providers and manufacturers, we recognize the importance of securing health reform for our nation and support legislative efforts to fairly and equitably finance these reform measures. The productivity adjustments assessed on the clinical laboratory community in the House-passed legislation seek to achieve a balance that provides significant funding for health reform, while ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries will continue to have access to laboratory services. We urge you to ensure that the final bill provides protections against applying the adjustment, if it would result in an overall Medicare Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule adjustment below zero. We feel strongly that the clinical laboratory community cannot sustain any additional cuts, without negatively impacting access to care for the most vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries.

Laboratory tests are extremely valuable tools for improving patient outcomes while reducing overall costs and serve as an essential basis for subsequent critical medical decision-making. Laboratory test results inform up to 70 percent of all medical decision-making. As the first point of intervention, laboratory tests serve as the foundation for the diagnosis and management of conditions like heart disease, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, health care associated infections, HIV, and other infectious diseases.

Any additional cuts beyond those proposed in the House-passed health reform bill would very seriously jeopardize these essential health services. The most vulnerable members of our population rely heavily on lab services to monitor and prevent diseases and to target appropriate treatment. If more drastic cuts are

applied to clinical laboratories, many community laboratories that service the Medicare population would be forced to close their doors, threatening access to essential clinical laboratory services for these seniors.

Again, we would like to commend you on your efforts to pass this historic legislation. We stand ready to work with you and your Congressional colleagues, during the conference process, to ensure that clinical laboratory services remain available to our most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,

American Association of Bioanalysts
American Association for Clinical Chemistry
American Medical Technologists
American Society for Microbiology
American Society Clinical Pathology
American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
Clinical Laboratory Management Association
National Independent Laboratory Association
Sonic Healthcare USA
Advanced Medical Technology Association (AdvaMed)
BD
Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics

cc: Senator Christopher Dodd, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee