



Better health through
laboratory medicine.

March 16, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Mikulski,

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) supports President Obama's "Precision Medicine Initiative (PMI)," which would provide \$215 million "to accelerate biomedical discoveries and provide clinicians with new tools, knowledge, and therapies to select which treatments will work best for which patients." More specifically, this funding would be used to develop more effective treatment options for cancer patients and establish a voluntary national research cohort of health data for better assessing disease risk.

AACC is a global scientific and medical professional organization dedicated to clinical laboratory science and its application to healthcare. AACC brings together more than 50,000 clinical laboratory professionals, physicians, research scientists, and business leaders from around the world focused on clinical chemistry, molecular diagnostics, mass spectrometry, translational medicine, lab management, and other areas of breaking laboratory science. In addition, our members are actively involved in the development and application of precision medicine. Laboratory tests, both genetic and non-genetic, are essential to advancing personalized care and reducing overall healthcare costs.

Under PMI, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) would receive \$70 million in 2016 for expanding its research efforts involving precision medicine. This money would be used to identify new cancer subtypes and therapeutic targets, as well as permit NCI to partner with private sector researchers in testing new precision therapies on pediatric and adult cancers. We are hopeful that these efforts may lead to a reduction in the nearly 600,000 cancer deaths that occur annually in the United States.

Cancer is only one area where research is needed, however. The Administration's plan would also provide the National Institutes of Health (NIH) with \$130 million to create a national research cohort comprising genetic, health and behavioral data from more than one million volunteers. This information, subject to strict privacy protections, would be available to public and private sector investigators seeking

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to identify new disease-related biomarkers and to explore new treatment interventions. Developing more targeted, effective therapies is critical to advancing patient care in the 21st century.

AACC looks forward to working with you on this most important issue, lending the unique expertise of its members to the critical identification and application of laboratory tests in precision and personalized medicine. If you have any questions, please email me at ddkoch@emory.edu, or Vince Stine, PhD, AACC Director of Government Affairs, at vstine@aacc.org.

Sincerely,



David D. Koch, PhD, DABCC
President, AACC

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