



July 18, 2011

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Attention: CMS-1436-P
P.O. Box 8013
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-8013

Dear Sir/Madam:

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) June 30, 2011 proposed rule, which would “retract” the policy set forth in the November 29, 2010 Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) final rule requiring clinical laboratories to obtain the signature of a physician or qualified non-physician practitioner on a requisition form to get reimbursed under Medicare. If finalized, the agency would return to its earlier policy, whereby a signed requisition form was only one of a number of options available to clinical laboratories for documenting the order.

As CMS details in the proposed rule, requiring a signed requisition form could:

- Negatively impact beneficiary access to care;
- Create unnecessary confusion among health care providers;
- Inconvenience physicians and patients alike; and
- Increase the administrative burden on many clinical laboratories.

AACC shares CMS’s opinion. We agree with the agency’s decision to return to the 2001 policy developed through negotiated rulemaking, which stated that a physician signature is not required for Medicare reimbursement. AACC looks forward to working with CMS as it finalizes this rule.

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 (314) 362-0194, or Vince Stine, PhD, Director, Government Affairs, at (202) 835-8721.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann M. Gronowski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ann M. Gronowski, PhD
President, AACC