



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SENATE JOINS FIGHT TO SCRAP GOVERNMENT HEALTH CARE EXPERIMENT

WASHINGTON – Citing congressional momentum against a potentially devastating government experiment that will limit nursing home and other vulnerable patients’ access to laboratory services, the organizations representing community clinical laboratories, including local and regional independent clinical laboratories, today backed the bipartisan Senate bill introduced by Senators Ken Salazar (D-Colo.) and Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) – S. 2099, the Preserving Access to Laboratories Act of 2007. This legislation is similar to H.R. 3453, introduced in August by House Small Business Committee Chairwoman Nydia Velázquez (D-N.Y.).

“We applaud Senators Salazar and Roberts for recognizing the serious impact so-called competitive bidding of laboratory services will have on our most vulnerable Americans,” said Dr. Mark Birenbaum, Administrator for the National Independent Laboratory Association (NILA) and the American Association of Bioanalysts (AAB). “Both houses of Congress have made it clear that this government experiment must be stopped immediately before damage is done.”

CMS is required by law to conduct two demonstration projects lasting three years using supposed “competitive bidding” for clinical laboratory services. The agency will accept bids on laboratory services and select labs to perform tests that will be reimbursed by Medicare.

“The so-called demonstration project would be nothing but a program to put small labs out of business and lessen the competition for national, publicly traded labs,” Dr. Birenbaum said. “Rather than creating competition, it will result in fewer labs, less competition and the government in essence picking winners and losers.”

“We are also pleased that the companion House bill is gaining steam by adding new co-sponsors, including Representatives Diana DeGette (D-Colo.), Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.) and Jim Matheson (D-Utah),” said Pat Lanza, chair of NILA. “We hope the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services takes note of the strong congressional action on this vital health care issue.”

AAB is dedicated to serving the community clinical laboratory and the professionals involved in clinical laboratory operations. Founded in 1956, AAB members are clinical laboratory directors, owners, managers, supervisors, technologists, technicians, and phlebotomists. NILA focuses on business/management issues facing laboratories, such as marketing/sales, contracting with managed care companies, finding and keeping good employees, financial management, expanding test menus, managing growth, competing with big, publicly traded laboratories, and acting on legislative and regulatory issues facing the laboratory industry.

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