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ACLA Applauds Introduction of Bipartisan Bill to Protect Seniors' Access to Critical Diagnostic Tests

Association Relaunches "Stop Lab Cuts" Campaign

Washington, D.C. – The American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) today welcomed the bipartisan and bicameral introduction of the *Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA)*. The bipartisan bill would ensure that America's seniors' access to lifesaving clinical laboratory tests and services would be maintained by alleviating deep Medicare payment cuts next year.

The bill was introduced by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Thom Tillis (R-NC), along with Reps. Richard Hudson (R-NC), Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Scott Peters (D-CA), and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). The legislation seeks to address the consequences of the flawed implementation of the 2014 *Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA)*, which has led to repeated, significant payment cuts for routine laboratory tests that guide clinical decision-making.

"It's time for a permanent legislative solution that preserves and sustains critical clinical laboratory services for seniors," said Susan Van Meter, president of ACLA. "With strong bipartisan and bicameral support of SALSA, Congress has the opportunity to fix the flawed PAMA framework and prevent reduced access to essential testing, stifled innovation, and weakened laboratory infrastructure essential to public health preparedness. Congress must pass SALSA now."

At the time PAMA was enacted, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projected \$2.5 billion in cuts to reimbursement rates over 10 years. However, PAMA has already led to nearly \$4 billion in payment cuts to laboratories after three years of reductions.

Absent congressional intervention, payment for about 800 tests will be cut up to 15 percent on January 1, 2024. Collectively, these cuts may threaten access to laboratory services that help diagnose and treat seniors with a wide range of conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, kidney disease, prostate and colon cancers, anemia, infections, and opioid dependency, among others. Additionally, these cuts would come as clinical laboratories across the country face continued workforce shortages and inflationary pressure on costs.

"ACLA thanks Sens. Brown and Tillis, and Reps. Hudson, Pascrell, Bilirakis, Peters, and Fitzpatrick for introducing SALSA, fighting for seniors' access to clinical laboratory services, and keeping the clinical laboratory infrastructure healthy," said Van Meter. "Patients are counting on Congress to act."

ACLA has also re-launched the "[Stop Lab Cuts](https://www.stoplabcuts.org)" advocacy campaign, mobilizing broad SALSA support from organizations serving providers, hospitals, and patients. The campaign serves as a central advocacy hub and resource for information on the need for PAMA reform. Visit [StopLabCuts.org](https://www.stoplabcuts.org) to learn more.

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The American Clinical Laboratory Association (ACLA) is the national trade association representing leading laboratories that deliver essential diagnostic health information to patients and providers. ACLA members are at the forefront of driving diagnostic innovation to meet the country's evolving health care needs and provide vital clinical laboratory tests that identify and prevent infectious, acute and chronic disease. ACLA works to advance the next generation of health care delivery through policies that expand access to lifesaving testing services.