

GROWING SUPPORT FOR THE SAVING ACCESS TO LABORATORY SERVICES ACT (SALSA)

Legislation Sets a Sustainable Path for Patient Access to Laboratory Services, and Keeps Our Clinical Laboratory Infrastructure Healthy

BACKGROUND

Medicare reimbursement for clinical laboratory services has been set on an unsustainable path of multi-year, double-digit reimbursement cuts resulting from the *Protecting Access to Medicare Act* of 2014 (PAMA), which relied on a narrow and unrepresentative sample to set Medicare reimbursement rates for hundreds of common laboratory tests. These Medicare payment cuts threaten patient access to essential laboratory services and undermine our nation's clinical laboratory infrastructure.

Through passage of the bipartisan *Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act* (SALSA / H.R. 2377 / S. 1000), Congress can protect the long-term delivery of routine care for patients, support strong clinical laboratory infrastructure, and encourage innovation in next generation clinical laboratory tests.

SUPPORT

SALSA has bipartisan, bicameral support from a growing list of cosponsors who are committed to addressing upcoming harmful payment cuts for laboratory services:

"Clinical labs are an essential part of our health care infrastructure, providing critical services – from COVID-19 diagnostics to innovative genomic testing. Right now, current law threatens Ohioans on Medicare's access to these vital lab services, which is why I'm proud to partner with my colleague Senator Tillis to ensure seniors continue to have access to high-quality diagnostic services by protecting access to clinical labs."

– Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

"It is critically important that seniors have uninterrupted access to innovative diagnostic tests. The Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act is a necessary step toward ensuring this access and supporting seniors' health care needs. I'm proud to work with my colleagues to permanently fix flawed data collection and reporting methods which will allow Medicare beneficiaries to continue receiving quality and affordable lab services."

– Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC)

"As we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic, our clinical laboratories play a crucial role in our healthcare system, providing seniors with critical diagnostic services that offer early disease detection and access to tailored treatment, prevention, and care. The Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA) would offer a much-needed lifeline to our labs and help remedy unintended payment cuts that could endanger lives. I am proud to lead this bipartisan, bicameral effort, and look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure continued and timely access to lab services for our seniors."

– Representative Richard Hudson (R-NC-9)

"In the wake of the pandemic, lab access for our senior neighbors is more important now than at any moment in the recent past. Prompt, full access to lab services is essential to protecting seniors who suffer from heart disease, cancer, and other common maladies. Because of an unfortunate statutory interpretation by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, lab access and aid under Medicare faces outrageous cuts that will harm seniors and hurt the American economy. We are teaming up with a bipartisan coalition to develop a comprehensive solution, so our neediest neighbors are protected and have the medical care they deserve."

– Representative Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ-8)

Additionally, SALSA has widespread support among groups that represent providers, hospitals, and patients. 37 leading consumer and patient advocacy groups and 34 health care provider organizations have sent letters to congressional leadership urging enactment of SALSA this year:

"On behalf of the nation's retirees, I urge Congress to pass SALSA this year to ensure seniors can continue to get the tests they need and continue to benefit from next-generation diagnostics that promise to transform care. Americans in their golden years deserve access to the diagnostic and therapeutic innovations arising from this golden age of medicine."

– Mark Gibbons, President and CEO, RetireSafe

"Without congressional action this year, Medicare reimbursement cuts scheduled for January 2024 could limit access to essential tests that 65 million American seniors rely on to diagnose and manage disease. The Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act would help ensure robust access to laboratory services that improve patient health."

– Sally Greenberg, Chief Executive Officer, National Consumers League

"The Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA) will repair a flawed data reporting and rate setting methodology put in place by the Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA) of 2014 and set the Medicare Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule (CLFS) back on a sustainable path by requiring market rates from all laboratory segments for widely available tests. ... Without Congressional action, clinical laboratories will face a major, devastating cut in reimbursement via Medicare that will flow directly into most private-payor contracts."

– The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science

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.