



Point of Care Testing Association Applauds New Medicare Legislation

Medicare needs to reform how it determines Clinical Lab Fee Schedule rates to maintain broad access to point of care testing.

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WASHINGTON D.C. – The Point of Care Testing Association (POCTA) applauds introduction of the Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA) and calls on Congress to enact this critical legislation this year.

The Protecting to Access to Medicare Act of 2014 (PAMA) significantly revised the Medicare payment methodology for certain clinical diagnostic laboratory tests paid under the Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule (CLFS). In 2018, Medicare began using private payor rate information reported by applicable laboratories to calculate Medicare payment rates for most laboratory tests paid under the CLFS.

POCTA supported PAMA, believing that it would modernize the CLFS to reflect innovations in clinical diagnostic laboratory testing that were poorly reflected in the former CLFS that was based upon historical charge data from the early 1980s. At the same time, POCTA members recognized that implementation of PAMA could have negative impacts on clinical diagnostic laboratory tests furnished at the point-of-care—in particular, tests performed in the physician office lab (POL) setting.

“CMS’s implementation of PAMA skewed data collection toward large reference labs, and especially under-represented physician office labs,” said Rachel Stauffer, a representative for POCTA. “Current CLFS rates do not represent the overall lab marketplace, as was intended by Congress,” Stauffer went on to say.

“If Medicare payments do not adequately reimburse physician offices for furnishing point-of-care testing, those settings will not enable localized testing,” according to Stauffer. “American public health will suffer without broad access to rapid diagnosis at the point of care,” said Stauffer.

SALSA would revamp how Medicare collects and incorporates data from labs, and better reflect the experience of physician office labs.

POCTA endorses SALSA and applauds the seven bipartisan lawmakers who introduced this bill: Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Representatives Richard Hudson (R-NC), Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Scott Peters (D-CA) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). POCTA urges rapid action to enact this important

legislation before gains in access to lab testing made during the COVID-19 pandemic are lost.

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The Point of Care Testing Association (POCTA) seeks to facilitate access to safe, effective, and cost-effective patient testing at the time of treatment. POCTA works to develop reimbursement policies that can improve health outcomes by supporting access to POC testing.

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