

Association for Molecular Pathology Outlines Key Principles for Health Care Reform

AMP Stresses that Molecular Diagnostic Tests are Critical in the Era of Personalized Medicine

Washington, DC – June 29, 2009 -- The Association for Molecular Pathology today announced a set of key principles to guide the organization's public policy advocacy amid current effort in Congress and the Obama administration to reform the nation's health care system. These core principles specifically address the practice of clinical laboratory medicine and the use of molecular-based diagnostic tests.

"AMP strongly supports comprehensive health care reform. Our members want to see expanded access to health care for all Americans," said AMP President Jan A. Nowak, MD, PhD. "We also believe that laboratory medicine has an indispensable role to play in making the health care system more efficient, in improving the quality of patient care, and in advancing the new era of personalized medicine."

AMP members are developing sophisticated molecular tests for a wide spectrum of clinical applications on a near-daily basis. These tests are the embodiment of "translational medicine," that is, they are the pathways through which information learned in basic genomic research then becomes molecular tools for the improvement of human health. "Tests performed in the laboratories of AMP members have had a significant impact on the understanding and treatment of diseases such as cancer and of inherited conditions," said Dr. Nowak.

AMP's principles for health care reform address five key areas impacting the clinical utility and economic viability of laboratory medicine. Specifically the principles advocate that:

- Clinical laboratory testing should be included in the covered benefits of all health plans.
- Clinical laboratory tests should be reimbursed in a manner commensurate with the added value and savings they contribute to health care delivery.
- Adoption of comparative effectiveness review (CER) practices in health care must include molecular-based laboratory tests and should do so in a way that strikes the balance between the short-term consideration of the costs of these tests and the longer term value of these tests in optimizing patient care.
- Preventive and early diagnostic services are critical to health care reform and should be in the covered benefits of all health plans.
- Regulation of molecular based laboratory tests should be done in a balanced way that will allow progress and innovation in the field to continue and not place undue burdens on a currently well-regulated practice.

"Laboratory medicine is a critical and integral component of the nation's health care infrastructure", said Dr. Nowak. "AMP's hope is that these principles will enable us to

help policy makers better understand the promise of clinical laboratories in this era of personalized medicine and the vital contribution they can make to health care reform.”

AMP’s Principles for Health Care Reform can be found at www.amp.org.

About AMP

The Association for Molecular Pathology is an international medical professional association dedicated to the advancement, practice, and science of clinical molecular laboratory medicine and translational research based on the applications of molecular biology, genetics and genomics. Through the efforts of an enthusiastic membership from across the United States and around the world, AMP continues to grow in numbers and influence. The organization is divided into the scientific subdivisions of genetics, infectious diseases, hematopathology, and solid tumors. Each subdivision addresses issues, identifies goals, shapes policy, and provides member benefits specific to that particular discipline. The AMP membership includes individuals from academic medical centers, independent laboratories, government, and industry, including physicians, laboratory directors, scientists, medical technologists, and trainees. AMP members populate the majority of clinical molecular diagnostic laboratories in the United States. AMP members are at the forefront of the development and implementation of novel molecular diagnostic tests, whether these are laboratory developed or commercially developed. AMP promotes molecular testing that is consistent with the highest standards established by CLIA, the College of American Pathologists (CAP), the American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG), and FDA. AMP members proudly accept their responsibilities in assessing the analytical validity, clinical validity, clinical utility, and the clinical utilization of molecular tests for each specific patient.

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