



**ASSOCIATION FOR MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY**  
*Education. Innovation & Improved Patient Care. Advocacy.*  
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## **AMP Presents Xavier Becerra with Champion for Innovation Award on 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Landmark Supreme Court Ruling**

*Current US Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services recognized for 30 years of leadership in efforts to protect patient access to critical medical testing procedures including prohibiting patents on DNA sequences*

**ROCKVILLE, Md. – June 13, 2023** – The Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP), the premier global molecular diagnostic professional society, today awarded Xavier Becerra, US Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, with its Champion for Innovation Award. Secretary Becerra was recognized for his 30-year career in public service and his ongoing commitment to protecting patient access to high-quality, affordable care. AMP is presenting Secretary Becerra with the award to coincide with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Supreme Court’s landmark decision invalidating gene patents in *Association for Molecular Pathology et al. v. Myriad Genetics, Inc. et al.*

Throughout his career, Secretary Becerra has been a strong advocate for patient access to affordable, high-quality healthcare. While in Congress, Secretary Becerra introduced the Genomic Research and Accessibility Act in 2007, which would have prohibited patents on a nucleotide sequence, its functions or correlations, or the naturally occurring product it specifies. His legislation not only highlighted this important policy issue but offered a clear legislative solution that would stem any further consequences from these inappropriately issued patents. In recent years, he provided critical leadership during unprecedented times while serving as California’s Attorney General during the COVID-19 pandemic and then also in his current role during the more recent Mpox public health emergency. Molecular diagnostics proved to be a critical, if not one of the most important, countermeasures to stemming both outbreaks.

Ten years ago today, the Supreme Court handed down a decision that naturally occurring DNA sequences cannot be patented. AMP, the lead plaintiff among several, believed firmly that the continued authorization of patents for human genes and naturally occurring associations between genes and diseases would impede the scientific community from working together to develop novel diagnostics and treatments for a range of diseases, including cancer, muscular dystrophy, Alzheimer’s disease, and heart disease. The unanimous decision remedied many of the same concerns in Secretary Becerra’s previous legislation, allowing innovation in this field to flourish, preventing barriers to patients’ access to life-saving genomic tests, and disrupting testing monopolies that would have stifled competition and dramatically increased costs for payers, patients, and the healthcare system overall. The Supreme Court ruling was the culmination of a decade-long debate within the medical field and was celebrated across the greater scientific community that fought hard for the chance to be heard. Since the ruling, the industry’s cumulative market cap has more than tripled to over \$132 billion, and patient costs have continued to fall as more tests become available.

“AMP is grateful for Secretary Becerra’s unwavering commitment to advancing innovation in our field, protecting frontline workers, and increasing patient access to high-quality, appropriate genomic testing,” said Laura J. Tafe, MD, President of AMP and Associate Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine. “Thanks to his efforts and the Supreme Court’s decision ten years ago, patients across the country have begun to realize the many benefits of precision

medicine, including the routine use of multiplex gene panels and other innovative diagnostics for common and rare diseases.”

To view the Supreme Court’s full decision, please visit <https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/boundvolumes/569BV.pdf> (page 576).

#### **ABOUT AMP**

The Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP) was founded in 1995 to provide structure and leadership to the emerging field of molecular diagnostics. AMP's 2,900+ members practice various disciplines of molecular diagnostics, including bioinformatics, infectious diseases, inherited conditions, and oncology. Our members are pathologists, clinical laboratory directors, basic and translational scientists, technologists, and trainees that practice in a variety of settings, including academic and community medical centers, government, and industry. Through the efforts of its Board of Directors, Committees, Working Groups, and Members, AMP is the primary resource for expertise, education, and collaboration in one of the fastest-growing fields in healthcare. AMP members influence policy and regulation on the national and international levels, ultimately serving to advance innovation in the field and protect patient access to high-quality, appropriate testing. For more information, visit [www.amp.org](http://www.amp.org) and follow AMP on Twitter: [@AMPath](https://twitter.com/AMPath).

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