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PENNSYLVANIA LEADERSHIP APPLAUDED FOR LEGISLATION LEADING TO INCREASED ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING LAB TESTS

*Bills in U.S. Senate & House will eliminate government red tape that discourages
doctors from ordering life-saving tests*

(Pittsburgh, PA) -- **U.S. Senator Arlen Specter** yesterday introduced legislation that will improve access to life-saving diagnostic tests for patients who might otherwise be denied. The Patient Access to Critical Lab Tests Act (S.1220) will eliminate burdensome Medicare billing regulations which discourage hospitals from ordering revolutionary lab tests needed to clarify complicated diagnoses and identify uniquely effective methods of treatment. This bill serves as a companion to HR 1699, introduced by U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) and co-sponsored by U.S. Congressman Tim Murphy (PA-18) and Mike Doyle (PA-14).

“Pennsylvania is incredibly fortunate to have visionary leaders in Washington who are fighting to reduce unnecessary and unreasonable red tape that oftentimes stands between patients and good care,” said Mary Del Brady, co-founder of RedPath Integrated Pathology and member of the Steering Committee for the Coalition for 21st Century Medicine. “Senator Specter, and Representative Altmire in the House, heard and responded to the congruent needs of patients and industry and are taking steps to disassemble an arcane bureaucratic rule that no longer applies in the world of 21st century personalized diagnostics.”

“Successful diagnosis and treatment increases dramatically when patients have early access to the most effective lab tests. We have a growing class of advanced diagnostics companies in Pennsylvania that have developed technologies and testing at the DNA level that are safe, accurate, clinically proven, and available. We applaud Senator Specter and Representatives Altmire, Murphy and Doyle for providing national leadership on this critical issue,” said Dennis M. “Mickey” Flynn, president of Pennsylvania Bio.

In recent years, several independent laboratories across the country -- including RedPath Integrated Pathology and Precision Therapeutics in Pittsburgh -- have created unique genetic and molecular diagnostic tests that can clarify diagnoses and help doctors select more cost-effective treatments. Although these laboratories are completely independent entities, under current Medicare regulations, hospitals bare financial responsibility for lab tests ordered within 14 days of a patient's discharge. This means that hospitals must pay the laboratories for their tests and bill Medicare for reimbursement, even though these lab tests may have nothing to do with the hospital's services.

RedPath and other similar laboratories find that this Medicare reimbursement structure often discourages doctors from ordering these tests. Indeed, RedPath found that hospitals cancelled 66 percent of the tests they had ordered from RedPath to clarify difficult cancer diagnoses upon learning about this current reimbursement structure.

“We are very appreciative of the efforts of our elected officials,” Mark D. Myslinski, CEO of RedPath said. “RedPath’s DNA-based analysis of tissue samples provides rich and quantitative information, personalized to each patient, to treating physicians - helping to improve the chances of a more accurate and actionable diagnosis. Accurate and actionable information protects against the over and under treatment of cancer and results in improved quality and longevity of life, with better utilization of healthcare resources.”

The Patient Access to Critical Lab Tests Act dramatically improves patients’ access to potentially life-saving lab tests by allowing independent laboratories to directly bill Medicare for the specialized tests they perform. By streamlining the reimbursement process, Doctors will no longer be discouraged to utilize their judgment and order the necessary tests capable of improving the quality of treatment for their patients.

RedPath Integrated Pathology, Inc. is a genomics-based molecular diagnostics company that provides complex cancer diagnostic testing for pathologists, oncologists and clinicians. RedPath’s patented molecular-based analysis, *PathFinderTG*®, integrates with routine pathology review of fixed slides, cytology and fluid specimens to render an earlier and more definitive diagnosis, improving patient outcomes and reducing healthcare costs. <http://www.redpathip.com>

Pennsylvania Bio is a catalyst to ensure Pennsylvania is a global leader in the biosciences by developing a cohesive community that unites the region's biotechnology, pharmaceutical, research, and financial strengths. <http://www.pennsylvaniabio.org>

The Coalition for 21st Century Medicine represents some of the world’s most innovative diagnostic technology companies, clinical laboratories, researchers, physicians, venture capitalists and patient advocacy groups – all linked by a common mission to develop advanced diagnostics that improve the quality of healthcare for patients. <http://www.twentyfirstcenturymedicine.org>.

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