

GAC Report to ASCLS-NJ Members

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Government Affairs Committee (GAC) Report:

- CMS released their guidance on PAMA (Protecting Access to Medicare Act 2014) on October 1st. All laboratories that receive at least \$50,000 in Medicare reimbursements annually must report private payor rates and volumes of tests between July 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015. All reports are due to CMS by March 31, 2016. These data will be collated to create a new fee schedule for Medicare reimbursements that will take effect January 2017. Hopefully, laboratories will see an increase in reimbursements for most tests. There are substantial financial penalties for labs who under-report or misrepresent their testing to CMS. More information can be found on the CMS website: <https://www.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Fact-sheets/2015-Fact-sheets-items/2015-09-25-2.html>
- The Medical Device Tax repeal has passed the House, but the Senate has taken it off the table for now. We were hoping this would pass soon so that manufacturers of laboratory equipment could stop paying a 2.3% sales tax and passing this on to laboratories.
- Rhode Island recently had a bill introduced to eliminate licensure for MLS there (among other professions listed in the bill). Many members of ASCLS were there to oppose the bill and testify at two hearings. Unfortunately, the bill passed- now, MLS only need national certification to work in Rhode Island.
- No movement on educational funds for MLS through Title VII or Title VIII. There may be funding for interprofessional programs, however. Patrick Cooney, the lobbyist for ASCLS, is talking with members of Congress to sponsor a bill for us. There are some interested parties.
- President Obama moved the money from the Health Workforce Diversity Program to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). ASCLS is discussing how to access some of the STEM money for MLS programs.
- As educational programs find it harder to stay open and to find clinical experiences for their students, GAC will keep pushing to find funding. Give

generously to PAC, please. And, we would love to see you at Legislative Day in March!

Respectfully Reported by Kim A. Przekop

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