



May 21, 2020

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, Dc 20515

Dear Representative Maloney:

On behalf of the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) and the ASCP Board of Certification (ASCP BOC), I am writing to thank you for your leadership in introducing H.R. 6720, the Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act, which provides student loan forgiveness and repayment for healthcare workers engaged in the fight against COVID-19. ASCP and the ASCP BOC strongly support your legislation.

America's healthcare professionals—including pathologists and laboratory professionals—are working tirelessly to diagnose and treat patients with COVID-19 and other diseases. Unfortunately, they are constantly being exposed to a disease that has sickened more than 100,000 Americans, including more than 10,000 healthcare professionals. For pathologists and laboratory professionals, every specimen they come in contact with carries a risk of COVID-19 infection, even those not being examined for COVID-19.

ASCP strongly supports the provision of H.R.6720, and particularly the eligibility provisions intended for laboratory personnel [Sec. 9(A)(iii)]. We appreciate that these provisions are not dependent on licensure, registration, or certification, as few states license laboratory professionals. We do, however, wish to suggest several minor changes to ensure all laboratory professionals at risk to infection are able to benefit from this legislation. First, we suggest that this language be clarified to ensure that phlebotomists and other laboratory personnel providing laboratory services such as collecting, handling, or processing specimens that put them at risk of infection are eligible. Adding "or who provides COVID-related health care services" to the end of Sec. 9(A)(iii) would parallel the eligibility provisions provided to other health care practitioners.

In addition, we suggest that the provisions applicable to researchers [See Sec. 9(A)(iv))] be expanded to cover individuals developing laboratory diagnostic or screening tests for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, as they work directly with live virus to enhance our nation's testing capacity. These suggestions are consistent with the intent of this legislation, which is to assist healthcare workers at risk of infection as a result of the healthcare services they provide.

ASCP truly appreciates your leadership in advancing loan forgiveness and repayment for America's healthcare workforce. We look forward to working with you to advance this legislation and look forward to its enactment. If ASCP can be of assistance on this or any other matter pertaining to laboratory testing or COVID-19 response, please feel free to contact one of us or Matthew Schulze, Director of ASCP's Center for Public Policy at XXX.XXX.XXXX or by email at matthew.schulze@ascp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gene P. Siegal".

Gene Siegal, MD, PhD, FASCP
President, ASCP

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan T. Johnson".

Susan T. Johnson, MSTM, MT(ASCP)SBB^{CM}
Chair, ASCP Board of Certification

