

HHS OIG's 2006 Work Plan ... Summary Information for Clinical Laboratories

The OIG's work plan sets out its investigative agenda for the year ahead. The 2006 Work Plan, which was recently released, features these top 7 items that clinical laboratorians may be interested in:

1. **Lab Proficiency Testing:** This marks the first. The OIG notes Medicare pays labs more than \$4 billion/year. The OIG will gauge lab's adherence to CLIA's PT testing requirements.
2. **Medicare pricing of lab services:** This will compare how Medicare lab payments measure up to other payers. This is a follow-up to an earlier study that found "Medicare paid significantly higher prices" for some lab services than other payers.
3. **Preventive care services:** This new study will examine whether beneficiaries are getting access to these services, which include lab tests, and whether payments and utilization are appropriate.
4. **Physician pathology services:** This could take a look at those so-called "condo" labs. This is an ongoing project. It will involve looking at "relationships between physicians" who provide these services and outside companies.
5. **Contractual agreements with suppliers:** If the Physician pathology services study doesn't include condo labs, this one would. This query reviews contractual and financial arrangements between labs or other suppliers and physicians and hospitals.
6. **Lab services rendered during an inpatient stay.**
7. **Separately billable lab services under the End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) program.**
8. **Imaging and lab services in nursing homes.**

For complete work plan, visit:

<http://oig.hhs.gov/publications/docs/workplan/2006/WorkPlanFY2006.pdf>