



Pictured Left to Right: Janice Maag, Brandie Schoellerman, Senator John Thune, Lezlee Koch, Nichole Taylor, Kathy Winter, Michelle Friesen

*Following is a brief summary of the main issues we discussed during the “Hill” visits:*

#### **The Medical Laboratory Personnel Shortage**

We were seeking congressional support to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 2009 with an enhanced authorization level for Community-Based Job Training Grants Program. We wanted our congressional leaders to urge HHS (Health and Human Services) to designate a portion of the \$200 million available for Health Professions Training in the stimulus package to medical laboratory science students and medical laboratory training programs. We presented statistics regarding the critical shortage of clinical laboratory professionals throughout the United States. We were asked to share personal experiences about the effects of the shortage in our respective workplaces.

#### **Modernizing the Clinical Diagnostic Laboratory Fee Schedule (H.R. 1452)**

The Medicare program reimburses clinical diagnostic laboratory tests according to the fee schedule created under section 1833(h) of the Social Security Act. This fee schedule has not been subject to a fundamental review since it was established in 1984. Significant technological advances in the delivery of clinical laboratory services in the last 25 years are not fully reflected in the current clinical laboratory fee schedule. It is time to modernize the clinical diagnostic fee schedule to reflect increased cost and enhanced technology. Representatives Stupak (D-MI) and Burgess (R-TX) introduced H.R. 1452 which would require the Secretary of HHS to convene a negotiated rulemaking committee to develop a modernized, consensus-driven clinical laboratory fee schedule. We asked our congressional leaders to co-sign onto this legislation with Representatives Stupak and Burgess.