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COLA MARKS 20th ANNIVERSARY BY HONORING LAB WORKERS' ROLE IN PATIENT CARE
Asks Health Care Professionals and Consumers to Support Laboratorians by Wearing Wristbands

COLUMBIA, MD, May 22, 2008 – COLA, an internationally respected clinical laboratory accreditation organization, announced plans to commemorate its 20th anniversary in 2008 with a campaign entitled “Laboratorians: Saving Lives One Test at a Time.”

The campaign urges health care professionals and consumers to log on to a special COLA website (www.COLA.org/20th) to order free wristbands with the campaign slogan and download other materials to educate themselves and others about the importance of laboratory medicine. The website also provides information about the industry to those interested in entering the field, including profiles of a diverse group of laboratorians who describe their daily work experiences.

The anniversary campaign is designed to raise public awareness of the critical role of the nation's nearly 300,000 clinical laboratory science professionals in the delivery of quality health care, and to improve consumer understanding of lab workers' contributions to protecting the health and safety of the nation.

“Laboratorians work diligently behind the scenes to provide doctors and other health care providers with critical information they need to diagnose and treat their patients safely and expediently,” said COLA Chief Executive Officer Douglas Beigel. “With laboratory tests influencing approximately 70 percent of medical decisions, these professionals are often unseen by patients and even their medical colleagues, and yet deserve to be recognized for the enormous contribution they make to the delivery of safe, efficient and effective patient care.

“Through this campaign we hope to honor the people who perform this vital work, by assuring that each test, each day is seen as ‘saving one life at a time.’ We encourage health care professionals and consumers everywhere to show their support and appreciation for laboratorians by ordering and wearing a free “Laboratorians: Saving Lives One Test at a Time” wristband,” Beigel added.

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COLA to Mark 20th Anniversary with Year-Long Salute to Clinical Laboratory Professionals ***Page Two***

Other 20th anniversary COLA initiatives will include:

- Launching “COLAaboration,” (www.COLA.org/COLAaboration), an online community where laboratory professionals can exchange ideas and best practices, read blogs by COLA surveyors and other experts, find professional mentoring, and access podcasts and other resources designed to enhance their knowledge and skills
- Donating 20 cash prizes to professionals whose work has directly saved a life or resulted in advancing safety in the laboratory as part of a national contest to spotlight the profession
- Sponsoring industry symposia featuring speakers and topics of interest to laboratory professionals, health care providers and consumers alike

About COLA

In 1988, a group of physicians founded COLA as a private alternative to help physician office laboratories stay in compliance with newly enacted Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA). In 1993, the Health Care Financing Administration (now CMS) granted COLA deeming authority in all 50 states under CLIA, and in 1997 the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) also recognized COLA’s laboratory accreditation program.

After 35,000 surveys in which COLA’s practical, educational accreditation methods helped physician office laboratories stay in compliance with CLIA, COLA expanded its program offerings to include hospital and independent laboratories.

Today, COLA is the premier independent laboratory accrediting organization, dedicated to promoting excellence in laboratory medicine and patient care through a program of voluntary education, consultation, and accreditation. COLA offers a wide range of services designed to enable clinical laboratories and staff to meet U.S. CLIA and other regulatory requirements, act in accordance with quality systems, and provide the best possible patient care. For more information about COLA accreditation services and educational products, and on-line educational opportunities please call 800-981-9883 or visit COLA's Web Site at www.cola.org.