In recent healthcare news, several well-known laboratories were at the center of patient complaints, legal actions and lawsuits for unethical practices, fraudulent billing techniques, and failure to maintain safety and regulatory compliance. When healthcare professionals turn to laboratories to support their practices and mitigate their risks, news reports like these are more than disheartening.

Every day, clinicians and physicians have to consider:

- Litigation for failure to treat pain or for under treatment of pain
- Criminal charges for abuse, addiction, or death
- Numerous federal guidelines and their implications
- Complaints by pharmacies
- Investigations or audits by State Board of Medical Examiners
- Inquiries or action by the DEA, State Bureau of Narcotics

When so very much is at stake, finding a laboratory partner that you can trust can mean the difference between success and failure – and life and death.

Empowering physicians – giving them information to improve patients' lives – that is our daily mission. We help our physicians by addressing some key questions and strategies for compliance and patient safety. Those questions include:

- Do you have updated Patient Records?
- Do you have a Drug Testing Protocol?
- Do you use screening tools to identify potential abusers?
- Do you use a Patient Treatment Agreement?
- Do you have new hire and ongoing training for staff on a consistent basis?
- Do you use tamper-resistance prescription pads?
- Do you follow regulations according to DEA or State Guidelines?

With the answers to these questions, we can help our physicians determine their level of potential risk and seek the support and resources to mitigate those risks.

A major compliance issue stems from abuse and misuse of prescription medications for pain. Today's physician is dealing with the dueling issue of abuse and misuse of pain medications versus the estimated 25% of adults suffering from chronic pain at any given time. There is conflicting evidence on pain treatment, conflicting roles for prescribers, and a tense regulatory environment.

If a physician is prescribing pain medications, it is imperative they take the necessary steps of precaution. When partnering with Gulfstream Diagnostics, we assist in patient monitoring and provide the necessary tools to ensure practice compliance. We can create a customized policy for testing patients regularly to ensure prescribed medications are taken responsibly and can develop contracts specifically for controlled substance usage. The goal with all the tools and resources we offer is to help all our physicians and clinicians maintain compliance, mitigate their risks, and uphold the highest level of patient safety.

Our goal is also to support a healthy community and economy. According to a new government study, abuse of opioids costs the U.S. economy $78.5 billion a year. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analyzed the financial toll of opioid abuse, including direct health care costs, lost productivity and costs to the criminal justice system, and the results are staggering.

With the significant increase of prescription misuse and abuse, clinicians and physicians must stay vigilant with continuous testing of their patients and active monitoring. Gulfstream Diagnostics' clinical team is dedicated to compliance and we are constantly vetting new drugs on the market, and researching potential issues for lack of medication efficacy, poor outcomes, misuse, abuse and diversion. We appreciate that these issues are growing concerns for doctors and clinicians everywhere, and we have made it our mission to help our clients improve their patient outcomes while maintaining compliance.

We offer a host of resources, tools and forms to support practices across the United States. When other laboratories are cutting corners and foregoing quality, we are adding additional clinical experts to our team, enhancing the technology in our labs, and upholding our commitment to quality and compliance.

We are proud to offer timely results you can trust, no matter your location, whether your lab needs pharmacogenetics, wellness, allergy, or toxicology lab services. We take pride in the quality of our services, our COLA Laboratory Excellence Award-winning lab, our CAP accreditation, and our team's commitment to providing innovation through R&D and insightful results that improve patient care. We hold compliance and lab safety to the highest standard, producing accurate qualitative and quantitative analyses in the shortest span of time, without compromising quality.

Call or email us today to learn more about how Gulfstream Diagnostics can meet your laboratory needs. We look forward to partnering with you, and delivering "results that shape lives."