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CONTACT:

Dave Nathan
202-434-2560 or dnathan@arp.org

AARP Reacts to Supreme Court Decision in Gene Patent case

Washington, DC – AARP Legislative Policy Counsel David Certner offered the following statement today in reaction to the Supreme Court’s decision in the Myriad gene patent case. AARP Foundation Litigation filed an amicus brief in the case.

“AARP is pleased with the Supreme Court decision in the Myriad genetics case. Gene patents significantly elevate costs of the important tests to consumers and reduce public access to them.

“Myriad Genetics has held an exclusive patent on BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, and the monopoly has led to Myriad charging more than \$3,400 for its genetic test related to a predisposition to develop breast and ovarian cancer. The high costs not only present an obstacle to access to the tests, but also prevent consumers from getting second opinions to confirm the validity of test results.

“And the patent has blocked the study of the genes by other labs.

“Limitations on the study and public access to genetic tests are important because genetic diagnostic tests can determine how a patient will respond to a specific drug or a patient’s risk of developing Alzheimer’s, heart disease, hearing loss, other cancers, and a variety of other illnesses.

“AARP consistently has opposed the exclusive patent by Myriad, filing five amicus briefs – three of which were in the Supreme Court – urging the courts to reject patents on human genes. We continue to believe strongly that such patents are not in the consumer’s - or public’s - interest.”

Here is the AARP brief:

http://www.arp.org/content/dam/arp/arp_foundation/litigation/amicus_brief_pdfs/Assoc-for-Molecular-Pathology-v-Myriad_SCt_12-398.pdf

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