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ON THE COVER Red blood cells, 3D rendering. During the normal 120-day life span of a red blood cell, a nonenzymatic reaction occurs between glucose and hemoglobin, forming glycated hemoglobin. Millions of measurements of hemoglobin A₁c (Hb A₁c), the major fraction of glycated hemoglobin, are performed each year in hospital laboratories and point-of-care facilities. This issue of Clinical Chemistry contains an article describing the results of a study of the magnitude of inappropriate requesting of Hb A₁c in patients with diabetes mellitus. Are these tests being ordered and used appropriately? Are clinicians following the recommendations contained in national guidance documents? Find out the answers to these questions by turning to page 906. Reproduced with permission. ©Dmitry Sunagatov - Fotolia.com