



NEWS RELEASE

# Quest Diagnostics Aims to Close Gaps in Maternal Healthcare with New Obstetrics Test Panel that Includes Hepatitis C Screening

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New test panel follows a Quest Diagnostics Health Trends® study with the CDC that revealed less than half of pregnant people are screened for hepatitis C as recommended under guidelines

SECAUCUS, N.J., Aug. 17, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Quest Diagnostics (NYSE: DGX), the world's leading provider of diagnostic information services, today announced the launch of a new obstetrics laboratory test panel designed to enable physicians to screen all eligible pregnant people easily and reliably for hepatitis C (HCV) with other laboratory tests typically ordered during early pregnancy.

The company developed the new test panel to include HCV antibody testing with reflex to quantitative real-time PCR in response to findings from a Quest Diagnostics Health Trends® **study** published in **Obstetrics & Gynecology** in June 2022. This peer reviewed study found that less than 41% of pregnant people were screened for HCV in 2021, based on Quest Diagnostic's laboratory testing of more than 5 million pregnant patients. The study also found that individuals with Medicaid health insurance were screened at rates 25-35% lower than those with commercial insurance.

"Our Health Trends research revealed that despite guidelines recommending HCV screening in pregnancy, many people are not receiving the testing they need. Individuals in underserved communities are most likely to experience this gap in care," said Damian "Pat" Alagia, MD, Senior Medical Director, Women's Health, Quest Diagnostics. "Screening for HIV, HBV and syphilis is already standard in obstetric panels, and it is no coincidence that screening rates for these diseases during pregnancy are more than double the current rate as for HCV. By adding HCV screening to our obstetrics panel, physicians will be more likely to deliver guideline-based care that

reduces HCV infection during pregnancy and fosters a positive outcome for the patient and their newborn."

"Our new test service is a prime example of how Quest Diagnostics illuminates care gaps from its uniquely large laboratory dataset and then creates solutions to improve patient care and public health," said Harvey W. Kaufman, MD, Senior Medical Director, Head of the Health Trends Research Program for Quest Diagnostics, and a lead of the study published in **Obstetrics & Gynecology**.

Obstetric panels are typically performed early in pregnancy and include guideline-recommended tests, such as complete blood count (CBC), blood typing, hepatitis B, syphilis, and rubella, to help guide clinical decisions affecting the pregnancy and mother's health.<sup>i</sup> In recent years, hepatitis C infections have risen in pregnant people and other populations in the United States, largely due to increased intravenous drug use. Between 2020-2021, the United States Preventative Services Task Force, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine issued practice guidance recommending one-time hepatitis C screening during pregnancy<sup>ii,iii</sup> while the CDC issued guidance recommending HCV screening for all pregnant people except in settings where the prevalence of HCV infection is less than 0.1%.<sup>iv</sup>

Hepatitis C is the most common bloodborne infection in the United States and is a leading cause of liver-related morbidity and mortality.<sup>v</sup> An estimated 1,700 infants were born with HCV infection (acquired in utero) each year between 2011 and 2014.<sup>vi</sup>

## About Quest Diagnostics Health Trends®

**Quest Diagnostics Health Trends®** is a series of scientific reports that provide insights into health topics, based on analysis of HIPAA-compliant, objective clinical laboratory data, to empower better patient care, population health management and public health policy. The reports are based on the Quest Diagnostics database of 60 billion deidentified laboratory test results, believed to be the largest of its kind in healthcare. Health Trends has yielded novel insights to aid the management of allergies and asthma, prescription drug misuse, diabetes, Lyme disease, heart disease, influenza and workplace wellness. Quest Diagnostics also produces the Drug Testing Index (DTI)<sup>™</sup>, a series of reports on national workplace drug positivity trends based on the company's employer workplace drug testing data.

## About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics empowers people to take action to improve health outcomes. Derived from the world's largest database of clinical lab results, our diagnostic insights reveal new avenues to identify and treat disease, inspire healthy behaviors and improve healthcare management. Quest annually serves one in three adult Americans and half the physicians and hospitals in the United States, and our 50,000 employees understand that, in the right hands and with the right context, our diagnostic insights can inspire actions that transform

lives. [www.QuestDiagnostics.com](http://www.QuestDiagnostics.com)

i American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Routine Tests During Pregnancy.

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/routine-tests-during-pregnancy>. Accessed July 26, 2022.

ii U.S. Preventative Services Task Force. Hepatitis C virus infection in adolescents and adults: screening: United States Preventative Services Task Force statement. *JAMA*. 2020;323(10):970–975. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.1123>.

iii **ACOG Practice Advisory: Routine Hepatitis C Virus Screening in Pregnant Individuals (opqic.org)**Schillie S, Wester C, Osborne M, Wesolowski L, Ryerson AB. CDC recommendations for hepatitis C screening among adults — United States, 2020. *MMWR Recomm Rep*. 2020;69(RR-2):1–17. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.rr6902a1>.

iv Schillie S, Wester C, Osborne M, Wesolowski L, Ryerson AB. CDC Recommendations for Hepatitis C Screening Among Adults — United States, 2020. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2020;69(No. RR-2):1–17.

v Seo S, Silverberg MJ, Hurley LB, et al. Prevalence of spontaneous clearance of hepatitis C virus infection doubled from 1998 to 2017. *J Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol*. 2020;18(2):511–513. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cgh.2019.04.035>.

vi Roberts EA, Yeung L. Maternal-infant transmission of hepatitis C virus infection. *Hepatology*. 2002;36(5 Suppl 1):S106-13.

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