



## Quest Diagnostics Is First to Offer New Roche Diagnostics ELECSYS proBNP Assay to Aid In Congestive Heart Failure Diagnosis

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TETERBORO, N.J., Dec. 17 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Quest Diagnostics Incorporated (NYSE: DGX), the nation's leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services, announced today that it is the first commercial reference laboratory to offer the new FDA-cleared ELECSYS(R) proBNP assay to aid in the diagnosis of Congestive Heart Failure.(1) The assay is available to physicians nationwide through the Quest Diagnostics Nichols Institute esoteric testing laboratory in San Juan Capistrano, California.

The automated Elecsys proBNP assay enables Quest Diagnostics to provide the physician with a fast and accurate measurement of NT-proBNP, a metabolite that rises with the onset of heart failure. NT-proBNP as well as the physiologically active BNP are part of a family of hormones that function to regulate blood pressure, electrolyte balance and fluid volume.

NT-proBNP levels have been demonstrated to be a diagnostic aid in identifying left ventricular dysfunction, allowing cardiologists, internists, and general practitioners to differentiate between heart failure and lung disorders with similar symptoms. Elevated plasma NT-proBNP levels are directly related to the severity of Congestive Heart Failure: The higher the level of NT-proBNP in the blood, the more serious the condition.

In addition to providing a quick turnaround time on test results, the Elecsys proBNP assay is the only test that gives the physician an accurate reading of NT-proBNP due to Congestive Heart Failure without interference from Natrecor(R) (nesiritide), the recombinant BNP therapeutic that may be prescribed for Congestive Heart Failure.

Physicians assessing patients with clinical symptoms of Congestive Heart Failure, which may include shortness of breath, fluid accumulation and fatigue, will gain diagnostic insight into the status of their patients' heart health by measuring NT-proBNP levels.

According to the American Heart Association, 4.8 million Americans are afflicted with Congestive Heart Failure, with 550,000 cases diagnosed each year. The prevalence of heart failure is expected to continue to rise, due to the aging population and increase in acute coronary syndrome survival. Heart failure is the leading cause of Medicare hospitalization in the United States, accounting for \$18 billion per year in direct costs.

For more information about NT-proBNP testing, physicians can call Quest Diagnostics Nichols Institute toll-free at 800-642-4657.

### About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics Incorporated is the nation's leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services, providing insights that enable physicians, hospitals, managed care organizations and other healthcare professionals to make decisions to improve health. The company offers patients and physicians the broadest access to diagnostic laboratory services through its national network of laboratories and patient service centers. Quest Diagnostics is the leading provider of esoteric testing, including gene-based medical testing, and empowers healthcare organizations and clinicians with state-of-the-art connectivity solutions that improve practice management. Additional company information can be found on the Internet at: [www.questdiagnostics.com](http://www.questdiagnostics.com).

The statements in this press release which are not historical facts or information may be forward looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results and outcomes to be materially different. Certain of these risks and uncertainties may include, but are not limited to, unanticipated expenditures, changing relationships with customers, suppliers and strategic partners, conditions of the economy and other factors described in the Quest Diagnostic Incorporated 2001 Form 10-K and subsequent filings.

Elecsys is a trademark of a member of the Roche Group. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.

(1) Hunt PJ, Richards AM, Nicholls MG, Yandle TG, Doughty RN; Espiner EA.

Immunoreactive aminoterminal pro-brain natriuretic peptide  
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