



## NCQA Receives Three-Year Grant From Quest Diagnostics

July 28, 2004

### Grant Supports Health Care Quality Advancements

WASHINGTON – The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) announced today that it received a three-year grant from Quest Diagnostics Incorporated, a national provider of diagnostic testing, information and services. This grant supports NCQA's mission to improve the quality of health care by helping NCQA expand efforts to enhance quality evaluation at the provider level and to implement and evaluate new HEDIS® (Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set) measures over the next three years.

"The way quality measurement evolves helps determine how the health care system evolves and improves," said Esther Emard, NCQA Chief Operating Officer. "Quest Diagnostics' contribution to NCQA recognizes this fact and the importance of expanding measurement across all levels of the system. Their support will help us expand our measurement activities at both the health plan and provider levels."

The expansion of quality measurement at the provider level is central to the next generation of quality improvement processes. Provider-level quality data are useful in helping doctors fine-tune their practices. In turn, health plans and purchasers can recognize and reward those providers that perform at a high level. Once provider-level quality reporting is widespread, the public can be provided with valuable information about the quality of care their doctors deliver. To further these goals, NCQA is engaged in a variety of regional demonstration projects and approaches to provider evaluation that take into consideration the many ways health care is delivered in America. Whether through physician recognition, pay-for-performance, or system and process evaluation, NCQA continues to explore new ways to enhance health care quality at the provider level. "We are pleased to support NCQA, which is fully aligned with our focus on health care quality," said Surya N. Mohapatra, Ph.D., President and Chief Executive Officer of Quest Diagnostics. "Quest Diagnostics was the first healthcare services company to pursue Six Sigma Quality, a rigorous process and management philosophy that strives for virtual perfection. In addition, we promote the use of health care information technology solutions that enable doctors to spend more time with patients, enhancing the quality of patient care. We look forward to collaborating with NCQA."

The grant will also support the implementation and evaluation of new HEDIS measures over the next three years. One such measure, introduced for first-year reporting in 2004, is the Colorectal Cancer Screening measure. The measure evaluates whether individuals 51 years of age and older were screened for colorectal cancer within an appropriate time frame. Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. This measure will promote early screening; detecting the disease in early stages has been shown to significantly reduce mortality.

#### About NCQA

NCQA is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. NCQA accredits and certifies a wide range of health care organizations and manages the evolution of HEDIS®, the performance measurement tool used by most of the nation's health plans. NCQA is committed to providing health care quality information through the Web and the media in order to help consumers, employers and others make more informed health care choices.

#### About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics Incorporated (NYSE: DGX) is the nation's leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services, providing insights that enable healthcare professionals to make decisions that improve health. The company offers the broadest access to diagnostic testing services through its national network of laboratories and patient service centers, and provides interpretive consultation through its extensive medical and scientific staff. Quest Diagnostics is the leading provider of esoteric testing, including gene-based medical testing, and provides advanced information technology solutions to improve patient care. Additional company information is available at: [www.questdiagnostics.com](http://www.questdiagnostics.com).

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