



New Rules Opening Access to Lab Test Results Will Empower Patients to Take Control of Their Health

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MADISON, N.J., Feb. 3, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- A final rule issued today by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) giving Americans increased access to their personal health information will empower patients to exercise greater control over their health, according to Quest Diagnostics (NYSE: DGX), the world's leading provider of diagnostic information services.

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"Patient engagement is essential to creating a healthcare system that delivers better health outcomes at lower costs," said Jon Cohen, M.D., senior vice president and chief medical officer, Quest Diagnostics. "HHS's final rule means millions of Americans who previously could not access their laboratory and other health care data from clinical laboratory companies like Quest can now do so without first requiring the approval of their healthcare provider. That's a huge win for patients who want to take responsibility for their healthcare and engage in a richer dialogue with their providers in the interest of making informed clinical decisions."

The final rule amends the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA) regulations to give patients (or their representatives) direct access to the patient's laboratory test reports. At the same time, the final rule eliminates the exception under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule to an individual's right to access his or her protected health information when it is held by a CLIA-certified or CLIA-exempt laboratory that is prohibited by law from providing such access. In combination, these changes will require laboratories to provide patients access to their test reports. It does not require laboratories to interpret test results, and they may refer individuals back to their health provider for this information.

"Studies show that patients who have access to their health records tend to be more engaged in decision making than those who don't, and may even be more likely to follow treatment protocols and other behaviors that promote favorable outcomes," continued Dr. Cohen. "We're hopeful that the ruling will empower consumers to openly communicate with their physicians regarding tests, procedures and therapies, and actively participate in their healthcare."

Studies suggest that direct patient rights to healthcare information could improve patient participation in healthcare and possibly quality. A study in the Annals of Internal Medicine in 2009 found that patients were not informed of more than 7 percent of abnormal test results. Another study, published in Lab Medicine in 2007, found that "patients want information on their lab results" and suggests patients would be more satisfied with the healthcare system if given greater data access.

Quest Diagnostics provides patients several options for accessing their laboratory and other health data, including the company's Gazelle mobile health app for patients.

About Quest Diagnostics Healthcare IT Solutions

Quest Diagnostics is a provider of healthcare information technology solutions that facilitate secure, flexible data access and management to help improve patient care and lower healthcare costs. Care360 solutions are used by more than 310,000 physician users in more than 95,000 locations, providing a network of affiliated physician users in local communities and across the country. The Black Book award-winning Care360 EHR affordably and efficiently delivers laboratory, radiology, ePrescribing and other information to community providers. Care360 EHR is certified under the Office of the National Coordinator's Authorized Testing and Certification Body (ONC-ATCB) program as meeting the requirements of the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act and its Meaningful Use provision. Quest Diagnostics HIT solutions also include the Gazelle mobile health app for patients and physicians and the award-winning ChartMaxx health document management solution. For more information, visit www.Care360.com or www.mygazelleapp.com.

About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics is the world's leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services that patients and doctors need to make better healthcare decisions. The company offers the broadest access to diagnostic testing services through its network of laboratories and patient service centers, and provides interpretive consultation through its extensive medical and scientific staff. Quest Diagnostics is a pioneer in developing innovative diagnostic tests and advanced healthcare information technology solutions that help improve patient care. Additional company information is available at QuestDiagnostics.com. Follow us at Facebook.com/QuestDiagnostics and Twitter.com/QuestDX.

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