



Quest Diagnostics Is Selected to Provide Confirmatory Testing for the California Department of Health Services Expanded Newborn Screening Program

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LYNDHURST, N.J., Aug. 10 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Quest Diagnostics Incorporated (NYSE: DGX), the nation's leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services, announced today that it has signed an agreement with the State of California Department of Health Services to provide follow-up laboratory testing under the recently expanded Newborn Screening Program of the agency's Genetic Disease Branch.

As part of the state's expanded Newborn Screening Program, Quest Diagnostics has begun providing confirmatory laboratory testing for newborns with abnormal screening test results for more than 30 genetic disorders that can be detected within days after the baby is born and before the newborn becomes ill. These disorders are caused by absent, inactive or malfunctioning enzymes and can lead to death and disability if treatment is not begun soon after birth. For example, in a recessive genetic disease known as Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD), enzymes used to break down certain amino acids are either absent or inactive. Unless diagnosed and treated promptly, MSUD can be life-threatening.

In another inherited disorder, medium-chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency (MCAD), the enzyme that is responsible for breaking down fats into energy, is missing or does not work correctly. MCAD deficiency may be the cause of one out of 100 deaths thought to be Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS); about one fifth of children with MCAD die with their first illness, before anyone knows they have the MCAD deficiency.(1) With early detection and appropriate treatment, often an infant's life is saved.

"We selected Quest Diagnostics because of their demonstrated strength as a biochemical genetics laboratory," said George Cunningham, M.D., M.P.H., Chief, Genetic Disease Branch, State of California Department of Health Services. "We value the high caliber of Quest Diagnostics' skilled physicians and scientists who provide outstanding interpretative consultation on test results that can be difficult to interpret."

"Quest Diagnostics is honored to be the only laboratory in the State of California to perform follow up testing for the State's recently expanded Newborn Screening Program," said Joyce G. Schwartz, M.D., Vice President and Chief Laboratory Officer of Quest Diagnostics. "It is an awesome responsibility to be in charge of confirmatory testing for the approximately 600,000 newborns that are expected to be born in California this year. We know that having a baby is an exciting and scary time for so many parents and we are privileged to be in a position to give parents and physicians the information they need within days after birth."

Newborn screening is an established preventive public health measure for all infants throughout the nation.(2) Every state and U.S. territory routinely screens newborns for certain genetic, metabolic, hormonal and functional disorders.(3) According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter, each newborn has a one-in-885 chance of having a positive screening test and with expanded screening it is estimated that one out of 1,000 newborns will be diagnosed with a specific detectable disorder. While most infants with initial abnormal screening test results go on to have normal test results on follow up testing, newborn screening is vital for early detection of many disorders that can lead to mental retardation, physical disability and/or death in early childhood if left untreated.

Testing newborns for multiple disorders is a simple, quick and relatively painless procedure for the baby. A small amount of blood is collected from the heel of the newborn's foot and the specimen is initially sent to the hospital's laboratory where it is screened for the presence and quantity of certain analytes. If a particular analyte is found to exceed a pre-determined cut-off value, and a specific condition is suspected, the specimen is sent for follow up, or confirmatory testing to Quest Diagnostics Nichols Institute esoteric testing laboratory in San Juan Capistrano, California.

About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics is the 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 national 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 new diagnostic tests and advanced information technology solutions that help improve patient care. Additional company information is available at: 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, competitive environment, changes in government regulations, changing relationships with customers, payers, suppliers and strategic partners and other factors described in the Quest Diagnostics Incorporated 2004 Form 10-K and subsequent filings.

(1) Source: Charles R. Roe, M.D. "MCAD: Medium Chain acyl CoA Dehydrogenase-Information for Families," FODSupport.org
http://www.fodsupport.org/mcad_fam.htm

(2) Source: California Department of Health Services, California Newborn Screening Program
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/pcfh/gdb/html/NBS/ProgramOVforParents.htm>

(3) Source: "Newborn Screening Tests," March of Dimes,
http://www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1200.asp

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