



Quest Diagnostics is the First Laboratory to Commercially Offer Improved HIV-1 Viral Load Test From Roche Diagnostics

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TETERBORO, N.J., Nov. 18 /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 reference laboratory to commercially offer Roche Diagnostics' new, FDA-approved AMPLICOR HIV-1 MONITOR(R) Test, Version 1.5 for HIV-1 viral load testing. The test is available to physicians through Quest Diagnostics Nichols Institute in San Juan Capistrano, California.

The new MONITOR 1.5 offers an advantage over its earlier version MONITOR 1.0, which physicians use to accurately and precisely measure the quantity of circulating HIV-1 virus in plasma of infected patients ("viral load"). MONITOR 1.5 can detect the full range of HIV viral subtypes that scientists have identified to date, and which until recently were particular to specific geographic regions. While the majority of HIV-1 isolates reported in the western hemisphere, Europe, and Australia continue to belong to subtype B, and while non-B subtypes A, C, D and E continue to be prevalent in Africa and Southeast Asia, global travel is facilitating the broad distribution of all HIV-1 subtypes worldwide.

"With reports of non-B subtypes increasing globally, the ability of a test to detect and quantify these diverse subtypes is crucial to quality HIV patient care and treatment decision-making," said Peter N.R. Heseltine, M.D., FACP, Medical Director, Infectious Diseases at Quest Diagnostics Nichols Institute. "We are excited to be the first laboratory to commercially offer this new version of MONITOR, which has been established as the standard of care for assessing disease prognosis, response to drug therapy and future treatment decisions."

The Roche AMPLICOR HIV-1 MONITOR Test, Version 1.5 is based on Roche's Nobel Prize-winning Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) technology, which is considered to be the gold standard in testing for HIV. PCR provides laboratories with the ability to both amplify and identify specific DNA or RNA sequences from a sample of blood. The original AMPLICOR HIV-1 MONITOR Test was the first FDA-approved test to accurately and precisely measure the quantity of circulating HIV-1 virus in plasma.

In addition to the MONITOR 1.5 test, Quest Diagnostics offers a complete menu of HIV diagnostic tests, including HIV-1 Genotypic and Phenotypic resistance tests.

For more information about AMPLICOR HIV-1 MONITOR Test, Version 1.5, 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.

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 Diagnostics Incorporated 2001 Form 10-K and subsequent filings.

AMPLICOR is a trademark of Roche Diagnostics, a member of the Roche Group.

SOURCE Quest Diagnostics Incorporated

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