



## Quest Diagnostics' Healthcare Information Technology Subsidiary to Test ePrescribing Technology Standards in Two New Pilot Programs

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LYNDHURST, N.J., May 1 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Quest Diagnostics Incorporated (NYSE: DGX), the nation's leading provider of diagnostic laboratory testing, information and services, announced today that its healthcare information technology subsidiary, MedPlus, will test electronic prescribing standards in two new pilot programs starting in May.

MedPlus will conduct testing in pilot programs in New Jersey and Florida that are designed to research the function and interoperability of ten technology standards over the course of 2006. In collaboration with Partners In Care, a physician organization serving more than 850 private practice physicians throughout central New Jersey, and Aetna, one of the nation's leading providers of health care and related benefits, MedPlus will test the technology standards that facilitate electronic prescribing through its Care360(TM) Physician Portal. MedPlus will deploy Care360 to select physicians participating with Partners In Care and Aetna.

MedPlus is participating in the pilot programs via SureScripts, the nation's leading provider of electronic prescribing services. SureScripts was recently awarded a \$2 million grant to conduct tests of electronic prescribing as part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Medicare prescription drug benefit program.

The Care360 Physician Portal, developed by MedPlus, is designed to enable physicians to order diagnostic tests and review laboratory results online; prescribe medications; monitor patients' response to prescribed treatment plans; view clinical and administrative information from multiple sources; and share portions of a patient's file with medical colleagues in a manner that is consistent with HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) privacy and security requirements.

The Care360 Physician Portal was recently enhanced with new electronic prescribing features, allowing physicians to see critical patient information when prescribing medication. In one screen, physicians can now review available medication histories, many drug-to-drug and allergy-to-drug interactions, patient concerns, notes and messages from other physicians and recent laboratory test results. The physician can then electronically prescribe medications right from the patient chart, sending the prescription directly to a local pharmacy or pharmacy benefit management company.

The grant awards fulfill part of the requirements of the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act (MMA), which require pilot testing of electronic prescribing standards as a part of the US Department of Health and Human Services Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit program. Medicare Part D encourages physicians to transmit new prescription and refill requests electronically to a Medicare patient's choice of pharmacy.

"We are pleased to have an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to healthcare quality by participating in this important Medicare Part D initiative," said Richard A. Mahoney, Vice President, Healthcare Information Solutions at Quest Diagnostics and President, MedPlus.

MedPlus will collaborate with the SureScripts' team including pharmacists, physicians, technology and business process experts who are experienced with electronic prescribing standards, workflow evaluation, survey design and research methodologies. In addition to the testing and evaluation of critical capabilities including pharmacy dispense or fill information, the project will also provide important data to reinforce the benefits of ePrescribing technology on healthcare quality and patient safety.

The pilot projects will be evaluated by the Secretary of HHS, and a report of the evaluation will be sent to Congress by April 1, 2007 as required under the Medicare Modernization Act. Based on the results of the pilot project, the Secretary will adopt final uniform standards in 2008 in accordance with the timing prescribed by the statute.

### 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 healthcare information technology solutions that help improve patient care. Additional company information is available at: <http://www.questdiagnostics.com>

### About MedPlus

MedPlus, the healthcare information technology subsidiary of Quest Diagnostics, is a leading developer and integrator of clinical connectivity and healthcare data management solutions that foster better patient care and improve business performance for healthcare institutions, physicians and patients. The company's ChartMaxx and Care360 solutions efficiently and securely collect, store, manage and integrate clinical information within an organization, enterprise, practice or community. ChartMaxx, the award-winning electronic patient record solution, has been implemented in more than 100 hospitals and clinics with over 115,000 clinical and administrative users. Care360 is a patient-centric physician portal providing a network of over 80,000 physicians and their staff with tools to improve patient care and overall office efficiency. For more information, visit the Company's Web site at <http://www.medplus.com>.

SOURCE Quest Diagnostics Incorporated

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