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## **Companion Dx To Share Genomic Test Results Through Healthconnect**

*Houston area pharmacogenomics lab utilizes regional health information network to ensure broad provider access to genetic profiles.*

Houston, Texas (January 14, 2014) – Healthconnect announced today that it has become one of the first health information networks in the country to sign-on a pharmacogenomics lab, Companion Dx, for the broad dissemination of genetic test results. By making archived records available through Healthconnect, Companion Dx can ensure that genetic information will be available to their patients' providers at some unspecified time in the future. Companion Dx performs a genetic analysis of a person's unique responsiveness to pharmaceutical agents in order to assist practitioners in avoiding severe adverse drug events and to optimize the use of medicines by identifying which drugs are most likely to be effective. Unlike most laboratory tests that reflect a current state, such as a cholesterol reading, the genomic profile is a life-long record that could help doctors to make informed treatment decisions well into the future.

This is particularly helpful to physicians who may have minimal contact with the patient after the episode of care, such as in emergency treatment situations. Dr. Kevin Rosenblatt, MD, PhD explains, "We can help physicians to select the best medications for their patients when rapid response is needed. Everyone's genome is different, so using that information can change therapy to suit each patient. The key to this is making the data actionable. In the last several years, we've been figuring out how to deliver the information in a way that the physician can readily understand."

Osama Mikhail, Ph.D., founding Healthconnect board member and Professor of Management and Policy at the UT School of Public Health noted that the long-term impact of genetic testing from a public health perspective could be substantial. "According to the CDC, chronic disease accounts for nearly 70% of the deaths in the United States. Many of those illnesses are related to a genetic predisposition. With genomic testing certain chronic diseases may be identified more readily and healthy lifestyle choices could be encouraged that would help to mitigate the course of a disease even before its onset."

Genomic testing has recently gained the attention of the public as a promising new wave in medicine. Electronic health information exchange, which is just coming online in Southeast Texas, will help to leverage the value of genetic testing for years to come.

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**About Greater Houston Healthconnect**

Greater Houston Healthconnect is an independent, community-based organization responsible for enabling information exchange among healthcare providers in a 20-county region. It is tasked with mobilizing healthcare information electronically across organizations to enhance the safety, quality, and efficiency of care and improve information access throughout the region. Key stakeholders include healthcare providers, payers, employers and the community as a whole. For more information, visit <http://www.ghhconnect.org/>.