

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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Quest Diagnostics, First National Laboratory to partner with Greater Houston Healthconnect to Improve Quality of Patient Care

Lab History and Results to be shared electronically through the regional health information network

Houston, Texas (July 31, 2013) – Seeking to improve coordination and quality of care, Quest Diagnostics is working with Greater Houston Healthconnect to make laboratory results and records available quickly in electronic format to all connected providers in the region. This will enable practitioners caring for the patient, including the original provider who ordered the test and follow-up caregivers, access to lab values. This will in some cases allow providers to better diagnose, treat, and possibly reduce the need for secondary tests. This is especially helpful for patients who see multiple specialists or are making transitions of care between facilities. Physicians will also be able to order their lab tests and receive results directly into their EMR system through this partnership. Quest Diagnostics is the first major reference lab to collaborate with the region’s health information network, which serves 20 counties.

Matthew Hamlin, Quest Diagnostics’ Vice President, Commercial – Southwest, explained the rationale for their participation. “We recognize that by playing a leadership role in the extended Houston community, we are contributing to the long-term efforts to electronically connect all physicians in the community and improve coordination of care.”

When a physician has the ability to view a patient’s prior lab results, he or she can better care for the patient in a number of ways. Baseline lab values often help a physician to determine what’s appropriate for a patient, so they have a better longitudinal perspective. In addition, recent test results can help a physician omit an expensive test that might otherwise have been indicated. Office staff will benefit by accessing prior results all from one source. This saves valuable time and yields greater satisfaction for patients who see that their care is well coordinated.

Jim Langabeer, PhD, President and CEO of Healthconnect illustrates this point, “Access to a patient’s relevant clinical information at the point of care helps providers better diagnose and treat patients. Getting comprehensive laboratory data helps complete the picture for a physician of what occurred with their patient prior to and during their visit. This is especially useful today when most patients seek care from multiple physicians, so access to laboratory data should enhance the coordination of care between these providers and improve overall quality of care”.

Healthconnect, which began operations in 2012, has grown rapidly, adding new providers and services at a fast pace. Many of the area's major health systems, including 23 hospitals, are signed on to participate and several are already sharing patient data. By 2017 that number is projected to grow to 80 hospitals.

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About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics is the world's leading provider of diagnostic information services that patients and doctors need to make better healthcare decisions. We offer the broadest access to diagnostic testing services through our network of laboratories and patient service centers, and provide interpretive consultation through our 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. For more information, visit www.QuestDiagnostics.com.

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/>.

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