



The California Prenatal Screening Program

California Department of Public Health

Genetic Disease Screening Program



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CALIFORNIA EXPANDED AFP SCREENING PROGRAM UPDATE

Prenatal Screening Program Expansion: Inclusion of First Trimester Specimens for Integrated Screening

The California Prenatal Screening Program (currently the Expanded AFP Screening Program) is pleased to announce a program expansion to include first trimester specimens and Nuchal Translucency (NT) results beginning in **late March 2009**. This will allow the California Program to provide Integrated Screening for Down syndrome and Trisomy 18.

A patient's screening options for the chromosomal abnormalities will be:

Quad Marker Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One blood specimen drawn at 15 weeks – 20 weeks of pregnancy (current second trimester program).
Serum Integrated Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combines first trimester blood test results (10 weeks – 13 weeks 6 days) with second trimester blood test results.
Full Integrated Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combines first and second trimester blood test results with NT results (Note: the Screening Program does not pay for NT ultrasounds). Patients with first trimester blood specimens and NT will get a preliminary risk assessment for chromosomal abnormalities in the first trimester. This preliminary risk will be revised when the second trimester blood specimen is received.

The Prenatal Screening Program will offer follow-up services at State-approved Prenatal Diagnostic Centers for women with screen positive results in the first or second trimesters. There will be one Program participation fee (currently \$162) whether the Program receives one or two blood specimens. Medi-Cal is expected to pay for NT ultrasounds performed by credentialed practitioners when the California Program expands to Integrated Screening.

The regional Prenatal Screening Program Coordinators will be offering “in-services” to clinicians and their staff beginning in February 2009 to explain the new Integrated Screening Program. For more information, please contact your regional Coordinator office, listed at the bottom of every Expanded AFP result mailer. **Detailed information and start-up packets for clinicians will be sent in March 2009.**

REMINDER ABOUT THE CURRENT EXPANDED AFP SCREENING PROGRAM

Prior to March 2009, it is possible for prenatal care providers to order screening for just Neural Tube Defects and Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome from the California Program for women who have had first trimester screening or CVS. The Program's current patient booklet (orange) discusses this option to include or not include screening for Down syndrome and Trisomy 18 with the Expanded AFP Screening test for such women. The patient's choice can be documented through check boxes on the patient consent form and the AFP test form.

With Integrated Screening (late March, 2009), a patient's first trimester specimen will be drawn through the California Program. The NTD/SLOS-only option for the second trimester will only be for women who had CVS.

Enclose a Copy of the Patient's Insurance Card or Medi-Cal Card

Please include a copy of the patient's insurance card or Medi-Cal card when you submit a blood specimen for current or future Screening. This will allow the Program to bill the patient's insurer directly and will help prevent the patient from being billed for the screening test.