

**New Report Finds Greater Use of Genetic Testing, but Half of Physicians Concerned About Their Lack of Familiarity With Genetic Tests**  
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- ***Nation spending over \$5 billion on genetic testing; costs may increase to \$25 billion by 2021***
- ***Most doctors and patients optimistic about prospects, with proper consumer safeguards***
- ***Report offers recommendations to ensure patient protections, while accelerating progress for treatment outcomes***

A new report by UnitedHealth Group's (NYSE: UNH) Center for Health Reform & Modernization finds that a majority of physicians are utilizing genetic testing. The report, titled *"Personalized Medicine: Trends and prospects for the new science of genetic testing and molecular diagnostics,"* presents new findings on how genetic tests can help diagnose disease, target prevention, and ensure that patients receive the medicines that will best treat their conditions.

Genetic testing is currently available for about 2,500 conditions, including cancers and communicable diseases, and it is estimated to be growing by double digits annually. Full genome sequencing, which maps an individual's entire genetic code, is also expected to become widely available, possibly beginning as soon as later this year.

"Genetic science offers unprecedented potential to prevent disease and improve diagnosis and treatment, ushering in an era of truly personalized care," said Simon Stevens, executive vice president, UnitedHealth Group, and chairman of the UnitedHealth Center for Health Reform & Modernization. "But for patients to realize these practical benefits, we will also need new models of research and care delivery combined with informed choice and appropriate consumer safeguards."

The report sheds new light on three important questions:

- What do U.S. doctors and patients think about genetic testing and molecular diagnostics?
- How are these tests currently being used, and how might their use grow?
- What practical action can be taken to ensure proper safeguards while accelerating progress for patients?

***Report Includes New Survey Results on Patient and Physician Views on Genetic Testing***

Most American consumers are optimistic about the potential benefits from advances in genetic testing, according to a national survey of U.S. adults conducted by UnitedHealth Group/Harris Interactive, included in the report. About three-quarters of survey respondents agree that genetic tests help doctors diagnose preventable conditions and offer more personalized treatment options. Most consumers expect that five years from now the use of testing will have increased. However, the coding system used across the country to monitor medical tests offers few codes to describe genetic tests for specific diseases.

The survey also finds that a majority of U.S. doctors say that genetic testing will improve care across a range of health problems in the future, allowing for more personalized medical decisions and more targeted choice of therapy. On average, physicians report having recommended genetic testing for 4 percent of their patients over the past year. Looking ahead five years, physicians on average feel that 14 percent of their patients will have had a genetic test; however, nearly three-in-five doctors say that they are very concerned about the cost of genetic tests.

"The mapping of the human genome and use of genetic testing in diagnosing and treating diseases are landmark breakthroughs in modern medicine," said Reed Tuckson, M.D., chief of medical affairs at UnitedHealth Group, and former chair of the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary's Advisory Committee on Genetics, Health and Society. "It is now up to all of us to foster an environment that encourages innovation in these tests and related treatments, as well as their responsible use, so as to bring about real-world improvements in care."

### ***New Data on Current Usage and Expected Trends***

The report contains new analyses of the experience of individuals covered by UnitedHealthcare that show the cost of genetic and molecular diagnostic testing for UnitedHealthcare health plan participants in 2010 was approximately \$500 million.

Per-person spending on genetic testing for UnitedHealthcare's Medicare and Medicaid members was higher than for UnitedHealthcare's employer-sponsored and individually insured population by 16 percent and 24 percent, respectively.

Extrapolating from these data, the report suggests that national spending on these services in 2010 may have reached around \$5 billion.

Looking forward, the report contains projections on how this spending may grow in the coming decade, potentially reaching between \$15 billion and \$25 billion annually in the United States by 2021.

### ***New Recommendations to Ensure Patients Benefit from Scientific Advances***

The report offers six recommendations to help ensure patients benefit from the new science. These include:

- protecting and supporting patients, through data confidentiality, nondiscrimination safeguards and decision support;
- strengthening clinical evidence to inform patients and their physicians about which tests work best, for specific conditions;
- better aligned reimbursement incentives to encourage innovation and appropriateness in test development and usage;
- improved care monitoring and more transparent test coding practices;
- ensuring lab tests are performed safely and accurately; and
- making it easier for health professionals to stay abreast of new developments in genetic science.

"Advancing genetic testing is one of the greatest contributions we can make to the future of personalized medicine. Doing it conscientiously requires taking a close look at the challenges ahead with a focus on bringing to consumers the full benefits that this new technology promises," said Otis Brawley, M.D., chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society. "I commend the UnitedHealth Center for Health Reform & Modernization for taking this initiative."

The report can be seen online at [http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/hrm/UNH\\_WorkingPaper7.pdf](http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/hrm/UNH_WorkingPaper7.pdf)

### **About the UnitedHealth Center for Health Reform & Modernization**

The Center serves as the focal point for UnitedHealth Group's work on health care modernization and national health reform. The Center assesses and develops innovative policies and practical solutions for the health care challenges facing the nation. For more information about the Center and to view the full report, go to: [www.unitedhealthgroup.com/reform](http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/reform).

### **About UnitedHealth Group**

UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH) is a diversified health and well-being company dedicated to helping people live healthier lives and making health care work better. With headquarters in Minnetonka, Minn., UnitedHealth Group offers a broad spectrum of products and services through two distinct platforms: UnitedHealthcare, which provides health care coverage and benefits services; and Optum, which provides information and technology-enabled health services. Through its businesses, UnitedHealth Group serves more than 75 million people worldwide. Visit [www.unitedhealthgroup.com](http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com) for more information.

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