

December 15, 2021, Washington, DC. - The Coalition for Access to Prenatal Screening (CAPS) applauds Wisconsin Medicaid for adopting coverage for cell-free DNA (cfDNA)-based noninvasive prenatal screening (NIPS) for all women who chose to pursue screening, improving access to NIPS regardless of their risk factors, income, and age. With the addition of Wisconsin, now 20 state Medicaid programs cover women of average risk.

NIPS represents a major advance in screening for fetal chromosomal aneuploidies through the analysis of millions of cfDNA fragments in the blood of a pregnant woman.

Chromosomal aneuploidies are characterized by an abnormal number of chromosomes, which may cause genetic disorders in a newborn baby, including some birth defects.

Prenatal screening for chromosomal aneuploidies using analysis of serum proteins has been the standard of care for decades. However, cfDNA-based NIPS has become the preferred method of prenatal screening for many healthcare providers and patients since its introduction to clinical practice in 2011.

The high sensitivity and specificity, and low failure rate, of cfDNA-based NIPS result in fewer women undergoing invasive testing procedures. Although all prenatal screening results should be confirmed with diagnostic testing by chorionic villus sampling (CVS) or amniocentesis, cfDNA-based NIPS correctly identifies a higher proportion of pregnancies affected by chromosomal aneuploidies, including Trisomy 21/Down syndrome, Trisomy 18/Edwards syndrome, and Trisomy 13/Patau syndrome.

Numerous professional organizations, including the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM), the International Society for Prenatal Diagnosis (ISPD), the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG), and the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) have recognized cfDNA-based NIPS as a screening option for all pregnancies, given appropriate patient counseling regarding the performance, risks and benefits of such testing.

We congratulate Wisconsin Badger Care for modernizing its policy to ensure women in the state receive comprehensive prenatal care and CAPS is working with other states to do the same.

To learn more about cfDNA-based NIPS and CAPS, visit <https://capsprenatal.com/>.