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Sanford Health Taps Harvard, Brigham and Women's for Genetic Screening Study

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NEW YORK (GenomeWeb) – Sanford Health yesterday unveiled a partnership with Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital to determine best practices for using genetic screening to improve population health.

Under the four-year collaboration, experts in genomic medicine from Harvard and Brigham and Women's will help guide Sanford researchers in using and interpreting data collected through the Sanford Chip, a $49 pharmacogenomic test to identify genetic risk factors for medication use and more accurately prescribe medications.

The laboratory-developed test, launched last March, is offered through Sanford Health Imagenetics, the molecular diagnostic laboratory of Sioux City, South Dakota-based Sanford Health. The assay leverages technology from Tel Aviv, Israel-based bioinformatics and genetic analysis firm Genoox.

New patients receiving testing with the Sanford Chip can consent to participate in the study, which launched in February of this year. Patients who have already received the test will be contacted separately for consent, Sanford said. The Sanford Chip is available to eligible patients through their Sanford Health primary care provider. It will be ordered and the results managed by Sanford primary care providers with support from genetic counselors.

The researchers will examine issues such as how prepared providers are to deliver results to patients; how results affect their prescribing patterns and patient compliance; the health and economic effects of the results; and how results affect family members of patients.

"These Harvard researchers are among the most experienced in the world studying genetic screening programs for healthy individuals," a Sanford spokesperson said in an email. "They are a great fit for our program of studying the impact of the Sanford Chip … in primary care populations. They have expertise in measuring the health economics … and in measuring health outcomes."

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