



Reproductive Carrier Screening for Genetic Diseases

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Next Review: September 2026

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IMPORTANT REMINDER

Medical Policies are developed to provide guidance for members and providers regarding coverage in accordance with contract terms. Benefit determinations are based in all cases on the applicable contract language. To the extent there may be any conflict between the Medical Policy and contract language, the contract language takes precedence.

PLEASE NOTE: Contracts exclude from coverage, among other things, services or procedures that are considered investigational or cosmetic. Providers may bill members for services or procedures that are considered investigational or cosmetic. Providers are encouraged to inform members before rendering such services that the members are likely to be financially responsible for the cost of these services.

DESCRIPTION

The purpose of reproductive carrier screening is to identify asymptomatic individuals who are heterozygous for serious or lethal single-gene disorders, in order to evaluate the risk of conceiving an affected child and inform reproductive decisions.

MEDICAL POLICY CRITERIA

Notes:

- This policy is not intended to address preimplantation genetic testing, prenatal fetal testing, or diagnostic genetic testing (see Cross References section).
- This policy applies only if there is not a separate Medical Policy that outlines specific criteria for carrier testing. If a separate policy does exist, then the criteria for medical necessity in that policy supersede the guidelines in this policy (see Cross References section).
- Carrier screening with the UNITY Screen™ (BillionToOne) is reviewed in Genetic Testing, Policy No 44 (see Cross References section) due to the reflex single-gene non-invasive prenatal testing of the fetus.

- I. Reproductive carrier screening for the following genes in adults, either as individual genes or in a panel test (see Policy Guidelines 2 section), may be considered **medically necessary**:
- A. *ABCC8* for familial hyperinsulinism
 - B. *ACADM* for medium-chain acyl-CoA-dehydrogenase deficiency
 - C. *ASPA* for Canavan disease
 - D. *BCKDHA*, *BCKDHB* for maple syrup urine disease
 - E. *BLM* for Bloom syndrome
 - F. *CFTR* for cystic fibrosis
 - G. *DHCR7* for Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome
 - H. *DMD* for Duchenne and Becker muscular dystrophies
 - I. *ELP1* (also known as *IKAP*, *IKBKAP*, *TOT1*) for familial dysautonomia/Riley-Day syndrome
 - J. *FANCC* for Fanconi anemia group C
 - K. *FMR1* for fragile X syndrome
 - L. *G6PC* for glycogen storage disease type 1A
 - M. *GALT* for galactosemia
 - N. *GBA* for Gaucher disease
 - O. *HBA* for α -thalassemia
 - P. *HBB* for β -thalassemia, sickle cell anemia
 - Q. *HEXA* for Tay-Sachs disease
 - R. *MCOLN1* for mucopolipidosis IV
 - S. *PAH* for phenylketonuria
 - T. *SMN1*, *SMN2* for spinal muscle atrophy
 - U. *SMPD1* for Niemann-Pick disease type A
 - V. *TMEM216* for Joubert syndrome 2
- II. Risk-based reproductive genetic carrier testing (see Policy Guidelines 1 section) for other specific autosomal recessive or X-linked diseases may be considered **medically necessary** for adults when all of the following criteria (A and B) are met for all included genes and conditions (see Criterion IV. for larger panels):
- A. There is an increased risk for affected offspring, due to any of the following:
 - 1. One or both reproductive partners have a first- or second-degree relative who is affected (see Policy Guidelines 3 section); OR
 - 2. Reproductive partner is known to be a carrier; OR
 - 3. One or both reproductive partners are members of a population known to have a carrier rate that exceeds 1/200 for recessive disorder(s) or a disease

prevalence that exceeds 1/40,000 for X-linked disorders (see Policy Guidelines 3 section).

B. All of the following criteria are met:

1. The natural history of the disease is well understood and there is a reasonable likelihood that the disease is one with high morbidity;
2. Alternative biochemical or other clinical tests to definitively diagnose carrier status are not available, or, if available, provide an indeterminate result or are individually less efficacious than genetic testing;
3. An association of the marker with the disorder has been established and the genetic test has adequate clinical validity to guide clinical decision making.

III. Risk-based reproductive genetic carrier screening for specific autosomal recessive or X-linked diseases that does not meet any of the above criteria is considered **not medically necessary**, including screening of children.

IV. Non-risk-based carrier screening panels for X-linked and autosomal recessive disorders (not based on ethnic or familial/partner risk) may be considered **medically necessary** when all of the following criteria are met for all included genes and conditions (see Policy Guidelines 2 section):

- A. The natural history of the disease is well understood and there is a reasonable likelihood that the disease is one with high morbidity; and
- B. Alternative biochemical or other clinical tests to definitively diagnose carrier status are not available, or, if available, provide an indeterminate result or are individually less efficacious than genetic testing; and
- C. An association of the marker with the disorder has been established and the genetic test has adequate clinical validity to guide clinical decision making; and
- D. The carrier rate is estimated to exceed 1/200 for recessive disorders or the disease prevalence is estimated to exceed 1/40,000 for X-linked disorders (see Policy Guidelines 3 section).

V. Non-risk-based carrier screening panels that do not meet Criterion IV are considered **investigational**.

NOTE: A summary of the supporting rationale for the policy criteria is at the end of the policy.

POLICY GUIDELINES

POLICY GUIDELINES 1

Risk-based carrier screening refers to screening an individual specifically for disorders for which their offspring are known to be at increased risk compared to the general population. This increased risk may be due to ethnic background, family or personal history of a disorder, or a reproductive partner who is known to be a carrier.

Non-risk-based carrier screening refers to carrier screening that is performed in the absence of any specific increased risk. This is the most commonly requested type of screening.

POLICY GUIDELINES 2

Examples of panel tests that may be medically necessary according to Criterion I. (if all genes are listed in Criterion I.) or Criterion IV. include, but are not limited to, the following tests:

- Ashkenazi Jewish Diseases, 16 Genes (ARUP)
- Beacon ACOG/ACMG Female Carrier Screening Panel (Fulgent)
- Beacon Focus Panel (Fulgent)
- Horizon 4 and 14 Panels
- Inheritest® CF/SMA Panel (Labcorp, Integrated Genetics)
- Inheritest® Core Panel (Labcorp, Integrated Genetics)
- Inheritest® Carrier Screen, Society-guided Panel (Labcorp, Integrated Genetics)
- Invitae Core Carrier Screen (Invitae)
- Foresight® Fundamental and Fundamental Plus Panels (Myriad)
- Prenatal Carrier Panel (CFvantage, Fragile X, SMA) (Quest Diagnostics)
- QHerit™ 24-gene carrier panel (Quest Diagnostics)

POLICY GUIDELINES 3

- First-degree relatives include a biological parent, brother, sister, or child
- Second-degree relatives include biologic grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandchildren, and half-sibling.

If there is no family history of, or other form of increased risk for a disease, such as ethnicity, carrier screening is not recommended when the carrier rate is less than 1% in the general population, according to the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Disorders with carrier rates in the general population that exceed 1% include, but are not limited to, cystic fibrosis (*CFTR* gene) and spinal muscular atrophy (*SMN1* gene). The American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) has recommended testing for recessive disorders with an estimated carrier frequency of 1/200 and X-linked disorders with a prevalence of at least 1/40,000 (see Tables in the [ACMG Practice Resource](#)).

LIST OF INFORMATION NEEDED FOR REVIEW

In order to determine the clinical utility of gene test(s), all of the following information must be submitted for review:

1. Name of the genetic test(s) or panel test
2. Name of the performing laboratory and/or genetic testing organization (more than one may be listed)
3. The exact gene(s) and/or variants being tested
4. Relevant billing codes
5. Brief description of how the genetic test results will guide clinical decisions that would not otherwise be made in the absence of testing
6. Medical records related to this genetic test
 - History and physical exam
 - Conventional testing and outcomes

- Conservative treatment provided, if any

CROSS REFERENCES

1. [Genetic Testing for Alzheimer's Disease](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 01
2. [Preimplantation Genetic Testing of Embryos](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 18
3. [Genetic and Molecular Diagnostic Testing](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 20
4. [Genetic Testing for FMR1 and AFF2 Variants \(Including Fragile X and Fragile XE Syndromes\)](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 43
5. [Noninvasive Prenatal Testing to Determine Fetal Aneuploidies and Microdeletions using Cell-Free DNA](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 44
6. [Genetic Testing for \$\alpha\$ -Thalassemia](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 52
7. [Genetic Testing for Primary Mitochondrial Disorders](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 54
8. [Chromosomal Microarray Analysis \(CMA\) or Copy Number Analysis for the Genetic Evaluation of Patients with Developmental Delay, Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Congenital Anomalies](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 58
9. [Evaluating the Utility of Genetic Panels](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 64
10. [Genetic Testing for Rett Syndrome](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 68
11. [Genetic Testing for Duchenne and Becker Muscular Dystrophy](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 69
12. [Invasive Prenatal \(Fetal\) Diagnostic Testing Using Chromosomal Microarray Analysis \(CMA\)](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 78
13. [Genetic Testing for the Evaluation of Products of Conception and Pregnancy Loss](#), Genetic Testing, Policy No. 79
14. [Maternal Serum Analysis for Risk of Preterm Birth](#), Laboratory, Policy No. 75

BACKGROUND

There are more than 1,300 inherited recessive disorders (autosomal or X-linked) that affect 30 out of every 10,000 children.^[1] Some diseases have limited impact on either length or quality of life, while others are uniformly fatal in childhood. See Appendix I for a glossary of terms related to carrier screening.

CARRIER SCREENING

Carrier screening is testing asymptomatic individuals to identify those who are heterozygous for serious or lethal single-gene disorders with the purpose of informing the risk of conceiving an affected child “to provide ... information to optimize pregnancy outcomes based on ... personal preferences and values.”^[2] Risk-based carrier screening is performed in individuals having an increased risk based on population carrier prevalence, and personal or family history. Conditions selected for screening can be based on ethnicities at high risk (e.g., Tay-Sachs disease in Ashkenazi Jews) or may be pan-ethnic (e.g., screening for cystic fibrosis carriers). Ethnicity-based screening for some conditions has been offered for decades and, in some cases, has reduced the prevalence of diseases. For example, a 90% reduction in Tay-Sachs disease followed introduction carrier screening in the 1970s in the United States and Canada.^[3] In addition, the U.S. population has become increasingly ethnically intermarried^[4, 5] — a phenomenon the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) noted when offering a recommendation in 2005 for pan-ethnic cystic fibrosis carrier screening.^[6]

While methods for carrier screening of conditions individually may have been onerous in the past, contemporary molecular techniques including next-generation sequencing allow simultaneously identifying carriers of a wide range of disorders efficiently and inexpensively.

CARRIER SCREENING PANELS

Non-targeted carrier panels may be used to screen individuals or couples for disorders and range in size from two to hundreds of genes. The disorders included many large screening panels may also span a range of disease severity or phenotype. Arguments for carrier screening using large panels include potential issues in assessing ethnicity, ability to identify more potential conditions, efficiency, and cost. However, there are possible downsides of screening individuals at low risk, including a potential for incorrect variant ascertainment and the consequences of screening for rare single-gene disorders in which the likely phenotype may be uncertain (e.g., due to variable expressivity and uncertain penetrance). The list of conditions included in carrier screening panels is not standardized. Although these panels generally include conditions assessed in risk-based screening, they often include many conditions that not routinely evaluated and for which there are no existing professional guidelines.

REGULATORY STATUS

Clinical laboratories may develop and validate tests in-house and market them as a laboratory service; laboratory-developed tests (LDTs) must meet the general regulatory standards of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA). Laboratories that offer LDTs must be licensed by CLIA for high-complexity testing. To date, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has chosen not to require any regulatory review of this test.

A number of commercially available genetic tests exist for carrier screening. They range from testing for individual diseases, to small panels designed to address testing based on ethnicity as recommended by practice guidelines (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics), to large panels that test for numerous diseases.

EVIDENCE SUMMARY

Validation of the clinical use of any genetic test focuses on three main principles:

1. The analytic validity of the test, which refers to the technical accuracy of the test in detecting a mutation that is present or in excluding a mutation that is absent;
2. The clinical validity of the test, which refers to the diagnostic performance of the test (sensitivity, specificity, positive and negative predictive values) in detecting clinical disease; and
3. The clinical utility of the test, which refers to how the results of the diagnostic test will be used to change management of the patient, and whether these changes in management lead to clinically important improvements in health outcomes.

RISK-BASED CARRIER SCREENING

The purpose of carrier screening is testing asymptomatic individuals to identify those who are heterozygous for serious or lethal single-gene disorders with the purpose of informing the risk of conceiving an affected child and to inform reproductive decisions.

Risk-based carrier screening is typically based on disease and carrier risk determined by family history, ethnicity, and race. Screening is recommended when carrier rates in a population approach or exceed those judged to offer clinical utility.

This evidence review applies only if there is no separate evidence review that outlines specific criteria for carrier screening. If a separate evidence review exists, then criteria for medical necessity in that evidence review supersede the evidence herein.

Clinical Validity

The clinical validity of a carrier screening test is evaluated by its ability to predict carrier status. Clinical validity is influenced by carrier prevalence, penetrance, expressivity, and environmental factors.^[1] Different variants in the same gene can result in different phenotypes (allelic heterogeneity) in most genetic disorders and impact clinical validity. The clinical sensitivity and predictive value of different assay methods (e.g., next-generation sequencing [NGS], microarray) vary depending on the proportion of known pathogenic variants evaluated. For example, clinical sensitivities for disorders in the previously mentioned Jewish panel ranged from 90% to 99% for all but Usher syndrome type 1F (62%). Clinical sensitivity will also vary according to the number of known variants tested. Additionally, not all testing strategies rely solely on genetic testing—for example, biochemical testing for hexosaminidase A may be the initial test to screen for Tay-Sachs carrier status. Finally, following a negative carrier screening test, the estimated residual risk of being a carrier reflects both the pretest probability, that is, the estimated carrier prevalence in the population, and the sensitivity and specificity of the test. Consequently, limitations in clinical validity are quantified in residual risk estimates.

Clinical Utility

The clinical utility of carrier screening is defined by the extent to which reproductive decision making or choices are informed, increasing “reproductive autonomy and choice”^[1]. Evidence to support the clinical utility carrier screening for conditions with the highest carrier rates e.g., Tay-Sachs disease, CF) among specific ethnic groups is robust concerning the effect on reproductive decision making.^[3, 7-9] For example, early studies of Tay-Sachs carrier screening in Ashkenazi Jews demonstrated a marked impact on reproductive decisions^[7, 9] and, after more than four decades of ethnicity-based carrier screening, most Tay-Sachs disease cases occur in non-Jewish individuals.^[8] As another example, a 2014 systematic review of CF carrier screening found that while individual carrier status “did not affect reproductive intentions or behaviors,” most couple carriers terminated affected fetuses.^[10] Similarly, a 2023 systematic review that included studies of both targeted and non-targeted carrier screening found that carriers of conditions classified as having a more severe impact were more likely to terminate pregnancy or opt for in vitro fertilization with preimplantation genetic testing.^[11]

A 2023 Canadian Health Technology Assessment reviewed 107 studies on carrier screening programs for cystic fibrosis, fragile X syndrome, hemoglobinopathies, thalassemia, and spinal muscular atrophy in individuals considering or already pregnant.^[12] The findings indicated that carrier screening likely influences reproductive decisions (GRADE: Moderate) and may reduce anxiety in pregnant individuals, though evidence was uncertain (GRADE: Very low). The main reproductive decision reported was whether at-risk couples opted for prenatal diagnostic testing to confirm if pregnancy was affected. Most individuals with confirmed affected pregnancies chose termination. For future pregnancies, some individuals opted for natural conception with potential termination, while others chose in vitro fertilization with preimplantation genetic testing. With regards to preconception carrier screening, few studies assessed plans for in vitro fertilization, prenatal testing, adoption, or pregnancy avoidance.

CARRIER SCREENING PANEL TESTING

The purpose of carrier screening panel testing in asymptomatic individuals is to identify those who are heterozygous for any of a large number of serious or lethal single-gene disorders, with the purpose of evaluating the risk of conceiving an affected child and to inform reproductive decisions.

Clinical Validity

For conditions where pathogenic variants would be included in a risk-based genotyping carrier test, clinical validity should be similar or approach that of the targeted test. Outside those defined variants (or when genotyping includes only others with strong evidence supporting pathogenicity), for the purposes of carrier screening pathogenicity, penetrance, and expressivity together with disease severity require accurate definition. Subsumed in clinical validity is the effect of a condition's severity on quality of life, impairments, and the need for intervention.

The ACOG (2017) Committee Opinion No. 690 included the following related to large carrier screening panels, also known as expanded carrier screening:^[13]

“Expanded carrier screening does not replace previous risk-based screening recommendations.”

Based on consensus, characteristics of included disorders should meet the following criteria:

- Carrier frequency $\geq 1/100$
- Well-defined phenotype
- Detrimental effect on the quality of life, cause cognitive or physical impairment, require surgical or medical intervention, or have an onset early in life
- Not be primarily associated with a disease of adult-onset

The ACOG opinion provided a detailed example of a panel that includes testing for 22 conditions that meet these criteria: α -thalassemia, β -thalassemia, Bloom syndrome, Canavan disease, CF, familial dysautonomia, familial hyperinsulinism, Fanconi anemia C, fragile X syndrome, galactosemia, Gaucher disease, glycogen storage disease type 1A, Joubert syndrome, medium-chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency, maple syrup urine disease types 1A and 1B, mucopolidosis IV, Niemann-Pick disease type A, phenylketonuria, sickle cell anemia, Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome, spinal muscular atrophy, and Tay-Sachs disease.

Many of the genes included in large carrier screening panels do not meet the prevalence criterion in all ethnic groups.^[14] However, self-reports of ethnicity may not be consistent with genetic ancestry in substantial proportion of individuals, particularly in countries with intermixed ethnicity such as the United States.^[15-17] A study by Guo and Gregg (2019) found that screening for the 40 genes that met the criterion of at least 1% prevalence in any ethnic group identified nearly all of the 2.52% of couples who would have been identified as at-risk with a 415-gene panel,^[18] while Stevens (2017) found that over half of the genes included in carrier screening panels from different laboratories did not meet the prevalence criterion.^[14]

Evidence on larger carrier screening panels (generally >100 disorders) includes case series,^[19-22] and modeling studies^[14, 23, 24] that estimated the incremental number of potentially affected fetuses if panel screening replaced a risk-based approach. Carrier rates with these panels ranged from 19% to 36% in individuals and from 0.2% to 1.2% of couples. Generally, as the size of the panel increases (risk-based to different sizes of expanded panels), the percentage

of patients who are identified as carriers for any recessive disease also increases. With a 218-disorder panel, about one in three individuals were identified as a carrier of a recessive single-gene disorder. Not all publications specified whether the disorders identified met the ACOG criteria; Peyser (2019) commented that some diseases may have late-onset as well as variable phenotypes.^[21]

Ben-Shachar (2019) considered all 176 conditions in a commercially-available panel to meet ACOG criteria, except for the criterion of a carrier rate exceeding 1 in 100.^[25] Examination of the genes included in the panel suggests potential variability in penetrance and expressivity. In another analysis, medical geneticists evaluated disease severity associated with the 176 genes in the panel.^[26] After evaluation of published literature and mapping according to ACOG severity criteria, the investigators concluded that 65 of the genes (36.9%) were associated with profound symptoms (shortened lifespan in infancy/childhood/adolescence and intellectual disability), 65 genes (36.9%) were associated with severe symptoms (shortened lifespan in infancy, childhood, or adolescence, or intellectual disability; or at least one of the following: shortened lifespan in premature adulthood, impaired mobility, internal physical manifestation with three or more traits: shortened lifespan in premature adulthood, impaired mobility, internal physical manifestation, sensory impairment, immunodeficiency/cancer, mental illness, or dysmorphic features), and 42 genes were associated with moderate symptoms. Moderate severity was classified as shortened lifespan in premature adulthood, impaired mobility, or internal physical manifestation; or at least one of the following: sensory impairment, immunodeficiency/cancer, mental illness, or dysmorphic features. It is unclear if these would meet the ACOG criteria of a well-defined phenotype, a detrimental effect on quality of life, cause cognitive or physical impairment, require surgical or medical intervention, or have an onset early in life.

Haque (2016) modeled the potential impact that expanded carrier screening adoption might have had for a cohort of individuals undergoing testing between January 2012 and July 2015.^[23] Data were derived from 346,790 individuals undergoing routine carrier screening. Tests were performed using genotyping (n=308,668) and NGS (n=38,122). The severity of the 94 conditions included in the panel was considered profound according to literature review and algorithm devised by Lazarin (2014).^[27] The incremental increase in the rate of potentially affected fetuses identified with carrier panel testing varied according to self-reported ethnicity. Out of 100,000 screened, the model predicted that the screening would identify 392 (95% confidence interval [CI] 366 to 420) affected fetuses compared to 175 (95% CI 164 to 186) with guideline-directed screening in Ashkenazi Jews – a difference of 217. Among African Americans, the incremental increase was 47 in 100,000 (364 vs. 317) and for those of Northern European descent, 104 in 100,000 (159 vs. 55). The authors concluded that expanded screening "may increase the detection of carrier status for a variety of potentially serious genetic conditions compared with current recommendations from professional societies. Prospective studies comparing current standard-of-care carrier screening with expanded carrier screening in at-risk populations are warranted before expanded screening is adopted."

A subsequent report by this group (Beauchamp [2018]) compared the detection rate of an large carrier sequencing panel (Counsyl) with a targeted family screen.^[24] The panel was designed for maximizing per-disease sensitivity for diseases categorized as severe or profound. Specificity of variant classification was maximized by comparison of variant classification with at least two other labs. In the model, the targeted panel detected

approximately half the maximal disease risk while the expanded panel was projected to determine 92% of the total risk, with 183 affected conceptions per 100,000 U.S. births.

Although the results of these studies are consistent with larger screening panels being able to identify more fetuses potentially affected by conditions than guideline-directed targeted screening, there are caveats to consider, as discussed in the accompanying editorial and subsequent correspondence on the Haque study.^[28, 29] Specifically:

- There may be limited genotype-phenotype data for the additional disorders included.
- The severity of some conditions is variable and accurately informing reproductive decisions potentially problematic (short-chain acyl CoA dehydrogenase deficiency provided as an example).
- A disorder such as phenylketonuria is treatable and detected by newborn screening yet included in the panel.
- It was also noted that fragile X syndrome screening in the absence of a family history (i.e., risk-based) is not recommended by professional guidelines. Widespread screening could have unintended consequences, including unnecessary invasive prenatal testing, labeling of newborns, and for some effectively screening for diseases of adult-onset (e.g., premature ovarian failure and tremor-ataxia dementia syndrome among males), which is contrary to accepted ethical convention.

Assessing the pathogenicity of sequence variants for rare disorders can be challenging, even when guidelines are followed, because laboratories may not provide the same interpretations. For example, Amendola (2016) compared interpretations of nine variants (pathogenic to benign associated with Mendelian disorders) among nine diagnostic laboratories and 90 variants in three of them.^[30] They found good concordance between the laboratory's methods for determining pathogenicity and the ACMG-AMP criteria (Krippendorff's $\alpha=0.91$; concordance 79%). However, across laboratories, there was only 34% concordance of either classification system, and for 22%, there were differences could have affected medical management.

Strom (2011) reported on an example of inclusion of a “nonclassical” CF variant (p.L997F) in a carrier screening panel.^[31] In a database of approximately 2,500 CF sequencing analyses, four compound heterozygous patients carrying a pathogenic CF allele and the p.L997F variant were identified. Of these, three were asymptomatic at ages between 28 and 60 months. The remaining patient was 10 years old with atypical CF. Another compound heterozygous patient having an allele with the p.L997F variant and another deletion had classical CF. The authors concluded that including the variant in a screening panel could lead to “poorly informed reproductive decisions based on incorrect assumptions.”

As noted by Henneman (2016) "There is no general agreement on classification of genetic disorders based on the severity of disease."^[1]

Clinical Utility

In addition to clinical validity—a well-defined predictable risk that the offspring will be affected by severe phenotype—to offer greater clinical utility than recommended risk-based approaches, carrier screening panels must:

1. Correctly identify more carrier couples of those conditions than recommended risk-based screening (higher clinical sensitivity while maintaining specificity [no change in false positives]);
2. Inform reproductive decisions more effectively than recommended risk-based carrier screening.

Kirk (2024) published the results of a nationwide Australian study that assessed the feasibility, acceptability, and outcomes of couple-based reproductive genetic carrier screening offered before or early in pregnancy as part of the Mackenzie's Mission project.^[32] As part of the enrollment process, study participants reviewed educational materials about reproductive carrier screening, were provided a decision-making tool, and completed a research survey. The genetic testing included over 1,200 genes, and bioinformatics analysis was used to evaluate the results from both reproductive partners to limit reporting to only variant combinations that were predicted to result in either serious early-onset conditions, or conditions for which early intervention can improve clinical outcomes. Of 10,038 enrolled couples, 9,107 (90.7%) completed screening, and 175 (1.9%) were newly identified as having an increased chance of having a child with a genetic condition. Pathogenic variants were identified in 90 genes, 74.3% of which were autosomal recessive. Three months after receiving the results, 76.6% of these couples had used or intended to use reproductive interventions to avoid having an affected child. Anxiety levels were higher among at-risk couples, though median decisional regret was low across all groups, and this screening was deemed acceptable by 98.9% of participants.

Several surveys studies in the United States have evaluated patients' perspectives and reproductive behaviors concerning carrier screening panels (see Table 1). Populations among the studies differed, with some studies including only women known to be carriers and some studies included all pregnant woman, regardless of carrier status. Due to the heterogeneity of the populations and outcomes, combining and summarizing results is not appropriate.

Table 1. Relevant Clinical Utility Studies

Study	Participants	Number	Outcomes	Results
Ghiossi (2018) ^[33]	Couples in which both partners carry genes for the same recessive disease who had received ECS	537 eligible couples 64 (12%) completed survey	Action (defined as IVF with PDG or prenatal diagnosis) No action	60% reported taking action following ECS results 40% reported taking no action following results
Propst (2018) ^[34]	Pregnant women undergoing prenatal counseling prior to an aneuploidy screening	80 women: • 40 elected ECS • 40 declined ECS	Reasons for declining or electing ECS Reproductive planning	Reasons for declining: • Not at risk (77%) • Small chance that both in couple are carriers (60%) • Results would not change reproductive planning (37%) • Too anxious if carrier test was positive (27%) Reasons for electing: • Want to know risk (90%)

Study	Participants	Number	Outcomes	Results
				• Want all information available about genetic risk (72%) • Want to make informed reproductive decisions (61%) • Want to prepare for special needs child (33%)
Johansen Taber (2018) ^[35]	Women in couples where both partners carry genes for the same recessive condition, who had received ECS 54% were for IVF	1,701 eligible couples 391 women completed survey	Reproductive planning	77% of patients screened prior to pregnancy planned or pursued actions to avoid having affected offspring 37% of patients screened during pregnancy pursued prenatal diagnostic testing Reasons for declining prenatal testing were: • Fear of miscarriage • Belief that termination would not be pursued for a positive diagnosis • Perception that risk of an affected pregnancy was low

ECS: expanded carrier screening; IVF: in vitro fertilization; PGD: preimplantation genetic diagnosis

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

For individuals who are asymptomatic but at risk for having offspring with inherited single-gene disorders who receive risk-based carrier screening, the evidence includes studies supporting analytic validity, clinical validity, and clinical utility. Relevant outcomes are test accuracy, test validity, and changes in reproductive decision making. Results of carrier testing can be used to inform reproductive decisions such as preimplantation genetic diagnosis, in vitro fertilization, not having a child, invasive prenatal testing, adoption, or pregnancy termination.

For individuals who are either at increased risk or population risk for having offspring with an inherited recessive genetic disorder who receive large carrier screening panel testing, the evidence includes studies supporting clinical validity and clinical utility. Relevant outcomes are test validity and changes in reproductive decision making. Studies have found that larger panels can identify more carriers and more potentially affected fetuses. Many of the genes in large panels do not meet the ACOG consensus-driven criteria of at least 1% carrier rate for all ethnic groups. However, pan-ethnic testing can address the discrepancies between self-reported ethnicity and genetic ancestry in an ethnically mixed population. As panels become larger the likelihood of being identified as a carrier of a rare genetic disorder increases, leading to an at-risk couple rate of nearly 2% for having an offspring with a recessive or X-linked disorder. Many, though notably not all, of these rare genetic disorders are associated with severe or profound symptoms including shortened lifespan and intellectual or physical disability. With adequate genetic counseling panel screening can inform reproductive choices, and observational studies have shown that a majority of couples would consider intervention that depends on the severity of the condition. Carrier screening for severe recessive and X-

linked genetic disorders with a 1% carrier rate in specific populations can have a significant clinical impact.

However, the evidence to support the clinical validity of carrier screening beyond risk-based recommendations is limited and accompanied by some concerns regarding interlaboratory agreement of variant pathogenicity assessment, the validity of disease severity classifications for rare disorders, and uncertainty that the offspring will be affected by a severe phenotype for all the disorders included in a panel.

PRACTICE GUIDELINE SUMMARY

RISK-BASED CONDITION-SPECIFIC SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) have issued numerous guidelines on conditions discussed herein. Table 2 provides the recommendations by indication for risk-based screening.

Table 2. ACOG and ACMG Recommendations for Risk-Based Screening

Society	Recommendation	Year
Cystic fibrosis^a		
ACOG	"Cystic fibrosis carrier screening should be offered to all women considering pregnancy or are pregnant." ^[36]	2017
ACMG	Current ACMG guidelines use a 23-variant panel and were developed after assessing the initial experiences on implementation of cystic fibrosis screening into clinical practice. Using the 23-variant panel, the detection rate is 94% in the Ashkenazi Jewish population and 88% in the non-Hispanic white general population. ^[37]	2013
Spinal muscular atrophy^b		
ACOG	"Screening for spinal muscular atrophy should be offered to all women considering pregnancy or are pregnant. In patients with a family history of spinal muscular atrophy, molecular testing reports of the affected individual and carrier testing of the related parent should be reviewed, if possible, before testing. If the reports are not available, SMN1 deletion testing should be recommended for the low-risk partner." ^[36]	2017
ACMG	Because spinal muscular atrophy is present in all populations, carrier testing should be offered to all couples regardless of race or ethnicity. ^[38]	2013
Tay-Sachs disease		
ACOG	"Screening for Tay-Sachs disease should be offered when considering pregnancy or during pregnancy if either member of a couple is of Ashkenazi Jewish, French-Canadian, or Cajun descent. Those with a family history consistent with Tay-Sachs disease should also be screened" ^[36]	2017
Hemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease, α- and β-thalassemia)		
ACOG	"A complete blood count with red blood cell indices should be performed in all women who are currently pregnant to assess not only their risk of anemia but also to allow assessment for risk of a hemoglobinopathy. Ideally, this testing also should be offered to women before pregnancy. A hemoglobin electrophoresis should be performed in addition to a complete blood count if there is suspicion of hemoglobinopathy based on ethnicity (African, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Southeast Asian, or West Indian descent). If red blood cell indices indicate a low mean corpuscular hemoglobin or mean corpuscular volume, hemoglobin electrophoresis also should be performed." ^[36]	2017
Fragile X syndrome		

Society	Recommendation	Year
ACOG	“Fragile X premutation carrier screening is recommended for women with a family history of fragile X-related disorders or intellectual disability suggestive of fragile X syndrome and who are considering pregnancy or are currently pregnant. If a woman has unexplained ovarian insufficiency or failure or an elevated follicle-stimulating hormone level before age 40 years, fragile X carrier screening is recommended to determine whether she has an FMR1 premutation.” ^[36]	2017

ACMG: American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics; ACOG: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

^a Carrier rates: Ashkenazi Jews 1/24, non-Hispanic white 1/25, Hispanic white 1/58, African American 1/61, Asian American 1/94.

^b General population carrier rate: 1/40 to 1/60.

Ashkenazi Jewish Populations

Individuals of Ashkenazi Jewish descent have high carrier rates for multiple conditions — cumulatively between one in four and one in five when all disorders are considered.^[39]

Recommendations for carrier screening for Ashkenazi Jewish individuals by ACOG^[36] and ACMG^[39] are summarized in Table 3. According to ACMG, if only one member of the couple is Jewish, ideally, that individual should be tested first. If the Jewish partner has a positive carrier test result, the other partner (regardless of ethnic background) should be screened for that particular disorder. One Jewish grandparent is sufficient to offer testing.

Table 3. ACMG (2008, 2013) and ACOG (2017) Carrier Screening Recommendations for Individuals of Ashkenazi Jewish Descent^[36, 39]

Condition	Incidence (Lifetime)	Carrier Rate	ACMG (2008, 2013)	ACOG (2017)
Tay-Sachs disease	1/3000	1/30	R	R
Canavan disease	1/6400	1/40	R	R
Cystic fibrosis	1/2500-3000	1/29	R	R
Familial dysautonomia	1/3600	1/32	R	R
Fanconi anemia (group C)	1/32,000	1/89	R	C
Niemann-Pick disease type A	1/32,000	1/90	R	C
Bloom syndrome	1/40,000	1/100	R	C
Mucopolidosis IV	1/62,500	1/127	R	C
Gaucher disease	1/900	1/15	R	C
Familial hyperinsulinism		1/52		C
Glycogen storage disease type I		1/71		C
Joubert syndrome		1/92		C
Maple syrup urine disease		1/81		C
Usher syndrome		≤ 1/40		C

ACMG: American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics; ACOG: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; C: should be considered; R: recommended.

EXPANDED CARRIER SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

In 2017, ACOG made the following recommendations on carrier screening strategies:^[13]

“Ethnic-specific, pan-ethnic, and expanded carrier screening are acceptable strategies for prepregnancy and prenatal carrier screening. Each obstetrician-gynecologist or other

health care provider or practice should establish a standard approach that is consistently offered to and discussed with each patient, ideally before pregnancy. After counseling, a patient may decline any or all carrier screening.”

“Expanded carrier screening does not replace previous risk-based screening recommendations.”

Based on “consensus,” characteristics of included disorders should meet the following criteria:

- carrier frequency $\geq 1/100$
- “well-defined phenotype”
- “detrimental effect on quality of life, cause cognitive or physical impairment, require surgical or medical intervention, or have an onset early in life”
- not be primarily associated with a disease of adult onset.

ACOG also noted that expanded panels may not offer the most sensitive detection method for some conditions such as Tay-Sachs disease (i.e., they will miss carrier state in up to 10% of low-risk populations) or hemoglobinopathies.

ACOG also provided a detailed example of a carrier screening panel that includes testing for 22 conditions: α -thalassemia, β -thalassemia, Bloom syndrome, Canavan disease, cystic fibrosis, familial dysautonomia, familial hyperinsulinism, Fanconi anemia C, fragile X syndrome, galactosemia, Gaucher disease, glycogen storage disease type 1A, Joubert syndrome, medium-chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency, maple syrup urine disease types 1A and 1B, mucopolysaccharidosis IV, Niemann-Pick disease type A, phenylketonuria, sickle cell anemia, Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome, spinal muscular atrophy, and Tay-Sachs disease.

In 2015, a joint statement on expanded carrier screening panels was issued by ACOG, ACMG, the National Society of Genetic Counselors, the Perinatal Quality Foundation, and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine.^[2] The statement was not intended to replace current screening guidelines but to demonstrate an approach for health care providers and laboratories seeking to or currently offering these panels. Some points considered included the following:

- “Expanded carrier screening panels include most of the conditions recommended in current guidelines. However, molecular methods used in expanded carrier screening are not as accurate as methods recommended in current guidelines for the following conditions:
 - a. Screening for hemoglobinopathies requires use of mean corpuscular volume and hemoglobin electrophoresis.
 - b. Tay-Sachs disease carrier testing has a low detection rate in non-Ashkenazi populations using molecular testing for the three common Ashkenazi mutations. Currently, hexosaminidase A enzyme analysis on blood is the best method to identify carriers in all ethnicities.”
- “Patients should be aware that newborn screening is mandated by all states and can identify some genetic conditions in the newborn. However, newborn screening may include a different panel of conditions than ECS. Newborn screening does not usually detect children who are carriers for the conditions being screened so will not necessarily identify carrier parents at increased risk.”

- “Expanded carrier screening can be performed by genotyping or by DNA sequencing. Genotyping searches for known pathogenic and likely pathogenic variants. Sequencing analyzes the entire coding region of the gene and identifies alterations from the normal sequence. Although genotyping includes only selected variants, sequencing has the potential to identify not only benign, but also likely benign variants. Sequencing also can identify variants of uncertain significance....
- ECS panels should only include “genes and variants” with “a well-understood relationship with a phenotype.... When the carrier frequency and detection rate are both known, residual risk estimation should be provided in laboratory reports.”
- Conditions with unclear value on preconception and prenatal screening panels include α_1 -antitrypsin, methylene tetrahydrofolate reductase, and hereditary hemochromatosis.

The statement also included a set of recommendations for screened conditions^[2]:

1. “The condition being screened for should be a health problem that encompasses one or more of the following:
 - a. Cognitive disability.
 - b. Need for surgical or medical intervention.
 - c. Effect on quality of life.
 - d. Conditions for which a prenatal diagnosis may result in:
 - i. Prenatal intervention to improve perinatal outcome and immediate care of the neonate.
 - ii. Delivery management to optimize newborn and infant outcomes such as immediate, specialized neonatal care.
 - iii. Prenatal education of parents regarding special needs care after birth; this often may be accomplished most effectively before birth.”

American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics

In 2021, the ACMG issued a position statement on screening for autosomal recessive and X-linked conditions during pregnancy and preconception.^[40] This position statement replaces the 2013 ACMG position statement on prenatal and preconception expanded carrier testing,^[41] and incorporates ACOG Committee Opinion 691 recommendations.^[36]

The ACMG consensus group made the following recommendations:

- Replacing the term “expanded carrier screening” with “carrier screening” as no precise definition for “expanded” exists
- Establishing a tier-based system of carrier screening, to enhance communication and precision while advancing equity in carrier screening (see Table 4 below)
- Carrier screening paradigms should be ethnic and population neutral and more inclusive of diverse populations to promote equity and inclusion
- Offering Tier 3 carrier screening to all pregnant patients and those planning a pregnancy
- Male partners of pregnant women and those planning a pregnancy may be offered Tier 3 carrier screening for autosomal recessive conditions when carrier screening is performed simultaneously with their female partner

- Consider offering Tier 4 screening when a pregnancy stems from a known or possible consanguineous relationship (second cousins or closer) or when family or personal medical history warrants.

The ACMG does not recommend:

- Offering Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 screening, because these do not provide equitable evaluation of all racial/ethnic groups
- Routine offering of Tier 4 panels.

Table 4. American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics Tiered Approach to Carrier Screening

Tier	Screening Recommendations
1	Cystic fibrosis + spinal muscular atrophy + risk-based screening
2	≥1/100 carrier frequency + Tier 1
3	≥1/200 carrier frequency + Tier 2 (includes X-linked conditions)
4	<1/200 carrier frequency + Tier 3 (genes and conditions will vary by lab)

X-linked genes considered appropriate for carrier screening in Tier 3 include: *ABCD1*, *AFF2*, *ARX*, *DMD*, *F8*, *F9*, *FMR1*, *GLA*, *L1CAM*, *MID1*, *NR0B1*, *OTC*, *PLP1*, *RPGR*, *RS1*, and *SLC6A8*. Tables in the ACMG position statement provide additional details regarding appropriate autosomal recessive conditions for screening and their associated carrier frequencies.

The ACMG recommends the following components regarding laboratory reporting of carrier screening panels:

- The content of carrier screen panels and corresponding ACMG tier must be described
- The testing approach and detectable variant types should be clearly stated
- Not reporting residual risk estimates
- Only reporting pathogenic and likely pathogenic variants
- Interpretation should consider genes and variants with multiple disease associations
- Reporting of a variant of uncertain significance (VUS) only in the partners of identified carriers and only with consent of the patient.

National Society of Genetic Counselors

The National Society of Genetic Counselors published a guideline in 2023 that included a conditional recommendation that “the option of expanded carrier screening as an alternative to ethnicity-based carrier screening for all individuals considering reproduction and for all pregnant reproductive pairs.”^[42] There were no specific criteria related to the inclusion of specific conditions in such screening.

SUMMARY

Reproductive carrier screening is performed to identify people at risk of having children with inherited single-gene disorders. Carriers are usually not at risk of developing the disease but can pass disease-causing gene variants to their offspring. There is enough research to show that targeted, risk-based carrier screening can help patients make informed reproductive decisions and improve health outcomes. Many clinical guidelines based on research

recommend carrier screening for certain disorders in patients at risk. Therefore, carrier screening may be considered medically necessary for patients that meet the policy criteria.

There is enough research to show that targeted carrier testing is unlikely to improve health outcomes and inform reproductive decision making in individuals that are not at increased risk of being carriers for a disorder. Therefore, targeted carrier screening is considered not medically necessary for patients that do not meet the policy criteria.

There is enough evidence to show that non-targeted carrier screening panels can inform reproductive decisions and improve health outcomes when the genes in these panels meet certain criteria. This includes testing that is limited to disorders with an estimated carrier frequency of at least 1 in 200, for which the natural history of the disease is well understood and there is a reasonable likelihood that the disease is one with high morbidity, when the genetic test has adequate clinical validity to guide clinical decision making. Therefore, non-targeted carrier screening panels may be considered medically necessary when the policy criteria are met.

There is not enough research to show that carrier screening for certain genes or disorders can provide information that can improve reproductive decision making and overall health outcomes for patients and their children. While large carrier screening panels can analyze many genes simultaneously, the results they may provide may include information on genetic variants that are of unclear clinical significance, or which would not be helpful for patients making reproductive decisions. These results may potentially cause harm by leading to additional unnecessary interventions and anxiety. Therefore, non-targeted carrier screening panels that do not meet the policy criteria are considered investigational.

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CODES

NOTE: If CPT tier 1 or tier 2 molecular pathology codes are available for the specific test, they should be used. If the test has not been codified by CPT, the unlisted molecular pathology code 81479 would be used.

Codes	Number	Description
CPT	0236U	SMN1 (survival of motor neuron 1, telomeric) and SMN2 (survival of motor neuron 2, centromeric) (eg, spinal muscular atrophy) full gene analysis, including small sequence changes in exonic and intronic regions, duplications and deletions, and mobile element insertions
	0400U	Obstetrics (expanded carrier screening), 145 genes by next generation sequencing, fragment analysis and multiplex ligation dependent probe amplification, DNA, reported as carrier positive or negative
	0691U	Carrier screening (cystic fibrosis, spinal muscular atrophy, beta hemoglobinopathies [including sickle cell disease], alpha thalassemia, and Duchenne muscular dystrophy), genomic sequence analysis panel, 6 genes (CFTR, SMN1, HBB, HBA1, HBA2, DMD)
	81161	DMD (dystrophin) (eg, Duchenne/Becker muscular dystrophy) deletion analysis, and duplication analysis, if performed
	81200	ASPA (aspartoacylase) (eg, Canavan disease) gene analysis, common variants (eg, E285A, Y231X)
	81205	BCKDHB (branched-chain keto acid dehydrogenase E1, beta polypeptide) (eg, maple syrup urine disease) gene analysis, common variants (eg, R183P, G278S, E422X)
	81209	BLM (Bloom syndrome, RecQ helicase-like) (eg, Bloom syndrome) gene analysis, 2281del6ins7 variant
	81220	CFTR (cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator) (eg, cystic fibrosis) gene analysis; common variants (eg, ACMG/ACOG guidelines)
	81221	;known familial variants
	81222	;duplication/deletion variants
	81223	;full gene sequence
	81224	;intron 8 poly-T analysis (eg, male infertility)

Codes	Number	Description
	81242	FANCC (Fanconi anemia, complementation group C) (eg, Fanconi anemia, type C) gene analysis, common variant (eg, IVS4+4A>T)
	81243	FMR1 (Fragile X messenger ribonucleoprotein 1) (eg, fragile X syndrome, X-linked intellectual disability [XLID]) gene analysis; evaluation to detect abnormal (eg, expanded) alleles
	81244	FMR1 (fragile X messenger ribonucleoprotein 1) (eg, fragile X syndrome, X-linked intellectual disability [XLID]) gene analysis; characterization of alleles (eg, expanded size and promoter methylation status)
	81250	G6PC (glucose-6-phosphatase, catalytic subunit) (eg, Glycogen storage disease, type 1a, von Gierke disease) gene analysis, common variants (eg, R83C, Q347X)
	81251	GBA (glucosidase, beta, acid) (eg, Gaucher disease) gene analysis, common variants (eg, N370S, 84GG, L444P, IVS2+1G>A)
	81252	GJB2 (gap junction protein, beta 2, 26kDa, connexin 26) (eg, nonsyndromic hearing loss) gene analysis; full gene sequence
	81253	;known familial variants
	81254	GJB6 (gap junction protein, beta 6, 30kDa, connexin 30) (eg, nonsyndromic hearing loss) gene analysis, common variants (eg, 309kb [del(GJB6-D13S1830)] and 232kb [del(GJB6-D13S1854)])
	81255	HEXA (hexosaminidase A [alpha polypeptide]) (eg, Tay-Sachs disease) gene analysis, common variants (eg, 1278insTATC, 1421+1G>C, G269S)
	81257	HBA1/HBA2 (alpha globin 1 and alpha globin 2) (eg, alpha thalassemia, Hb Bart hydrops fetalis syndrome, HbH disease), gene analysis, for common deletions or variant (eg, Southeast Asian, Thai, Filipino, Mediterranean, alpha3.7, alpha4.2, alpha20.5, and Constant Spring)
	81260	IKBKAP (inhibitor of kappa light polypeptide gene enhancer in B-cells, kinase complex-associated protein) (eg, familial dysautonomia) gene analysis, common variants (eg, 2507+6T>C, R696P)
	81290	MCOLN1 (mucolipin 1) (eg, Mucopolipidosis, type IV) gene analysis, common variants (eg, IVS3-2A>G, del6.4kb)
	81329	SMN1 (survival of motor neuron 1, telomeric) (eg, spinal muscular atrophy) gene analysis; dosage/deletion analysis (eg, carrier testing), includes SMN2 (survival of motor neuron 2, centromeric) analysis, if performed
	81330	SMPD1(sphingomyelin phosphodiesterase 1, acid lysosomal) (eg, Niemann-Pick disease, Type A) gene analysis, common variants (eg, R496L, L302P, fsP330)
	81336	SMN1 (survival of motor neuron 1, telomeric) (eg, spinal muscular atrophy) gene analysis; full gene sequence
	81337	SMN1 (survival of motor neuron 1, telomeric) (eg, spinal muscular atrophy) gene analysis; known familial sequence variant(s)
	81400	MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY PROCEDURE LEVEL 1
	81401	MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY PROCEDURE LEVEL 2
	81402	MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY PROCEDURE LEVEL 3
	81403	MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY PROCEDURE LEVEL 4
	81404	MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY PROCEDURE LEVEL 5
	81405	MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY PROCEDURE LEVEL 6
	81406	MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY PROCEDURE LEVEL 7
	81407	MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY PROCEDURE LEVEL 8
	81408	MOLECULAR PATHOLOGY PROCEDURE LEVEL 9
	81412	Ashkenazi Jewish associated disorders (eg, Bloom syndrome, Canavan disease, cystic fibrosis, familial dysautonomia, Fanconi anemia group C, Gaucher disease, Tay-Sachs disease), genomic sequence analysis panel, must

Codes	Number	Description
		include sequencing of at least 9 genes, including ASPA, BLM, CFTR, FANCC, GBA, HEXA, IKBKAP, MCOLN1, and SMPD1
	81430	Hearing loss (eg, nonsyndromic hearing loss, Usher syndrome, Pendred syndrome); genomic sequence analysis panel, must include sequencing of at least 60 genes, including CDH23, CLRN1, GJB2, GPR98, MTRNR1, MYO7A, MYO15A, PCDH15, OTOF, SLC26A4, TMC1, TMPRSS3, USH1C, USH1G, USH2A, and WFS1
	81431	;duplication/deletion analysis panel, must include copy number analyses for STRC and DFNB1 deletions in GJB2 and GJB6 genes
	81434	Hereditary retinal disorders (eg, retinitis pigmentosa, Leber congenital amaurosis, cone-rod dystrophy), genomic sequence analysis panel, must include sequencing of at least 15 genes, including ABCA4, CNGA1, CRB1, EYS, PDE6A, PDE6B, PRPF31, PRPH2, RDH12, RHO, RP1, RP2, RPE65, RPGR, and USH2A
	81443	Genetic testing for severe inherited conditions (eg, cystic fibrosis, Ashkenazi Jewish-associated disorders [eg, Bloom syndrome, Canavan disease, Fanconi anemia type C, mucopolidosis type VI, Gaucher disease, Tay-Sachs disease], beta hemoglobinopathies, phenylketonuria, galactosemia), genomic sequence analysis panel, must include sequencing of at least 15 genes (eg, ACADM, ARSA, ASPA, ATP7B, BCKDHA, BCKDHB, BLM, CFTR, DHCR7, FANCC, G6PC, GAA, GALT, GBA, GBE1, HBB, HEXA, IKBKAP, MCOLN1, PAH)
	81479	Unlisted molecular pathology procedure
HPCPS	S3844	DNA analysis of the connexin 26 gene (GJB2) for susceptibility to congenital, profound deafness
	S3845	Genetic testing for alpha-thalassemia
	S3846	Genetic testing for hemoglobin E beta-thalassemia
	S3849	Genetic testing for Niemann-Pick disease
	S3850	Genetic testing for sickle cell anemia
	S3853	Genetic testing for myotonic muscular dystrophy

APPENDIX I: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

APPENDIX 1. DEFINITIONS

Carrier Screening

Carrier genetic screening is performed on people who display no symptoms for a genetic disorder but may be at risk for passing it on to their children.

A carrier of a genetic disorder has one abnormal allele for a disorder. When associated with an autosomal recessive or X-linked disorder, carriers of the causative variant are typically unaffected. When associated with an autosomal dominant disorder, the individual has one normal and one mutated copy of the gene and may be affected by the disorder, may be unaffected but at high risk of developing the disorder later in life, or the carrier may remain unaffected because of the sex-limited nature of the disorder. Homozygous-affected offspring (those who inherit the variant from both parents) manifest the disorder.

Compound Heterozygous

The presence of two different mutant alleles at a particular gene locus, one on each chromosome of a pair.

Expressivity/Expression

The degree to which a penetrant gene is expressed within an individual.

Genetic Testing

Genetic testing involves the analysis of chromosomes, DNA, RNA, genes, or gene products to detect inherited (germline) or noninherited (somatic) genetic variants related to disease or health.

Homozygous

Having the same alleles at a particular gene locus on homologous chromosomes (chromosome pairs).

Penetrance

The proportion of individuals with a variant that causes a disorder who exhibit clinical symptoms of that disorder.

Residual Risk

The risk that an individual is a carrier of a disease, but testing for carrier status of the disease is negative (e.g., if the individual carries a pathogenic variant not included in the test assay).

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