California Prenatal Screening Program (PNS)

General Description

The California Prenatal Screening Program (PNS) is one component of the California Genetic Disease Screening Program (GDSP). Currently, the GDSP runs the largest screening program in the world and have set the standard in delivering high-quality, cost-effective genetic services to all Californians.[1]

The activities of the PNS are directed toward detecting birth defects during pregnancy. PNS is working to assure prenatal screening services and follow-up diagnostic services, where indicated, are available to all pregnant women in California. Prenatal screening currently offers three types of screening tests to pregnant women in order to identify individuals who are at increased risk for carrying a fetus with a specific birth defect.

The screening tests include:

1) Quad Marker Screening - One blood specimen drawn at 15 weeks - 20 weeks of pregnancy (second trimester test).

2) Serum Integrated Screening - Combines a first trimester blood test screening result (10 weeks-13 weeks 6 days) with a second trimester blood test screening result (15 weeks-20 weeks).

3) Sequential Integrated Screening - Combines first and second blood test results with Nuchal Translucency (NT) ultrasound results. This type of ultrasound is done by clinicians with special training. It measures the back of the fetus' neck. This measurement helps screen for Down syndrome (trisomy 21). (Note: the Screening Program does not pay for NT ultrasounds).

The Prenatal Screening Program provides pregnant women with a risk assessment for open neural tube defects (NTD), Down syndrome (trisomy 21), trisomy 18 and SLOS (Smith-Lemli-Opitz Syndrome) through one or two blood tests. The screening test indicates risk, but does not diagnose fetal birth defects. For women with screening results indicating a high risk for a birth defect, the Program provides free follow-up diagnostic services at State-approved Prenatal Diagnosis Centers (PDCs) (PDF). Services offered at these Centers include genetic counseling, ultrasound, and amniocentesis. Participation in the screening testing and follow-up services is voluntary. The cost of the testing through the Prenatal Screening Program is $207.

Background

The California Prenatal Screening Program was developed by the Genetic Disease Screening Program, a division of the California Department of Public Health. The Program began in 1986 and it is linked to both the California Birth Defects Monitoring Program and California Biobank Program.

[1] http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/GDSP/Pages/default.aspx

Data Collection
Data are collected through blood samples and ultrasounds on an ongoing basis

Data Coverage
Data are collected for the entire state of California. Additional geographic information will be determined by California State IRB CalProtects.

Accessibility
Data released to researchers must be approved by an IRB. Terms of use and data restrictions to be determined by IRB.

Data Link
http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/pns/pages/default.aspx

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The PNS is funded as part of the CGSP. The California Department of Public Health, Center for Family Health administers the GDSP and is 100% fee supported.

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