

Good and bad news: Insurance companies expanding coverage of genetic tests

A year and a half ago, few health insurers would cover a noninvasive prenatal test — which draws blood from a pregnant woman to analyze fetal DNA — unless the pregnancy was considered high-risk, which usually meant the woman was over 35.

Today, at least 30 major U.S. insurers — including Anthem, Cigna and more than a dozen Blue Cross Blue Shield affiliates nationwide — cover the test for average-risk single-gestation pregnancies, expanding access to millions more people.

The turnaround is part of a broader move by insurers to pay for genetic tests and screenings. The technology is advancing quickly, and the cost of many types of tests is plummeting. Not all tests are covered. But increasingly, insurers are willing to cover screenings for genetic mutations linked to breast, colon and prostate cancer.

The trend has sparked concerns about the access insurers could have to the sensitive information such tests reveal.

“We are seeing more insurance companies cover genetic testing for two reasons: The prices are going down and the value is going up,” said Dan Mendelson, president of the Washington consulting firm Avalere Health. The growing coverage of such tests raises “some important and extremely socially relevant questions about how the information is used,” he added.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Insurers help make genetic testing widely available](#)