



LabCorp signs research agreement with drug company

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Oct. 23-- LabCorp has signed a research agreement with Medco Health Solutions to improve the understanding between individual genetics and the safety and efficiency of specific prescription drugs.

This research "can help physicians determine which drug will be most effective for particular patients," said Dr. Myla P. Lai-Goldman, executive vice president, chief scientific officer and medical director for LabCorp. "This will benefit patients and lower health care costs by improving outcomes, enhancing safety and reducing ineffective drug regimens." The research will be centered on tamoxifen, a drug that deprives certain tumors of estrogen needed for their growth, treats some forms of breast cancer and prevents the disease from occurring in some women at high risk for the condition, the company said in a press release.

About 10 percent of women currently using tamoxifen do not fully benefit from the drug because of variations in genes encoding drug metabolizing enzymes, the release stated.

Eric Lindblom, a spokesman for LabCorp, said that knowing the patient's genetic makeup can help identify risk factors for disease and determine the efficiency of certain drugs. It can also help determine the right dosage the patient needs based on how patients metabolize the drugs, he said.

LabCorp, Alamance County's largest employer, was one of the first companies in the industry to embrace genomic testing. It offers clinical tests ranging from routine blood analyses to HIV and genomic testing. The company recorded annual revenues of \$3.6 billion in 2006.

"These new tests can help ensure patients are getting the right medication at the right dosage, while also assisting to avoid adverse drug events," said Dr. Robert Epstein, chief medical officer with Medco.

New Jersey-based Medco is one of the nation's leading pharmacy benefit managers. Its 2006 total net revenues were over \$42 billion.

Lindblom said the agreement is part of LabCorp's strategy to advance the field of personalized medicine, an arena the company will continue expanding into in the future.

In February, LabCorp entered into an agreement with **ARCA Discovery** Inc., of Denver, to develop a commercial genetic test to aid in prescribing bucindolol, a genetically-targeted heart failure drug in development by ARCA.