

MEDIA RELEASE

13 May 2021:

\$107.5M for genetic testing for pregnancy a winner for women and families

Announced tonight in the Federal Health budget was support through Medicare funded genetic testing for women and families that have known genetic disorders, a real win for women and those planning and having families according to Australian Pathology.

These genetic tests for pre-implantation genetics and for genetic testing for those people who have identified abnormalities via ultrasound is a major step forward in assisting couples with their family planning decisions. It will also assist their doctors, their Obstetricians and their IVF providers, doctors and senior IVF scientists with all the data and evidence to help them to build their families with the best and most relevant genetic evidence available.

Australian Pathology Member, Genea Fertility initially submitted the application for pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) funding and are able to detect more than 350 genetic diseases.

"We pioneered PGD, our expertise and techniques are amongst the best in the world. Many clinics have followed our lead and modelled their approach to embryo biopsy on ours," Scientific Director Steven McArthur said.

"We congratulate the Government for responding to our submission and providing this much needed support," added Mr McArthur.

The Treasurer's budget put the role of private pathology front and centre, and this will make such a significant difference to women and families with these test now funded through Medicare, with no out of pocket costs to Australians for many important tests. Australian pathology members deliver the majority of pre-implantation genetic testing.

Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Professor Steve Robson regularly sees couples in his practice that would significantly benefit from these new tests.

"This is a great win for women and a great win for families" said Professor Steve Robson, Immediate Past President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

"Planning a family can be a difficult and stressful time, especially when parents already know they personally have, or one of their children has a genetic disorder. These tests will make such a difference to couples wishing to bring more children into their families." He said.

Whilst a major focus of the Health Budget included the role of Pathology in COVID pathology testing, the Federal Government tonight also supported the access for women and families

through this funding on Medicare of essential genetic tests, particularly in the area of antenatal and pre-natal care.

Australian Pathology CEO, Liesel Wett was also welcoming of the significant investment in new Pathology tests.

“These new genetic tests are the Pathology tests of the future, and will have a positive impact on the health of many women and couples planning families, through the funding of pre-implantation genetic testing where there are known serious familial genetic disorders that may prevent them from starting families.

It’s a great win for Australians, especially as Pathology has one of the highest bulk billing rates in the community of 99.6%, meaning there will now be no out of pocket costs for many tests.

“What a great win for all involved, and a true way the private sector is working with the Government to get these tests listed.” She said.

ENDS

Available for interview/ comment:

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ABOUT GENEA FERTILITY

Genea is one of Australia's leading providers for infertility, IVF and other assisted conception treatment with 35 years of experience in the field. The company has long been a fertility pioneer, with research and technologies developed in-house virtually doubling IVF success rates in the mid-nineties and continuing to improve outcomes today.

In Australia, Genea lead the way in investigating and developing PGD and our expertise and techniques are amongst the best in the world. Genea launched chromosome testing of embryos in 1995 and expanded that treatment to offering single gene testing in 1998. Genea's PGD testing now detects more than 350 genetic diseases.