

# ***KATHRYN E. WHITE, M.D.***

## **Gynecology & Infertility**

Dear Patient,

In light of revised cervical cancer screening guidelines/recommendations by the American Cancer Society (ACS) in November 2002 and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) in July 2003, we are pleased to inform you that our practice will be offering patients a test, *High-Risk HPV DNA*, designed to complement the PAP test. According to the ACS and ACOG, the incorporation of this test for *women age 30 and older* will provide extremely valuable insight in the early detection of cervical cancer and its precursors. It is not currently recommended that this be done routinely in women under the age of 30.

You are probably familiar with the PAP test, but may not be familiar with the *High-Risk HPV DNA* test, and the reasons why you should have this test performed along with your PAP test.

- HPV is a very common virus and the cause of cervical cancer.
- Most sexually active people are exposed to the virus at some point in their life. It is the most common sexually transmitted infection and does not generally cause symptoms. It is easily transmitted and condoms do not provide complete protection.
- If your test comes back positive, you should not blame your partner, because there is no way to tell where or when you were exposed to the virus. Exposure could have been many years ago.
- Most women will successfully clear the virus soon after infection. If the virus isn't cleared by your immune system, it may cause abnormal changes to the cells of your cervix.
- The PAP test allows a laboratorian to look for these abnormal cells indicating the possible presence of disease, while the HPV test looks for the cause of the disease, the virus itself. This combination of tests helps improve cervical cancer screening.

House Bill No. 1485 mandates that all private payors and Medicaid pay for an FDA-approved HPV DNA test in combination with a PAP, however we cannot be sure your particular plan has included this test in your benefits. It is your responsibility to ascertain your plan coverage. This test will be done routinely in all women age 30 or over at the time of your exam unless you specifically decline this.

I \_\_\_\_\_ decline the HPV test.

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**Signature of Patient**