

DNA tests at center of growing crisis

February 25 2008

The growing costs of U.S. healthcare and health insurance have led to a drop in the number of people getting precautionary DNA tests, a report said Sunday.

The New York Times said U.S. citizens are becoming increasingly loathe to take part in such genetic examinations, which could potentially forecast health problems, because of the economic consequences.

Dr. Francis S. Collins of the National Human Genome Research Institute said citizens are afraid to engage in DNA testing due to worries their results could negatively influence their employers or health insurance carriers.

"It's pretty clear that the public is afraid of taking advantage of genetic testing," Collins said. "If that continues, the future of medicine that we would all like to see happen stands the chance of being dead on arrival."

The growing problem has led some healthcare officials to call for legislation protecting those undergoing DNA tests from facing potential discrimination, the Times said. The aim of such legislation would be to allow citizens to learn of any potential health threats beforehand with little to no worry of economic repercussions.

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Citation: DNA tests at center of growing crisis (2008, February 25) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2008-02-dna-center-crisis.html>

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