

## Lombardy recognizes “non-invasive prenatal testing” and the “BI-Test” to detect possible anomalies in the foetus

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On a suggestion of the Vice President and Councillor for Welfare, Letizia Moratti, Lombardy Regional Council has **approved adoption of “non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT)” and of the “BI-Test” as prenatal screening, for the prevention and diagnosis of foetal anomalies.**

“This is an important commitment, achieved thanks to the adoption of **increasingly accurate tests** that are less invasive than amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling, and that make highly reliable diagnosis easier,” Letizia Moratti explained.

Lombardy Region **have made €500,000 available (until 2022) for the new screening**

**PREVENTION AND DIAGNOSIS, THE KEY ROLES IN THE LAW REVISION** – “We believe it is necessary to provide pregnant women who live in Lombardy with opportunities for valid prenatal diagnosis, which include these and similar tests, to further improve the services offered by our maternal-neonatal network,” Moratti explained.

**THESE TESTS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THE GUIDELINES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF HEALTH AND IN THE NEW ESSENTIAL LEVELS OF CARE** – In 2015, when drafting their guidelines, the Superior Council of Health (CSS) already suggested including NIPT in national healthcare.

**The BI-TEST has been included in the outpatient services of the new Essential Levels of Care (LEA)**, following its approval with the Prime Ministerial Decree of 12 January 2017. The LEA indicate the group of services and activities that citizens are entitled to receive from the National Health Service, to ensure uniform provision of services nationwide.

**WHO CAN GET THE TESTS** – Pregnant women who are resident in Lombardy can get the tests, in accordance with procedures and criteria that will be indicated, thanks to the support of the Regional Committee on Birth and Paediatric-Adolescent Care, and approved with a subsequent decision by the General Welfare Directorate.

**SIX-MONTH INTRODUCTORY PHASE, MILAN GENERAL HOSPITAL** – For NIPT, a six-month, introductory phase is planned before it is offered to all pregnant women. The Milan General Hospital (Policlinico) has been identified as the regional reference point for this “pilot phase”. The hospital is in the best possible position to take care of pregnant women, in terms of the completeness of the care, the cases treated and the skills.

**PROVIDING EXCELLENCE, ALSO IN THIS AREA** – “The new opportunities will not end with the screening activities. Our goal is to provide real excellence in this area as well,” Moratti concluded.

**A LABORATORY AT THE GENERAL HOSPITAL, THE ONLY CENTRE FOR THE TEST** – “On the basis of the results from the pilot phase of the NIPT, we plan to set up a laboratory at the Milan General Hospital, which will be the only reference centre in Lombardy. And it will be able to carry out the test for pregnant women living in our region,” Letizia Moratti concluded.

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