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Contact Information
Karen Busse
502.417.9171
kbusse@indianaspinegroup.com

**GENETIC TEST PREDICTS THE CURVE PROGRESSION OF SCOLIOSIS PATIENTS
Reducing Radiation Exposure and Physician Visits in Low Risk Patients**

INDIANAPOLIS (April 25, 2011) – Indiana Spine Group is among one of the first practices in Indianapolis to offer a new genetic test for adolescent patients diagnosed with mild adolescent idiopathic scoliosis (AIS). This genetic test, ScoliScore™ AIS Prognostic Test, helps physicians determine which patients diagnosed with mild AIS are least likely to develop severe scoliosis with 99 percent accuracy.

ScoliScore utilizes a simple saliva test, collected from the patient during an office visit, to measure DNA markers. Research has determined that scoliosis patients have two DNA markers – one that may predispose them to developing severe scoliosis (28 markers – progressive genes) and the other (25 markers – protective genes) that may protect them from severe spinal curve progression. The ScoliScore analyzes these genetic markers and assigns a numerical score between 1 and 200 as the likelihood of curve progression. This score takes into account the child's DNA and current Cobb angle; which is the standard measurement to evaluate the degree of spinal curvature. A ScoliScore of 50 or less is considered low risk for curve progression, 51 to 180 intermediate, and 181 to 200 high risk.

The standard protocol for patients with mild AIS is to monitor them with routine physician visits and X-rays to measure their spinal curve, typically every four to six months. "This new test provides an additional diagnostic tool for patients with AIS that helps us in determining the appropriate treatment plan," states

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Rick Sasso, MD, a spine surgeon with Indiana Spine Group. "With ScoliScore, we can now identify which patients need more aggressive treatment such as bracing, and those patients who are determined low risk will require less monitoring therefore reducing the frequency of X-rays and physician visits," Sasso adds.

Indications for ScoliScore are Caucasian males or females diagnosed with AIS, who are between the ages of 9 -13, and have a mild curvature of 10 – 25 degrees as determined by a radiograph. Clinical data, from more than 10,000 scoliosis patients worldwide, concluded that the ScoliScore Test has been 99% predictive for children who score in the low-risk group.

According to the National Scoliosis Foundation (NSF) scoliosis, defined as abnormal curvature of the spine, affects about seven million Americans. More common in girls than boys, the most common form of scoliosis is Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis (AIS). The cause of AIS is unknown, although it has been determined that the likelihood of getting scoliosis increases twenty percent if a family member has been diagnosed with scoliosis. Scoliosis is typically first detected during school screenings or by a parent who observes something wrong with their child's posture or unevenness in the shoulders. Scoliosis is diagnosed by an X-ray which measures the extent of the curvature. If a curve is at 25 to 40 degrees, typically back bracing is recommended to stop the curve progression. Surgery is considered if the curve is greater than 40 degrees.

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Rick C. Sasso, M.D., is a board-certified spine surgeon with Indiana Spine Group and co-director of the St. Vincent Spine Center. Specializing in adult and pediatric spine surgery, Dr. Sasso has dedicated his medical career to the comprehensive treatment and surgery of spinal disorders and abnormalities. Actively involved in spine surgery research, Dr. Sasso is a pioneer in the development of minimally invasive spine surgery techniques. He is actively involved in many research studies, as well as the development of instrumentation technology used to treat spinal disorders.

Indiana Spine Group is a Center of Excellence for comprehensive spine care. Providing comprehensive diagnosis and treatment for all spinal disorders, our spine specialists are experts in using the most advanced diagnostic and treatment tools, with a focus on minimally invasive non-operative spine treatments. The comprehensive patient care team includes board-certified minimally invasive spine specialists and spine surgeons. For more information, call 317.228.7000 or visit www.indianaspinegroup.com.