Promoting Self-Referral for Laboratory Testing

From time to time, ecp will publish selected images to illustrate how various tests and treatments are being marketed to the public. Our goal is to inform our clinician readers of the kinds of messages that their patients may be receiving. These messages may stimulate demand for various services and/or distort expectations about the benefits (and harms) of the services. Readers are encouraged to submit their own examples for publication.

Here we feature two pages from a Web site that encourages consumers to order their own laboratory tests. The site gives the following testimonial about why patients might want to order tests. “I often wonder if I’m at risk for any problems, even though I feel fine. I don’t want to wait until something goes wrong. So I ordered my own lab tests—and the results helped me focus on how to stay healthy.” Tests can be ordered singly (e.g., a complete blood count) or as a panel. Panels offered include women’s health profile with or without osteoporosis risk test, gout screening and monitoring, heart risk panel, STD screen, and allergy panels.
The Web site has a location finder that helps users find the nearest QuestDirect lab. Acceptable payment forms are cash, check, or major credit cards; insurance is not accepted.