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Chicago Fertility Specialist Participates In Published PGD Case Study in April 10th 2003 Issue of New England Journal of Medicine

April 10, 2003 Chicago, IL - Dr. Randy Morris, board certified reproductive endocrinologist and fertility expert has played a vital and intricate role in a new case study that will be coming out in the April 10th, 2003 edition of the New England Journal of Medicine regarding preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) of *Familial Holoprosencephaly* resulting from the Sonic Hedgehog (SHH) Gene.

According to Dr. Morris, *Familial Holoprosencephaly* is one of the most common abnormalities that can occur in the forebrain and the midface in the development of human beings. *Familial Holoprosencephaly* occurs in 1 in 16,000 live births and 1 in 200 spontaneous miscarriages. There are several different causes of this disease, yet the one focused on in this study deals with the SHH Gene, as its inheritance is autosomal dominant, meaning only one parent needs to have this gene to pass it on to their child.

Dr. Morris explains, "Because this genetic type has a clear pattern, PGD testing may be done to find a mutation in this gene. In performing IVF treatments, we are able to create numerous embryos, perform testing for the mutations in all of these embryos and transfer those without mutations to the mother's womb."

In this specific case published in the NEJM, a family in which two children were born with *Familial Holoprosencephaly* sought Dr. Morris' help to acquire PGD and IVF to produce a child free of the SHH mutation. Their first child is alive but has a mild form of *Familial Holoprosencephaly*. Their second child had a severe form of the disease and died shortly after birth. In trying to help the family conceive a healthy third child, Dr. Morris worked with other physicians and geneticists, who through analysis of the autopsy of the deceased child, were able to find the SHH mutation and generate a probe to find that same mutation in the mother's embryos.

After two cycles of IVF treatment, Dr. Morris was able to implant two embryos. The mother had gotten pregnant and delivered a healthy baby girl on September 19, 2002.

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