



*Division of Public Health Services
Bureau of Laboratory Services
Office of Newborn Screening*

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Alert Regarding Newborn Screening for Critical Congenital Heart Defects

This alert contains information about new requirements regarding universal newborn screening for critical congenital heart defects. **Effective July 1, 2015**, all birthing facilities and providers are required to order pulse oximetry screening on every newborn in their care and report the results to the Arizona Department of Health Services (A.R.S. §36-694 as amended by Laws 2014, Chapter 171 §1).

Congenital heart defects are the most common type of birth defect and affect nearly 1% of all births. About 25% of these are considered critical congenital heart defects (CCHD). Infants with CCHD have an increased risk of developing serious and life-threatening complications during the first few days or weeks of life; and may require surgery or other procedures in the first year of life. Pulse oximetry is an effective method of screening for CCHD and can reduce the number of undiagnosed infants prior to the development of life-threatening symptoms.

It is recommended that each birthing facility will have a written protocol in place for uniform CCHD screening. We urge you to follow evidence-based recommendations to develop and implement your CCHD screening protocol, so that infants with a failed pulse oximetry screen receive immediate follow-up by a physician or cardiologist. The protocol should also include instructions for reporting screening data to the Office of Newborn Screening.

Multiple reporting options are being developed including modified bloodspot collection kits (anticipated to be distributed in mid-August) and a secure file transfer protocol for those wishing to submit a data file. The data collected will be used for surveillance, quality assurance and evaluation and monitoring. More information, including reportable data elements, reporting options and education and training materials, is available at <http://www.azdhs.gov/lab/aznewborn/> or by emailing nbseducation@azdhs.gov.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of Newborn Screening at the Arizona Department of Health Services at (602) 364-1409.

Sincerely,

Ward Jacox
Assistant Bureau Chief