



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

JAMES K. HAVEMAN
DIRECTOR

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CONTACT: Angela Minicuci
(517) 241-2112

This September, Michigan Celebrates Newborn Screening and Its Life-Saving Results
Since 1965, More Than 7,500 Infants Have Been Diagnosed, Treated

LANSING – September marks the National 50th Anniversary of Newborn Screening and to recognize this significant public health achievement, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) joins national organizations, federal officials, statewide partners, and other states in celebrating the accomplishments of newborn screening in Michigan. In 2012, 275 babies in Michigan were diagnosed with a disorder found through newborn screening and treated at special medical management clinics.

“Newborn Screening is truly a public health success story. Since Michigan began screening in 1965, more than 7,500 infants have been diagnosed, and their lives saved or improved through early treatment,” said Dr. Matthew Davis, Chief Medical Executive for the MDCH.

Following development of a new screening test by Dr. Robert Guthrie, the first state-mandated newborn screening programs began in 1963 to find babies with a rare condition known as “PKU”. When detected early and treated with a special diet, children with PKU lead a normal life. Fifty years later, more than 4 million newborns are screened annually in every state for at least 29 different genetic and metabolic conditions, hearing loss and critical congenital heart defects. Michigan’s newborn screening panel currently includes 54 disorders.

Newborn screening keeps rare conditions from stealing children’s lives. Without screening, there are typically no red flags to alert families or physicians that a baby might become sick or develop disabilities. Ultimately these disorders can affect how the body breaks down food, fights infection, and may also impact brain development, hormones, blood cells, lungs or breathing.

“Birthing hospitals, midwives, primary care providers and medical specialists all work together with families and the Department of Community Health laboratory and follow-up program to ensure a successful newborn screening system. This year as we celebrate the nation’s 50th anniversary of newborn screening, we also want to recognize our own state’s accomplishments and thank the many partners who make this vital public health program such a success,” said Dr. Davis.

For very rare conditions like galactosemia to somewhat more common ones like cystic fibrosis and sickle cell anemia, newborn screening allows diagnosis and prompt treatment to prevent or lessen the serious effects of an underlying disorder. Nationally, newborn screening identifies disorders in more than 12,000 babies each year.

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September 2013 was also proclaimed Michigan Newborn Screening Awareness Month by Governor Rick Snyder. From September 18 through 20, visitors to the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing can view a traveling exhibit sponsored by the Association of Public Health Laboratories and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Visitors can also learn more about Michigan's Newborn Screening Program including the use of remaining newborn screening blood spots for health research through the Michigan *BioTrust for Health*.

For more information about newborn screening, visit www.michigan.gov/newbornscreening.

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