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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 15, 2015

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Congenital Hypothyroidism Highlighted During January to Increase Awareness

LANSING, Mich. – About one in every 1,200 Michigan babies born in 2013 was diagnosed with congenital hypothyroidism (CH), a thyroid disorder present at birth where the thyroid gland is missing, misplaced or too small. In an effort to improve health outcomes for children, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is raising awareness around congenital hypothyroidism (CH) and MDCH's Newborn Screening Program. These awareness efforts coincide with National Thyroid Awareness Month in January and Michigan's 50th anniversary of newborn screening in 2015.

“Untreated congenital hypothyroidism may affect brain development and cause abnormal growth, so making sure that all newborns are screened at birth for this disease is vital for improving child health outcomes,” said Nick Lyon, director of the MDCH. “Thanks to newborn screening in Michigan, conditions such as these can be detected early so that our children can develop normally and go on to lead healthy lives.”

In June 1977, CH was the second disorder added to the Michigan Newborn Screening Program (NBS) panel; a list that currently includes more than 50 conditions. Since screening was initiated, a total of 1,966 babies have been diagnosed with CH, making it the most common disorder detected by NBS in Michigan.

Newborn screening not only identifies CH cases, but also helps assure follow-up, diagnosis and treatment. The program works with the Pediatric Endocrine Advisory Council and pediatric endocrinologists across the state to save babies from adverse health outcomes and provide parents knowledge after a diagnosis.

The importance of newborn screening is clear each time a child is identified and treated for any of the disorders on the NBS panel. The improved health outcomes – and lives saved—that come from a simple screening test at birth provide unmeasurable benefits for the families whose children have a disorder detected by the screening program.

Throughout the year, Michigan's Newborn Screening Program is celebrating its 50th anniversary with ongoing activities and events to raise awareness around newborn screening. For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/newbornscreening.

For more information about congenital hypothyroidism, please visit <http://www.babysfirsttest.org/newborn-screening/conditions/primary-congenital-hypothyroidism>

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