

## September is Newborn Screening Awareness Month

Since 1964 The Connecticut Department of Public Health has **proudly** conducted universal bloodspot screening for all babies born in the State. The CT Newborn Screening (NBS) Program, located at the State Public Health Laboratory, has 19 dedicated staff and is supported by multiple other departments to ensure our success. Our goal is to screen and identify newborns at risk for select rare disorders for prompt diagnostic work up and treatment. The Newborn Screening Program provides a universal reduction in infant mortality and morbidity.

Newborn bloodspot screening tests samples which have been collected by a heel stick from newborn infants for certain conditions that may not be noticeable at the time of birth but can cause serious disability, or even death, if not treated quickly. The Connecticut Newborn Screening Laboratory tests for 33 core Recommended Uniform Screening Panel (RUSP) Conditions <https://www.hrsa.gov/advisory-committees/heritable-disorders/rusp>, but can detect over 70 disorders and traits in all. Newborn hearing and Critical Congenital Heart Defect (CCHD) screening are conducted by the birth hospitals and tracked through by DPH's Family Health Section and newborn Cystic Fibrosis (CF) bloodspot screening is conducted by the Yale and UCONN CF Laboratories. In 2021 the CT NBS Program identified 130 infants either with a disorder or as a carrier of a rare genetic disorder and over 1,000 infants as carriers of a hemoglobin disorder. Our NBS laboratory tests 35,000+ samples each year to provide fast and actionable results for families and providers.

Once a newborn has screened positive for a disorder, Newborn Screening Follow-up (NBSFU) staff either request another bloodspot sample for repeat screening or report the result to the CT Newborn Screening Network to connect the newborn's primary care provider with a specialist in the fields of genetics, immunology, endocrinology, hematology and neurology.

NBSFU staff work with CT birth hospitals, birthing centers and midwife groups to monitor births through the NBS database and ensure that a satisfactory bloodspot specimen is received for every newborn born in the state. We also work to identify babies living in CT who are not in the NBS database (i.e., babies born out of state, adopted babies and babies born outside of the hospital) to ensure that every baby has access to screening.

To learn more, please use the links below;

<https://portal.ct.gov/Newborn-Screening-Program>

<https://www.babysfirsttest.org/>

<https://www.connecticutchildrens.org/search-specialties/newborn-diagnosis-treatment-network/>

