

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
September 7, 2016

For More Information, Contact:
Katie Bentz
Division of Family Health
Phone: 701.328.4538
E-mail: kbentz@nd.gov

September is Newborn Screening Awareness Month

BISMARCK, N.D. – September is Newborn Screening Awareness month.

Newborn screening is a simple blood test done shortly after birth by taking a few small drops of blood from a baby's heel. Newborn Screening Awareness month is an opportunity to educate about the importance of this test, which can make a big impact on the lives of all babies.

“Newborn screening is a public health system success story,” said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. “These screening innovations are considered among the greatest public health achievements of the early 21st century.”

Newborn screening began over 50 years ago in North Dakota by testing for phenylketonuria (PKU). Currently, North Dakota screens for nearly 50 disorders, such as cystic fibrosis (CF) and Sickle Cell Disease. These screenings look for signs of rare but serious conditions that may not always be apparent at birth.

“Newborn screening promotes early identification and treatment before an infant gets sick, which may make the difference between health and disability, or even life and death,” said Katie Bentz, Nurse Consultant for the Newborn Screening Program. “Newborn screening is one of the most important things families can do for the health of their baby. We encourage families to discuss newborn screening with their health care providers.”

To view additional newborn screening information, click here: <http://www.ndhealth.gov/newbornscreening/>

For more information, contact Katie Bentz at 701.328.4538.

– 30 –

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.health.nd.gov/news-media/news-releases.

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ndhealth or Twitter at twitter.com/nddoh.