



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
State Laboratory of Public Health**

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Scott J. Zimmerman, DrPH, MPH, HCLD (ABB)  
Laboratory Director

Date: October 20, 2014

To: Hospitals, Birthing Centers, Physician's Offices, and Health Departments

From: Dr. Scott J. Zimmerman, DrPH, MPH  
Director, State Laboratory of Public Health

Dr. Shu Chaing, Ph.D. *SHC*  
Manager, Newborn Screening Laboratory

Re: **GUIDELINES for PROMPT MAILING OF NEWBORN SCREENING FILTER PAPER SPECIMENS**

The Newborn Screening Program at the State Laboratory of Public Health currently screens North Carolina newborns for over 30 disorders to prevent potentially disastrous health consequences. If untreated, these disorders can result in anemia, stroke, infections, irreversible mental impairment, convulsions, coma, and even death. These infants may look perfectly normal at birth but can become very sick and begin to show symptoms of their disorder within one or two weeks after birth.

**Because of this urgency to test the infant, it is crucial that the specimen submitters never hold or batch specimens for any reason. ALL SPECIMENS SHOULD BE MAILED WITHIN 24 HOURS OF COLLECTION, by the quickest method possible, preferably overnight delivery.** Facilities that retain specimens are directly responsible for timely testing of specimens. In addition, delayed delivery of specimens could result in late diagnosis and treatment of an affected infant; their health or future well-being could be irreparably or fatally impacted.

The State Laboratory encourages all submitters of specimens and healthcare providers to refer to the following national resources for proper submission of specimens:

- American College of Medical Genetics' document "Newborn Screening: Toward a Uniform Screening Panel and System," May, 2006, page 80, <http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/mchbadvisory/heritabledisorders/uniformscreening.pdf>
- Clinical Laboratory Standards Institute ([www.clsi.org](http://www.clsi.org)), document NBS01-A6, Blood Collection on Filter Paper for Newborn Screening Programs; Approved Standard-Sixth Edition, 2013, page 7

Submitters and healthcare providers that have questions regarding the correct mailing of Newborn Screening specimens are encouraged to contact the Newborn Screening Laboratory at (919) 733-3937 for more information. For further reference and education, the State Laboratory website offers online training at <http://slph.adobeconnect.com/newborn/>.

A crucial step in Newborn Screening is the prompt receipt of specimens. Your diligence in collecting a quality specimen and mailing it within 24 hours of collection are the first steps in an effective Newborn Screening program.

www.ncdhhs.gov • www.publichealth.nc.gov • <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com>

Location: 4312 District Drive • Raleigh, NC 27607 • Tel 919-733-7834 • Fax 919-733-8695

Mailing Address: 1918 Mail Service Center • PO Box 28047, Raleigh, NC 27611-8047

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