

BULLETIN #22 – October 31, 2007

Date of Collection of Newborn Screening Sample

As you know, it is essential that we have accurate information regarding the date and time a newborn screening sample is collected. This information allows us to:

1. Determine if the sample was obtained at less than 24 hours and that a repeat is required
2. Accurately interpret a baby's newborn screening results based on their age at collection

The majority of the requisitions we receive have the date of collection field completed accurately – thank you!

Some submitters place a sticker in the optional “Submitter Unique Number” field. This field was designed to provide a space for submitters to affix a sticker or hand write a number that would allow them to track the sample at their institution prior to send out to our screening laboratory. As well, the Submitter Unique number written in this field, or highlighted on the sticker, is entered into our information system and appears on the NBS report to help submitters track reports they receive from us. However, many of the stickers in this field also contain a date and based on conversations with certain submitters, our staff began to enter the date on the sticker as the date of collection.

It has recently come to our attention that the date of collection on the sticker may NOT reflect the actual time of collection of the NBS sample for some submitters. Given variability in practice amongst submitters, it is impossible for our data entry clerks to keep track of which submitter's stickers accurately reflect the date of collection and which do not.

Given the potential serious consequences of misclassifying a baby's sample as satisfactory vs. unsatisfactory based on time of collection, and/or misinterpreting the analytical results, we will no longer be modifying the date of collection field based on information on the sticker. We will ONLY use the information hand written in the date of collection field. This change will be instituted on November 5, 2007.

Again, thank you for your cooperation and assistance in making the Ontario Newborn Screening Program the most effective and efficient that it can be.

Additional information about the Ontario Newborn Screening Program can be found at:
www.newbornscreening.on.ca

These bulletins are being circulated to keep you abreast of changes to the Ontario Newborn Screening program. Please share this information with any relevant personnel in your hospital / clinic. If there is someone who would like to be added to this list, contact: Shelley Kennedy or Sari Zelenietz, Genetic Counsellors
(613) 738-3222, option #1; NewbornScreening@cheo.on.ca