

BULLETIN #49

January 26, 2011

Holiday Season Debriefing

Happy New Year from Newborn Screening Ontario (NSO)!

Over the holiday period, some submitting providers and institutions encountered difficulties with newborn screening samples. We would like to take this time to address some of these challenges so that going forward we can ensure that all newborns in Ontario receive screening in a timely fashion.

1) Batching Samples

There were several instances where samples were collected on December 23rd & 24th, batched with samples drawn the following week, and then sent to NSO the first week of January. This delay caused the samples drawn on the 23rd and 24th to be received in the lab >14 days after collection, which is unsatisfactory for testing. These babies now require repeat samples.

Please do not batch newborn screening samples at any time. Sample batching increases the risk of a delay in diagnosis for a baby affected by one of the conditions on our panel. Send samples to NSO on a daily basis to ensure that newborn screening is done in a timely fashion.

2) Unsatisfactory Samples – follow-up phone calls over the holiday period

On several occasions when NSO called a submitter regarding unsatisfactory samples and the need for a repeat sample, the recipients of the call were staff who did not typically address these issues. This can cause a delay in the process of obtaining a repeat sample on a baby. It is important to prepare staff that are covering over the holidays for the possibility of an unsatisfactory sample and the process in your institution for organizing a repeat newborn screen.

3) Scheduling Sample Pick-Ups

CanPar's holiday schedule can be found at: <http://www.canpar.com/en/ship/holiday.jsp>. For the minority of submitters who must still use Purolator, their holiday schedule can be found at http://www.purolator.ca/dbwp/holiday_schedule.html. Please refer to these links when planning for sample pickups during holiday periods.

4) Supplies for Shipping

Please ensure an adequate stock of shipping envelopes prior to the holidays so that staff who may not be regularly involved in the shipment of newborn screening samples are well equipped.

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

These bulletins are circulated to keep you abreast of changes to Newborn Screening Ontario. Please share this information with any relevant personnel in your hospital / practice. If there is someone who would like to be added to this list, contact NSO at: (613) 738-3222, option #0 or at NewbornScreening@cheo.on.ca.