

Kansas Newborn Screening Program Process Change

Relative Increase in Newborn Screening Specimen Standards

The Kansas Newborn Screening Program (KS-NBS) strives to protect and improve the health of all newborn Kansans. The Kansas Health and Environment Laboratories, Newborn Screening Laboratory (KHEL-NBSL) has increased the standard of acceptability when less than ideal Newborn Screening blood spot specimens have been submitted.

The KHEL-NBSL is currently preparing to add new screening disorders to the KS screening panel which were endorsed by the KS-NBS Advisory Committee and approved by the Kansas Secretary of Health. While we will not be requiring additional circles of the baby's blood on the collection card to be submitted for testing, we will need to be more vigilant in requiring the current five circles on the collection card be filled out to the lines of the circles. This should be obtainable by allowing one large drop of the baby's blood to form before applying it to each circle on the card, as is described in the Clinical Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) standards for the collection of NBS specimens.¹

While there is an initial uptick in the number of unsatisfactory specimens, this initiative will lead to a much lower overall unsatisfactory rate for Kansas and provide for the needs of the additional screening tests, without requiring a change in the collection card and an increase in the number of bloodspot circles required for collection.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What does an unsatisfactory specimen look like?

A. You may use the [QA Spot Check](#) tool to judge your specimens before you send them into the state lab.

Q. What do I do when I believe my facility has collected an unsatisfactory specimen?

A. If you have collected an unsatisfactory specimen, immediately collect another full specimen from the baby and discard the unsatisfactory specimen in-house. If you recognize later that you have collected an unsatisfactory specimen after the baby has been discharged from your facility, go ahead and send the unsatisfactory specimen to KHEL-NBSL anyway as it is irretrievable. The reason for this is you/we may never be successful in getting the family to come back in to collect another newborn screen.

Q. Will my facility be reprimanded about any increase in the amount of forms used?

A. No. We understand with a relative increase in expectations there will be an increase in the number of unsatisfactory specimens. This subsequently may cause an increase in the amount of collection kits used. We do ask that you be as conservative as possible with them. Currently, Kansas does not charge for the provision of collection kits or for the actual screening. The number of forms used does greatly impact the annual cost of the Newborn Screening Program.

Q. Will extra spots on the side of the sheet help determine the quality of the specimen?

A. Extra spots will not cause a specimen to be deemed unsatisfactory, but the quality and quantity of your spot will only be judged on the specimen that is within the 5 printed circles on the filter paper. This is because the 5 circles are carefully calibrated to receive the specimen and the edges of the filter paper are easily damaged or can be contaminated.

Q. What education can you provide my facility?

A. For any and all educational needs please contact the Newborn Screening Educator at kdhe.newbornscreening@ks.gov.

Conclusion

This change is one example of the steps taken daily within KS-NBS to improve the screening and follow up processes needed to ensure every newborn in Kansas receives quality newborn screening care. Every submitting health care facility can assist in improving the NBS process for newborn babies in Kansas by assessing their NBS specimen collection processes. We truly appreciate all that you do in your vital part of the entire NBS process.