

# Improving the Newborn Screening Status in Arkansas

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## Arkansas Newborn Screening Facts

- ❖ The March of Dimes **recommends 29 newborn screens** be done on all newborns.
- ❖ **Arkansas performs only 7 screens** on newborns.
- ❖ The Arkansas Public Health Lab Director stated that expanded newborn screenings will **save an estimated 1.9 million to 4.7 million on medical care** for those conditions detected by the expanded screen
- ❖ The fee for newborn screens in AR would increase from **\$14.83 to \$89.25** for an additional **21 diseases**.
- ❖ The risk of mental retardation, morbidity and mortality can be **decreased** with immediate action and treatment.
- ❖ Babies that test positive can still receive insurance benefits as established in the 1996 HIPPA Law.
- ❖ Arkansas Medicaid and Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield expressed **support** of expanded screenings-Arkansas Democrat Gazette 10/2006
- ❖ Children that go unscreened sometimes spend several months, or years, suffering through medical tests to find out what is wrong with them.

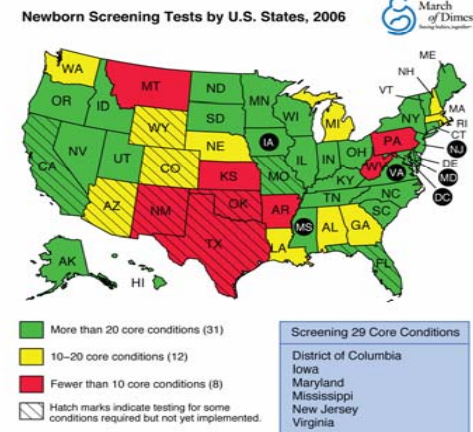
## The Process for Improvement

- ❖ Problem Identification: Dr. Ralph Vogel presented information regarding March of Dimes recommended genetic screenings and number of screenings performed in Arkansas.
- ❖ Obtaining Facts: Internet search used to obtain information regarding Newborn Genetic and Metabolic screening in Arkansas and across the nation.
- ❖ Contacts: David Evans, White County State Representative, contacted and agreed to present Fact sheet to members on the floor of the General Assembly.
- ❖ Development of "Facts about Newborn Screens": One page fact sheet developed to present to 2007 General Assembly to educate the legislators on the importance of increasing the number of newborn genetic screenings performed in Arkansas.
- ❖ State Bill/Act to Increase Number of Newborn Screens in Arkansas: Numerous sources indicated that legislation to increase newborn genetic screens in Arkansas would be presented for a vote.
- ❖ Numerous persons watched for this legislation; the last session passed without such legislation.

## The Outcome

- ❖ Contacted Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services for the present Status of Newborn Genetic Screening in Arkansas
- ❖ **By authority of the Arkansas Board of Health, the initiation of the 29 recommended screenings for newborns occurs in July 2008**
- ❖ Appropriation of funds for the Arkansas Department of Health received authorization to reflect the increase of screening costs.

## Where Arkansas Rates for Number of Newborn Screens Offered



Source: March of Dimes. Data reported from NNSGRC as of June 1, 2006.  
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