A. Statement of Position
The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) recognizes that all state newborn screening (NBS) systems should have a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that ensures minimal or no interruption of services. A COOP is a comprehensive, pre-event plan that describes procedures, policies, and arrangements necessary for the laboratory to respond quickly and effectively to a variety of possible disruptions. APHL is committed to assisting in the development of continuity plans, to ensure these plans are operational, and to serve as a coordinator/facilitator during a disaster or other event that threatens to interrupt operations of NBS systems.

B. Background/Data Supporting Position
Screening newborns for detection of certain treatable congenital or heritable diseases is a public health responsibility. Effective laboratory testing of newborns using dried blood spot specimens collected at birth, combined with follow-up diagnostic studies and treatment, helps prevent intellectual disability, other serious health consequences and premature death. The continuity of NBS services is critical for public health and a comprehensive plan is necessary to ensure continuity of services during a natural or man-made disaster as well as during any event that interrupts services.

Critical components that the NBS COOP plan should address include:

- Pre-analytic issues involving provision of blood collection supplies, collection of blood specimens from newborns delivered during the event, transport of specimens to the testing facility, and interruptions in communications.
- Analytic issues including loss of an entire testing facility and interruptions in delivery of testing materials, basic system supports (e.g., water and electricity), and communications.
- Post analytic issues including reporting test results to displaced health care providers, locating displaced patients for follow-up diagnostic studies and treatment, as well as appropriate medical management including access to diagnostic test facilities and necessary treatments (e.g., pharmaceuticals, formulas, etc.).

C. References
1. Newborn Screening Preparedness/Contingency Planning Framework, APHL, 2004
2. Newborn Screening Contingency Plan (CONPLAN), Department of Health and Human Services, August 2010. “National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program” Centers for...
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