



APHL Position Statement

Newborn Screening Contingency Planning

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.¹ 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.²

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

Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking/>

Recommended by: The Newborn Screening and Genetic Testing Committee, Approved by Board of Directors for Interim Use: May 2011, Approved by Membership: December 2011, Sunset Date: December 2016. BOD Approved Extension: December 2016. Extension Granted till: March 2017

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