Generic news release template for hospitals FINAL – 2015

You can work with your hospital public relations staff to complete the highlighted info. in the template below and send the news release out to your local media.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE (In September)

For More Information, Contact: NAME, Contact Info.

**(HOSPITAL NAME) Celebrates National Newborn Screening Awareness Month this September**

More than (#) babies enter the world at (HOSPITAL NAME) every year. And before they are even a few days old, most will have taken the most important tests of their young lives – their newborn screening tests. September is National Newborn Screening Awareness Month.

Newborn screening includes blood, hearing and heart screens to find problems that parents, doctors and nurses are unaware of because most of the conditions being tested for are not apparent in the first few days of life.

The blood screen process takes place between 24 to 48 hours after a baby is born. The hospital staff will prick the baby’s heel and a few drops of blood are put on a special newborn screening collection card. The card is sent to the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene’s (WSLH) Newborn Screening Laboratory in Madison, where scientists test the dried blood spots for 44 serious disorders that, if not treated quickly, can lead to severe health problems and sometimes even death.

The hearing and heart screening tests are done in the hospital before the baby is discharged.

Babies who are deaf or hard of hearing need to have their hearing loss identified as soon as possible so early interventions can be implemented for their best development.

The heart screen uses a machine called a pulse oximeter to measure the blood oxygen saturation in the baby’s right hand and either foot. Some babies with a serious heart defect look well for the first few days, but will have blood oxygen levels that are below normal. Without timely diagnosis and treatment many of these babies will become very sick or die in the first week of life. A low oxygen level may also be the first sign of a serious infection or lung disease.

Wisconsin screens nearly 65,000 babies each year and about 135 are identified with one of the 44 disorders detected in the blood. More than 100 babies a year are diagnosed with permanent hearing loss and another 30 to 40 babies each year will have a serious heart defect, lung disease, or infection identified by the pulse oximetry screening.

Because of the importance of newborn screening to babies’ health, it’s vital for hospitals to send the blood specimens to the WSLH quickly. More than (%) of babies’ blood specimens from (HOSPITAL NAME) arrive at the WSLH within 4 days of the heel prick. The WSLH also sends (HOSPITAL NAME) staff a monthly quality report showing how quickly specimens are sent and whether there are any quality problems with the blood specimens. (ADD ANY SPECIFIC INFO ABOUT PROCESS FOR HOW YOUR HOSPITAL HANDLES THE NBS PROCESS).

If a baby’s newborn screening results are normal – and that’s the case for 99.9 percent of babies – the test results will be sent to the baby’s health care provider. Parents should be sure to ask their baby’s doctor for the newborn screening results.

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