



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health

Cynthia C. Romero, MD, FAAFP
State Health Commissioner

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Dear Colleague:

Those of us who began practicing medicine within the past 50 years have seen the benefits of newborn screening as a part of routine newborn care. The screening started with phenylketonuria (PKU), and many still refer to newborn dried-blood spot screening as the “PKU test.” Currently, Virginia screens for 28 conditions including metabolic and endocrine disorders, hemoglobinopathies, and cystic fibrosis. Newborn screening is generally recognized as one of the top achievements in public health.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of newborn screening nationally. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the milestones and successes of newborn screening in Virginia:

- In 1966, legislation was enacted in Virginia mandating the screening of all babies for phenylketonuria (PKU).
- In 2005, the Code of Virginia was amended to assure that the newborn screening panel is consistent with the panel of disorders recommended by the American College of Medical Genetics in its report *Newborn Screening: Toward a Uniform Screening Panel and System*.
- Every year, an average of 150 infants in the Commonwealth are diagnosed with one of these disorders.
- More than 100,000 births are recorded in Virginia each year. The Virginia Department of Health newborn screening staff provides follow-up on more than 20,000 infants each year.
- In 2012, the State Board of Health acted on recommendations to add Severe Combined Immune Deficiency (SCID) screening to the newborn screening panel; regulations to implement this change are in process.

I want to personally thank you for your support of Virginia’s Newborn Screening Program. Your commitment to assuring follow-up on abnormal screening results, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health, is diagnosing newborns early and improving the outcomes associated with these rare disorders. If you have questions or would like more information about newborn screening in Virginia, please contact Kathleen Moline, Newborn Screening Supervisor, at (804) 864-7712 or by email at kathleen.moline@vdh.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

Cynthia C. Romero, MD, FAAFP
State Health Commissioner