

Wyoming Health Department increases newborn screenings

By The Associated Press

CHEYENNE -- Babies born in Wyoming after July 1 will undergo screening for more medical conditions under a program administered by the Wyoming Department of Health.

The state has been testing newborns for seven diseases but will expand the testing to cover 28, the department announced Friday.

"We hope to protect more Wyoming babies by expanding this important newborn screening from seven conditions to covering 28," said Dorothy Ailes, manager of the Metabolic Screening Program. "If we can identify infants who may be threatened, they can be helped with early treatment. Most children with problems detected by newborn screening do not have a family history of genetic or metabolic disorders, and often seem healthy at birth."

Wyoming law specifies that newborns are screened between 24 hours and 48 hours after birth unless their parents sign a waiver opting out of the program. The test involves taking a few drops of blood from the baby's heel.

Crystal Swires, administrative specialist with the Newborn Screening Program and Metabolic Screening Program, said the expanded test will look for a number of amino acid disorders and fatty acid oxidation disorders. She said such conditions are quite rare.

Ailes said that by expanding the screening program, the state is following recommendations from national medical organizations. "Many of these diseases are quite rare, but they can be absolutely devastating," she said.

Kim Deti, a health department spokeswoman, said the cost of testing for the seven diseases has been \$45. She said the expanded test will cost \$70. The fees are included in what hospitals charge for delivering babies, she said.

The test results will be provided to the baby's primary care physician, Deti said.

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