



Anchorage

3601 C Street, Suite 902
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5923
Main: 907.269.7800
Fax: 907.269.0060

Juneau

P.O. Box 110601
350 Main Street, Suite 404
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0601
Main: 907.465.3030
Fax: 907.465.3068

September 13, 2024

RE: Critical Congenital Heart Disease (CCHD Screening)

Dear Alaska Healthcare Provider:

Thank you for your service as a healthcare provider for Alaskan children and their families. We at the Department of Health (DOH) appreciate your commitment to ensuring the best outcomes for children born in our state. Recently, questions have come to the Department regarding the requirements related to Critical Congenital Heart Disease (CCHD) screening for newborns, as outlined in Alaska state statutes and regulations. Because it has been many years since guidance on these requirements was given, we wanted to provide you with an update and clarification specific to your work.

Under Alaska Statute AS 18.15.205, the state mandates that all newborns be screened for CCHD. The Alaska Administrative Code, 7 AAC 27.630, further elaborates on this. According to these state laws, the CCHD screening must be conducted using pulse oximetry, which is a non-invasive procedure measuring oxygen levels in the blood.

Requirements for birthing facilities licensed by DOH:

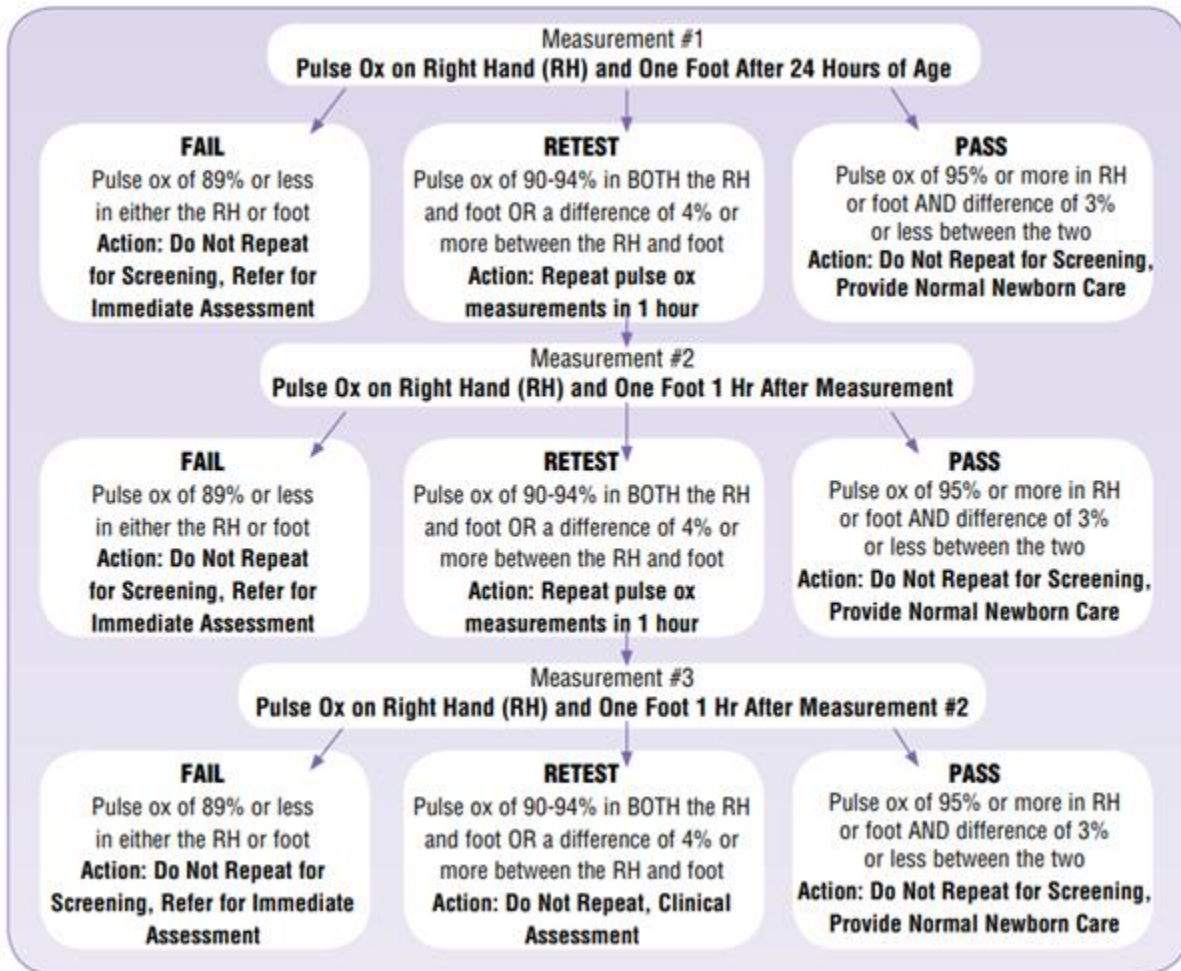
Screening is done when a baby is 24 to 48 hours of age by personnel trained in the procedure. For a baby discharged from a free-standing birth center before they are 24 hours old, the screening may be completed at the follow-up home visit when the baby is between 24 and 48 hours of age. When a newborn is discharged from a hospital prior to 24 hours, screen the newborn prior to discharge as close to 24 hours as possible.

Other considerations:

- Performing the screening in conjunction with other standard-of-care newborn screenings will increase the efficiency of the procedure.
- Earlier screening (less than 24 hours of age) may lead to false positive results.
- Health care providers should inform families that a negative screening result does not exclude the possibility of CCHD.

As licensed birth attendants, you are responsible for ensuring that each newborn in your care undergoes the CCHD screening. The screening should be conducted using the algorithm endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and written in the DOH CCHD toolkit. The results of the screening should be recorded, and any abnormal findings reported promptly to a healthcare provider for further evaluation. It is essential to document the screening in the newborn's medical record, including the time of the test and the results.

CCHD Screening Protocol:



Please ensure that your practices align with the DOH statutory and regulatory requirements. Compliance with CCHD screening guidelines is critical to safeguarding the health of newborns and adhering to state law.

If you have any questions or need further clarification regarding these requirements, please do not hesitate to contact the Newborn Screening Program via telephone at 907-334-2295, email newborn.screening@alaska.gov, or reference the CCHD toolkit online at https://health.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Documents/toolkit_CCHD.pdf

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your continued commitment to providing quality care to Alaska newborns.



Robert Lawrence, MD
Chief Medical Officer