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**Laboratories Administration**

Robert A. Myers, Ph.D., Director  
1770 Ashland Avenue  
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**MEMORANDUM**

Date: June 13, 2025

To: All providers of Newborn Screening (NBS) specimens

From: M. Christine Dorley Ph.D., Division Chief NBS Laboratory  
LaPortia Barrows, RN, BSN Program Manager, NBS Follow-up and CCHD Programs

Subject: **Unsatisfactory Specimens**

The NBS program is improving operations to align with national recommendations on timely specimen collection and turnaround times for reporting disorders that are time critical or time sensitive. Additionally, we are striving to align our specimen acceptance criteria to the standards outlined in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the CLSI NBS01 *Dried Blood Spot Specimen Collection for Newborn Screening*. In that vein, we have:

1. Retrained staff to recognize acceptable specimens for consistency in unsatisfactory determinations.
2. Initiated a two-person review of every specimen.
3. Instituted supervisory review when needed to determine specimen quality and unsatisfactory coding.

Because of this new process and the change to our acceptability criteria, you may have noticed an increase in your facility's unsatisfactory rate. To help with decreasing these rates, we suggest the following:

1. Request a site visit with our NBS follow-up team to review your collection techniques.
2. Request images of some of your unsatisfactory samples for retraining purposes.
3. Do not hold or batch specimens but courier or ship them to the laboratory within 24 hours of collection.
4. Use priority or overnight delivery to avoid samples deemed unsatisfactory due to greater than 10 days transit times.
5. Review the video links below on proper specimen collection techniques as a refresher.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S51Y9ShD6HI>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qg\\_h354MVaU&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qg_h354MVaU&t=2s)

<https://www.newsteps.org/resource-library/newborn-screening-dried-blood-spot-collection-resources>

We ask you to also use our Cognito link <https://www.cognitoforms.com/mdh3/nbslabrequests> to access:

1. Lab order slip request (for NBS collection forms)
2. Specimen request (for requesting results or corrections)
3. Sick cell trait records request (for requesting archived results)
4. Refusal (to document refusal of the newborn screen)

Lastly, for an easy download of your facility's NBS results, use our MyLIMS web portal. To enroll, send an email to the lab at [mdphl.nbs@maryland.gov](mailto:mdphl.nbs@maryland.gov) and for additional inquiries, use this same email or contact the follow-up office at [mdh.newbornscreeningfollowup@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.newbornscreeningfollowup@maryland.gov). Thank you for your cooperation as we work to improve the NBS program.