

# NBS02

## Newborn Screening Follow-up and Education

This guideline describes the basic principles, scope, and range of follow-up and education activities within the newborn screening program and system.

A guideline for global application developed through the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute consensus process.

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### Abstract

Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute guideline NBS02—*Newborn Screening Follow-up and Education* describes the basic principles, scope, and range of follow-up and education activities within a newborn screening (NBS) program and system. NBS systems are responsible for education, screening, follow-up, diagnosis, intervention, and evaluation. Follow-up and education activities are part of the NBS system and play an essential role in facilitating early detection, diagnosis, and intervention for affected babies. This guideline is intended for those involved in any aspect of follow-up and/or education, including health care providers, parents, and others concerned with the health and welfare of newborns.

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# Contents

Abstract .....	i
Committee Membership .....	iii
Foreword .....	ix
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Scope .....	1
1.2 Standard Precautions .....	3
1.3 Terminology .....	3
<b>Chapter 2: Organization of Newborn Screening Follow-up and Education Topics .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Awareness, Education, and Training in Newborn Screening .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Prenatal Care Providers, Childbirth Educators, Expectant Families, and the Public .....	14
3.2 Hospital, Birthing Facility, and Midwifery Personnel .....	15
3.3 Primary Health Care Providers .....	17
3.4 Specialty Care Providers .....	18
3.5 Families of Babies With Actionable Screening Results .....	18
3.6 Internal Newborn Screening Program Personnel .....	19
3.7 Policy Makers and Advocates .....	19
<b>Chapter 4: Timeliness Recommendations .....</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1 Time-Critical and Time-Sensitive Screened Diseases .....	22
4.2 Notification and Reporting Timeliness Recommendations .....	22
4.3 Newborn Screening Program Operating Hours .....	23
4.4 Quality Indicators .....	24
<b>Chapter 5: Newborn Screening Follow-up for Results Other Than Screen Positive .....</b>	<b>25</b>
5.1 Written Procedures, Communication, and Documentation .....	26
5.2 Screen-Negative Results .....	27
5.3 Requests for Repeat Specimens .....	28
5.4 Unscreened Newborns .....	30
5.5 Carrier Detection .....	31
5.6 Follow-up in Special Circumstances .....	31

## Contents (Continued)

<b>Chapter 6: Screen-Positive Results Follow-up</b>	<b>33</b>
6.1 Written Procedures, Communication, and Documentation of Screen-Positive Results	34
6.2 Notification of Screen-Positive Results	34
6.3 Diagnostic Testing, Clinical Evaluation, and Standard Case Definitions	36
6.4 Screening Outcome Documentation and Reporting	37
6.5 Ongoing Surveillance to Improve Newborn Screening Systems	40
<b>Chapter 7: Data Management and Analysis for Follow-up</b>	<b>43</b>
7.1 Follow-up Data Collection and Uniformity	44
7.2 Case Management Systems	45
7.3 Electronic Data Security and Transfer	47
7.4 Electronic Standards-based Messages	47
7.5 National or Global Newborn Screening Data Collection and Sharing Efforts	48
<b>Chapter 8: Evaluation of Follow-up and Education Activities: Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement</b>	<b>49</b>
8.1 Follow-up and Education Evaluation	50
8.2 Importance of False-Negative and False-Positive Screening Results	51
8.3 Building and Maintaining Relationships With Specialty Care Providers	51
8.4 Systematic Evaluation of Newborn Screening Through Long-Term Data Collection	52
<b>Chapter 9: Considerations With Advanced Screening Technology</b>	<b>53</b>
9.1 Molecular Testing	54
9.2 Secondary Analyses	55
<b>Chapter 10: Ethics, Equity, and Cultural Sensitivity</b>	<b>57</b>
10.1 Refusals	58
10.2 Health Literacy	58
10.3 Equity	59
10.4 Confidentiality and Protection of Private Data	59
<b>Chapter 11: Follow-up and Education Needs for Implementing Screening for New Diseases</b>	<b>61</b>
11.1 Disease-Specific Follow-up Algorithms	62
11.2 Educational Materials and Communications	62
11.3 Potential Changes Needed to Data Collection, Follow-up, and/or Resources	63
<b>Chapter 12: Emergency Preparedness Considerations for Follow-up and Education</b>	<b>65</b>
12.1 Contingency Planning for Emergency Operations	66
12.2 Follow-up and Education Considerations	66

## Contents (Continued)

Chapter 13: Conclusion .....	67
Chapter 14: Supplemental Information .....	69
References .....	76
Additional Resources .....	76
Appendix A. Overview of Newborn Screening Follow-up Workflow for Actionable Results .....	78
Appendix B. Repeat Screening (Requested) Follow-up Procedures Template .....	79
Appendix C. Unscreened or Missed Newborn Follow-up Procedures Template .....	80
Appendix D. Unacceptable Specimen Follow-up Procedures Template .....	81
Appendix E. Screen-Positive Results Follow-up Procedures Template .....	82
Appendix F. Postdiagnostic Follow-up Model .....	83
Appendix G. Example Laboratory Information Management System or Case Management System Requirements for Newborn Screening Follow-up .....	84
The Quality Management System Approach .....	86

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## Foreword

Newborn screening (NBS) is an essential public health service focused on testing every newborn for certain congenital diseases, groups of diseases, and/or phenotypic differences, including hearing differences, that can result in significant morbidity and/or mortality without early intervention.<sup>1</sup> Screening tests are not diagnostic. Rather, they separate newborns at higher risk of having a disease, group of diseases, or phenotypic difference from newborns at low risk. Therefore, newborns who have screen-positive results, indicating higher risk, must undergo additional diagnostic testing and clinical evaluation to confirm their status as affected or unaffected.

A complete NBS system comprises six parts: education, screening, follow-up, diagnosis, intervention and/or management, and evaluation.<sup>2</sup> Although the NBS system historically focused primarily on the screening tests performed within the public health laboratory, it is now understood that education, follow-up, diagnosis, intervention and/or management, and evaluation are equally important. An effective NBS system provides the infrastructure for universal access, education, and rapid follow-up for at-risk newborns. Parents and/or legal guardians; hospital, birthing facility, and midwifery personnel; health care providers (HCPs); and the NBS program should collaborate to ensure that the NBS system functions effectively and efficiently, providing maximum benefit to the family.

The primary aim of the NBS system is to provide early intervention for affected babies. Pre- and postdiagnostic follow-up helps ensure the accountability of NBS programs and systems. Follow-up, which determines whether NBS systems are achieving and sustaining their primary aims of preventing or minimizing morbidity and mortality, is vital to evaluating the benefits of NBS to an individual throughout his or her life, as well as to the family and society.<sup>3</sup> The quality of follow-up services directly affects the lives of families with at-risk and affected babies. This guideline outlines the role of follow-up services within an NBS system and provides guidance on developing and maintaining effective follow-up services, as well as on educating parents and legal guardians; hospital, birthing facility, and midwifery personnel; and HCPs on their roles in ensuring the success of NBS systems.

### Overview of Changes

This guideline replaces the previous edition of the approved guideline, NBS02-A2, published in 2013. Several changes were made in this edition, including:

- Explaining general and NBS-specific terminology, including recent changes:
  - Describing use of the term *special care baby unit and/or neonatal intensive care unit*
  - Clarifying use of the terms *disease, disorder, and condition*
  - Clarifying definitions for *short-term follow-up* and *long-term follow-up*
- Expanding discussion of the role of communication and education in the prenatal and postnatal periods and throughout NBS systems
- Discussing timeliness initiatives related to follow-up
- Expanding discussion of postdiagnostic follow-up needs for affected individuals and families
- Outlining considerations for use of advanced screening technologies and their effect on education and follow-up needs
- Describing follow-up considerations for new diseases or groups of diseases added to screening panels

**NOTE:** The content of this guideline is supported by the CLSI consensus process and does not necessarily reflect the views of any single individual or organization.

**KEY WORDS**

**congenital heart disease**

**newborn hearing screening**

**short-term follow-up**

**dried blood spot screening**

**newborn screening**

**long-term follow-up**

**quality assurance**

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# Chapter ①

## Introduction

# Newborn Screening Follow-up and Education

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Scope

The primary goal of this guideline is to enhance the overall quality and continuity of newborn screening (NBS) follow-up and education services offered through public health or other NBS programs. The timeliness, quality, and effectiveness of these services directly affect the health and well-being of babies and their families, as well as the effectiveness of the NBS system.

This guideline discusses both the follow-up and education components of the NBS system. Awareness, education, training, and engagement in NBS programs are pivotal to the ongoing success of NBS as a public health initiative. To ensure efficient coordination and informed decision-making, it is important that these efforts span the entire NBS system, including the preanalytical, analytical, and postanalytical phases. As NBS continues to expand and become more complex, NBS programs increasingly need to invest resources in information dissemination and evaluate the success of those efforts in achieving NBS-related communication goals.

Likewise, post-NBS follow-up services have evolved and might now span from the first days after birth to many years after a patient is diagnosed with a disease or trait or found to have hearing differences. Follow-up services include ensuring that all newborns have received a valid screen; establishing vigorous processes to ensure appropriate follow-up for babies with actionable results; and assessing care coordination, family needs, and health outcomes after diagnosis. In general, robust follow-up is an essential part of the screening pathway, contributing to the NBS goals of quickly detecting at-risk newborns and improving health outcomes for affected babies.

The NBS program should assess the resources available in its geographic location for disease diagnosis, treatment and other interventions, and follow-up. A lack of resources can limit the value of screening. Detecting newborns at increased risk for a disease might not be advisable if sufficient resources for care are not available.

This guideline outlines the wide range of follow-up and education activities that should be included in an NBS system. It is intended for global use by public health officials, policy makers, health care providers (HCPs), and anyone involved in any aspect of follow-up or education within NBS systems, including NBS program personnel, confirmatory laboratory personnel, parents, families, and other caregivers. It does not cover other components of the NBS system, such as laboratory methods, disease-specific monitoring, treatment and other intervention protocols, or specific follow-up considerations for point-of-care (POC) screening (eg, newborn hearing screening, critical congenital heart disease [CCHD] screening by pulse oximetry).

Although funding, laws, regulations, and external advisory committees certainly apply to and affect follow-up and education activities within NBS programs, the details of these components are not included in this guideline. However, it is important for NBS programs to ensure that follow-up and education activities are accounted for within funding, regulatory, and advisory structures by including program elements such as health education, short-term follow-up (STFU) and long-term follow-up (LTFU) staffing needs, materials development and dissemination, contracts with specialty centers, and coverage of medical foods and formulas.