



news

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Statement: Newborn Screening Settlement

The Texas Department of State Health Services today issued the following statement regarding the recent settlement of a lawsuit about the storage of dried bloodspots from the state's newborn screening program:

DSHS believes settling this lawsuit is in the best interest of this program's core mission to screen all newborn babies in Texas for life-threatening disorders. Newborn screening saves children's lives, and settling this lawsuit allows us to continue operating this critical program.

As a result of this settlement, DSHS will destroy all bloodspot cards received by the department before May 27, 2009, the date legislation expressly authorized the storage and specified uses of the samples.

DSHS is complying with all the requirements of that legislation, including the provision allowing parents to have bloodspots from their infants destroyed rather than stored. We will continue to be very sensitive to the privacy concerns of parents and the confidentiality of all medical information.

If parents don't object, the department saves the samples for uses allowed under the new legislation – primarily quality assurance and control purposes to ensure accuracy in lab testing and because the samples could provide an invaluable resource in researching new or more effective ways to prevent, diagnose and treat serious medical conditions that affect Texas children, including leukemia and birth defects.

DSHS screens approximately 800,000 newborn specimens annually.

Information about the DSHS Newborn Screening Program is available online at www.dshs.state.tx.us/newborn/default.shtm.

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