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News Release

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Ohio Starts Testing for New Disease in Ohio's Infants

Early identification of severe combined immunodeficiency disorder can be lifesaving

COLUMBUS - The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) today announced that it has added severe combined immunodeficiency disorder (SCID) to the list of diseases that all newborns in Ohio are screened for at birth. The ODH laboratory began screening for SCID on July 29, using the same newborn screening specimens already collected to test for 35 other rare disorders.

"The new screening item helps move Ohio forward in our fight against infant mortality," said Dr. Ted Wymyslo, Director of the Ohio Department of Health. "More than 1,000 babies die before their first birthday in Ohio. By detecting SCID early, we can help our state's infants have a healthier start to life and less medical problems down the road."

SCID is a group of genetic disorders that causes profound defects of the immune system, the body's line of defense against all types of infections. SCID is one of the most critical immune system problems and occurs in an estimated one in 40,000 newborns. If it is not treated, most affected infants die within the first year of life. The screening is expected to identify approximately three infants with SCID each year in Ohio.

Ohio's newborn screening program began in 1964 with one disorder and now screens for 36 disorders. Approximately 140,000 newborns are screened annually. The blood to be tested is drawn by a simple heel stick within 48 hours of birth. The screening provides an opportunity to detect medical conditions that, if not addressed early, would cause serious problems like developmental delays, major illness or death.

Prior to the addition of SCID on Monday, Tyrosinemia was the last disorder added and that occurred in July 2011. Additional information on the Ohio Department of Health's Newborn Screening Program is available on the [agency's website](#).

Details on Ohio Department of Health initiatives to reduce infant mortality are also [available online](#).

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