

MLS Laboratory Update: Newborn Screening Specimen Cards Temporary Shortage

FEBRUARY 29, 2024

Purpose of this Message:

To inform MLS Laboratories that there is a temporary shortage of newborn screening specimen cards, as such we are accepting 5-spot specimen cards for the time being.

Action Item:

Read the notification and share with other laboratorians and clinical partners at your site.

Laboratory Specific Information:

Dear Newborn Screening Submitter,

We've run into an issue with our newborn screening specimen cards and will not be able to provide our submitters with their entire order of our 6-spot specimen cards. To minimize disruptions as much as possible:

- Some submitters received a smaller amount of screening cards than usual. If necessary, we will send another shipment in a few weeks to tide each submitter over until we can fulfill the entire order.
- Some submitters received a shipment that includes our old 5-spot specimen cards. Both 5- and 6- spot specimen cards will be accepted by the lab until further notice.

We will communicate with you once we are able to fulfill your entire order with 6-spot specimen cards. Thank you for your patience and all the work you do on behalf of newborns across Minnesota.

Please reach out if you become critically low on newborn screening specimen cards.

Background:

You may find these tips from staff who regularly collect screening samples helpful:

- Newborns are better hydrated and easier to draw after they have begun to nurse. Waiting until the baby has been fed several times often makes collection easier.
- While warming the heel improves blood flow, it is helpful to keep the whole baby warm. Leaving the baby swaddled and slipping just the foot out of the blanket can improve blood flow.

- Let gravity be your ally. Let the baby's foot dangle lower than the heart. Many hospital baby cribs can be propped or angled to allow better foot position.
- It can be distressing to hear a baby cry especially for new parents who may be present at the collection. Some nurseries offer Sweetees or other forms of sugar to stop the baby's cries. This practice may be counter-productive for blood collection. When babies cry, they often redden because blood is coming to the surface, this increased blood flow may make it easier to collect the specimen quickly and allow the baby to be calmed and comforted sooner.

Please share this letter and its enclosure with the appropriate personnel within your hospital system. We hope you find this information helpful in your preparation, and we thank you for your continued support of newborn screening.

Questions: Please contact: Ron Brown, our Newborn Screening Program Operations Supervisor at Ron.Brown@state.mn.us or 651-201-5058.

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PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO ALL APPROPRIATE PERSONNEL WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION AND HEALTH SYSTEM

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