



Millionth Newborn Screened in Ontario

OTTAWA - March 21, 2013 –As of today, Newborn Screening Ontario (NSO) has tested **one million babies** born in Ontario, Canada, for rare diseases that are treatable. Since NSO started at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) in 2006, over 1250 newborn babies with these diseases have been diagnosed through newborn screening.

Most of the ~145,000 babies born each year in Ontario are healthy; however, some have rare diseases that are treatable. Most babies with these diseases look healthy at birth, but they are at risk of having serious health problems like severe learning problems, frequent sickness and even death – if their disease is not detected and treated.

Using a heelprick test, a small amount of blood is collected from all babies shortly after birth. This blood is sent to NSO where it is used to screen for 28 diseases. For these diseases, early diagnosis is the key to effective treatment.

History of newborn screening in Ontario

Newborn screening started in Ontario in 1965 with screening for Phenylketonuria (PKU), by public health. Screening for Congenital Hypothyroidism was added in 1978. The program stayed much the same for 27 years, until NSO was founded in 2005.

NSO’s mission is to ensure every newborn receives the highest quality screening and care for serious disease. NSO has improved newborn screening in Ontario by updating the number and type of tests available. Right now babies in Ontario are screened for 28 diseases including Cystic Fibrosis and Sickle Cell Anemia. NSO is preparing for the addition of a 29th disease, Severe Combined Immune Deficiency (SCID), later this year.

Ontario is a leader in newborn screening. NSO is the most comprehensive newborn screening program in Canada, and is one of the largest and most modern programs in the world. For more information about newborn screening in Ontario, please visit www.newbornscreening.on.ca or contact:

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