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Laboratory Bulletin

DATE:	2022 February 22
TO:	All Zones
FROM:	Genetics & Genomics, Newborn Screening Laboratory
RE:	**Spinal Muscular Atrophy Newborn Screening Pilot Program**

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message

- Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) will be added to the Alberta newborn screening panel beginning on Feb 27, 2022, as part of a one-year pilot program.

Background

- SMA is a genetic disorder that affects the motor neurons of the brainstem and spinal cord. Early diagnosis and treatment leads to better health outcomes for babies with SMA. Treatment can slow or even stop the progression of SMA, especially if given before the onset of symptoms.
- The Alberta newborn screening panel identifies babies with disorders that may otherwise be undetectable at birth. With the addition of SMA, the Alberta Newborn Metabolic Screening Program screens for 22 disorders.
- This one-year pilot program is funded by a grant from Muscular Dystrophy Canada supported by donations from Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada, with additional research and development prior to this pilot supported by funding from the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation. Following this pilot and a Health Evidence Review conducted by Alberta Health it is anticipated that SMA will remain permanently on the Alberta newborn screening panel.

How this will impact you

- There is no change to the collection or ordering of newborn screening.
- Primary care providers and specialists will be notified by telephone of critical newborn screen results and will be provided with educational resources.

Action Required

- Visit the Alberta Health Services Newborn Metabolic Screening Program's Resource page to access Provider Information and other resources at: www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page9014.aspx

Effective

- February 27, 2022

Questions/Concerns

- Please contact the Newborn Screening Laboratory Genetic Counsellors at 780-407-7907.

Approved by

- Dr. Dennis Bulman, Medical/Scientific Director, Genetics & Genomics, APL
- Dr. Carolyn O'Hara, Chief Medical Laboratory Officer (Interim), APL