



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
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February 1, 2008

DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

No. **2008-0020**

TO: THE UNDERSECRETARIES, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS, ARMM SECRETARY, CHIEFS OF HOSPITAL, MEDICAL DIRECTORS, AND OTHERS CONCERNED.

SUBJECT: Reiterating the Provision of Newborn Screening Services as a Mandatory Licensing Requirement for All Hospitals

Republic Act 9288, otherwise known as the Newborn Screening Act of 2004 was passed last April 7, 2004. Section 8 of this law stipulates that the Department of Health and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation shall require health institutions to provide newborn screening services as a condition for licensure or accreditation of hospitals.

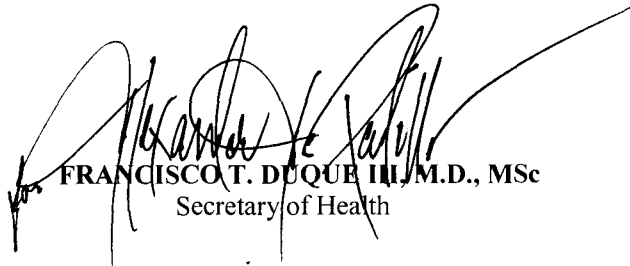
In 2004, with the revision of the licensing standards for hospital and birthing homes, the provision of newborn screening services was included as a mandatory licensing requirement. All hospitals and birthing homes were required to enroll as a newborn screening facility to ensure that all newborns will be screened.

In year 2006, the provision of newborn screening services was fully implemented in all hospitals and birthing homes to ensure that adequate and sustained newborn screening services such as information, education, communication, screening, recall and management of identified cases are provided.

However, the newborn screening coverage in the country still remains very low. As of December 2007, only 15.6% (234,000) of the 1.5 million newborns were screened. Only 1,610 health facilities are enrolled as a newborn screening facility. Out of these health facilities, 1,020 are hospitals, which is only 57.6% of the total 1,771 licensed hospitals. Out of the 1,610 enrolled health facilities, 1,325 (82.3%) are active in the submission of samples while 285 (17.7%) are inactive.

In view of the above, the Department of Health is reiterating the provision of newborn screening services as a mandatory licensing requirement for all hospitals. By year 2009, the DOH shall assess full compliance with the requirement by determining actual number of newborns screened out of the total number of live births.

For your strict compliance.


FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, M.D., MSc
Secretary of Health