

NEWS RELEASE

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BOTHWELL BEGINS CONGENITAL HEART SCREEN ON ALL NEWBORNS

SEDALIA -- Beginning with the new year, all babies born at Bothwell Regional Health Center will have pulse oximetry screening within 48 hours of their birth. The screen measures oxygen in the bloodstream and helps identify the presence of congenital heart defects.



Pulse oximetry screening of newborns is mandated by a state law that went into effect Jan. 1. Senate Bill 230, also known as Chloe's Law, was the result of a Lee's Summit mother (Kelly Manz), who lobbied for the test after her infant daughter was diagnosed with four congenital heart defects and required open-heart surgery.

"We screen for congenital heart disease because there are babies who don't have symptoms during pregnancy, birth or while they're in the hospital right after birth, said Lana Kelly, director of the Women's Health and Nursery at Bothwell. "These babies may not have symptoms until they are at home, and those symptoms may be life threatening."

Kelly is a member of the Critical Congenital Heart Disease Task Force that is helping to draft the reporting rules for the law. Although the law is in effect, rules and the reporting mechanism have yet to be developed. Roughly 4,800 babies are born with congenital heart defects each year in the United States.

Pulse oximetry, which takes about 10 minutes, consists of connecting a lead to the infant's right hand and a foot to monitor oxygen in the bloodstream. Readings of at least 94 are considered normal, Kelly said. If the reading is less than 90, other tests, such as an echocardiogram (an ultrasound of the heart), may be necessary. If the reading is between 90 and 94, it is to be repeated in an hour.

Pulse oximetry is one of three screenings infants now receive before leaving the hospital. The other two tests are a hearing screening and a metabolic panel that screens for more than 30 different abnormalities.

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Cutline: Tammy Walker, a charge nurse in the Nursery at Bothwell Regional Health Center, attaches a sensor to a newborn baby girl to conduct the pulse oximetry screening now required by state law. The test measures the level in oxygen in the bloodstream and screens for congenital heart defects.

For more information on Bothwell Regional Health Center and its services, visit the Web site at www.brhc.org or find them on Facebook.