

# Pulse oximetry screenings save lives of babies with congenital heart defects

17 November 2014

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Screening for congenital heart defects with pulse oximetry identified newborn babies with previously unsuspected critical congenital heart defects (CCHD), according to research presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2014. Babies with undetected CCHD have a significant increased risk of disability or death.

About nine of every 1,000 babies are born with [congenital heart defects](#)—the leading cause of infant deaths in the United States—and 25 percent of those have CCHD.

New Jersey is the first state to implement mandated newborn CCHD screening using [pulse oximetry](#) in all licensed birthing facilities.

Approximately 99.6 percent of 278,409 eligible babies born in licensed birthing facilities were screened from August 2011 through June 2014. Of 183 babies who failed the screen, 86 had a diagnostic evaluation solely attributable to the screening.

As a result, 13 babies with previously unknown CCHD were detected prior to hospital discharge which may have prevented significant disability or death—New Jersey Birth Defects Registry for births from August 2011-June 2014.

Provided by American Heart Association

APA citation: Pulse oximetry screenings save lives of babies with congenital heart defects (2014, November 17) retrieved 29 April 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-11-pulse-oximetry-screenings-babies-congenital.html>

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