
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1420 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY BOBACK, WHITE, BAKER, CALTAGIRONE, YOUNGBLOOD,
COX, DONATUCCI, FLYNN, MUNDY, ROZZI, KAVULICH, RAPP, O'BRIEN,
BROWNLEE, SCHLOSSBERG, GINGRICH, HARKINS, HARHAI, COHEN,
QUINN, FARINA, R. BROWN, BROOKS, HESS, SABATINA, V. BROWN,
EVERETT, KULA, WATSON, KORTZ AND MILNE, MAY 23, 2013

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MAY 23, 2013

AN ACT

1 Providing for newborn child pulse oximetry screening.

2 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3 hereby enacts as follows:

4 Section 1. Short title.

5 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Newborn Child
6 Pulse Oximetry Screening Act.

7 Section 2. Findings.

8 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

9 (1) Congenital heart defects (CHD) are structural
10 abnormalities that are present at birth and range in severity
11 from simple holes in the heart to severe malformations.

12 (2) Some severe congenital heart defects can cause
13 serious and life-threatening symptoms that require
14 intervention in the first days of life.

15 (3) The March of Dimes reports that approximately
16 350,000 infants are born with heart defects every year in the

1 United States.

2 (4) Congenital heart defects are the number one killer
3 of infants with birth defects, however, advances in diagnosis
4 and surgical treatment have led to dramatic increases in
5 survival for children with serious heart defects.

6 (5) In the United States, about 1.4 million children and
7 adults live with congenital heart defects today and nearly
8 all are able to live productive, active lives.

9 (6) Current methods for detecting congenital heart
10 defects include prenatal ultrasound screenings and repeated
11 clinical examinations, which only identify less than half of
12 all cases of CHD.

13 (7) Pulse oximetry is a noninvasive test that when
14 performed on newborns is effective in detecting critical,
15 life-threatening congenital heart defects that go undetected
16 by current screening methods.

17 Section 3. Definitions.

18 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
19 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
20 context clearly indicates otherwise:

21 "Birthing facility." An inpatient or ambulatory health care
22 facility licensed by the department that provides birthing and
23 newborn care services.

24 "Department." The Department of Health of the Commonwealth.

25 "Newborn child." A child less than 28 days of age.

26 Section 4. Pulse Oximetry Screening.

27 (a) General rule.--Except as provided for in subsection (b),
28 the department shall require a birthing facility to perform a
29 critical congenital heart defects screening using pulse oximetry
30 on a newborn child in its care before discharge from the

1 birthing facility.

2 (b) Exception.--A screening test under subsection (a) may
3 not be performed if a parent or guardian of the newborn child
4 dissents on the ground that the test conflicts with a religious
5 belief or practice.

6 Section 5. Regulations.

7 The department shall promulgate regulations necessary to
8 effectuate the provisions of this act.

9 Section 6. Effective date.

10 This act shall take effect in 90 days.