

## Dept. of Health adds 'bubble boy' disease to newborn screenings

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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In February, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Laboratory added Severe Combined Immunodeficiency (SCID), often referred to as bubble boy disease, to its core panel of newborn screening tests. The screening tests detect 35 debilitating and potentially life-threatening birth disorders in newborns.

David Butcher, director of the state laboratory where the Colorado Newborn Screening Program is based, said, "SCID typically leads to death before the child's first birthday. However, when diagnosed early, the condition is amenable to treatment. Early diagnosis and treatment with a bone-marrow transplant markedly improves the long-term health outcomes of the infant."

A conservative estimate of the prevalence of SCID in Colorado is 1/66,000 births, Butcher said.

The Colorado Board of Health voted in March 2011 to add SCID to Colorado's newborn screening panel. In preparation for launching the test, scientists were trained in conducting and analyzing the tests, and the lab acquired necessary equipment. Since testing began Feb. 1, approximately 2,500 SCID tests have been performed on newborns, and no positive test results have yet been reported. Seven total states now are testing for SCID.

Butcher said to fund the testing of this additional disorder, the state lab's fee for the screening will rise \$7.

The average hospital bill for a baby who goes undiagnosed with SCID is estimated to be \$2.2 million. By contrast, the cost to treat an early diagnosed case is estimated at \$250,000 for a bone marrow transplant.

For more information about SCID, visit [www.SCID.net](http://www.SCID.net). For information on Colorado's Newborn Screening Program, visit [www.cdphe.state.co.us/lr/newbornscreening.htm](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/lr/newbornscreening.htm).

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