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For immediate release

Province expands newborn screening program

Health PEI

Government is partnering with the IWK Health Centre to increase the number of disorders for which newborns in Prince Edward Island will be screened, says Health and Wellness Minister Doug Currie.

"I am extremely pleased to expand our existing newborn screening program to ensure the early detection of even more conditions, including cystic fibrosis and sickle cell anemia," said the Minister. "It will also mean better support and follow-up service will be in place for the improved health of Island children."

Babies born in Prince Edward Island are currently screened for 13 conditions, including metabolic conditions and blood disorders. Another 13 will be added within the next two years.

"This is great news for Island infants and their families," said Dr. Kathy Bigsby, Health PEI pediatrician. "Early diagnosis can help prevent permanent disabilities and other serious health issues."

Currently the IWK Health Centre does newborn screening for all babies born in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. With this expansion, the IWK will do all screening for babies born in the Prince Edward Island, which will standardize services and testing.

The Maritime screening program will also provide a full range of services beyond screening, such as arranging follow-up appointments, clinical visits and referral to specialists for patients who test positive for a condition.

Government will invest an additional \$70,000 per year for the expansion of the program.

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