

<b>DATE:</b>	22 December 2025
<b>TO:</b>	Pediatric Hematologists, All Zones
<b>FROM:</b>	Alberta Newborn Screening Laboratory, Genetics & Genomics, APL
<b>RE:</b>	<b>Referral Pathway for Positive Newborn Screens for Sickle Cell Disease</b>

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### Key Message

- Once notified of a positive newborn screen for sickle cell disease (or other hemoglobinopathy), the on-call pediatric hematologist will be responsible for contacting the primary care provider and ensuring that appropriate diagnostic testing and follow-up is initiated. This is a change from the current process where the ordering provider has been contacting the hematologist on-call to arrange a plan for contacting the family.

### Background

- When a positive newborn screen for sickle cell disease (other hemoglobinopathy) is identified, the Genetic Counsellor in the Alberta Newborn Screening Laboratory (ANSL) contacts the on-call pediatric hematologist and the most responsible healthcare provider, often a pediatrician or family physician. Diagnostic testing and clinical follow-up are indicated to determine whether the infant has sickle cell disease or another hemoglobinopathy. A lack of clarity regarding the referral pathway has led to delayed investigations. As experts that understand the clinical severity of hemoglobinopathies and the importance of determining whether the screen was a true positive or false positive, pediatric hematologists will coordinate communications and follow-up testing. This change in the referral pathway aligns with the referral pathways for other screened disorders.

### How this will impact you

- The on-call pediatric hematologist is responsible for contacting the most responsible healthcare provider indicated by the ANSL Genetic Counsellor to ensure diagnostic testing and appropriate clinical follow-up is initiated in a timely manner.

**Effective      Immediately**

### Questions/Concerns

- ANSL Genetic Counsellors: 780-407-7907

### Approved by

- Dr. Dennis Bulman, Medical/Scientific Director, Genetics & Genomics, APL
- Dr. Carolyn O'Hara, Chief Medical Laboratory Officer (Interim), APL