

5 Briarwood Drive
Sherman,
CT 06784

March 7, 2012

Public Health Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3000
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Support for Bill # SB 56

Dear Public Health Committee,

I am here today to urge you to support SB#56. Congenital Heart Defects is the most common of all birth defects - 1 in 100 births! All newborns in the state of Connecticut should be automatically screened for CHD with pulse oximetry. Pulse oximetry should automatically be the 5th Vital sign in newborn screening.

As a mother of two wonderful healthy children, a practicing Registered Nurse and patient advocate, I was fortunate to become involved with Marie Hatcher and her wonderful son, Matthew, who is living testimony of a positive outcome to early intervention.

I could stand here and quote study after study that endorses pulse oximetry for CCHD, the study I wish to refer to is from the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine regarding "Missed Diagnosis of Critical Congenital Heart Disease." There was a 15 year California study which was based on 898 infants who died of CCHD in infancy. 152 were determined to have missed CCHD diagnosis; 299 late diagnosis. According to National Statistics, of the approximate 4,000 babies born nationally with CCHD each year, "one can assume 2,000 babies would die due to undiagnosed or late diagnosis of CCHD." The median age of death for the deaths in CA was less than 2 weeks and more than 50% with missed CCHD died at home or in the hospital emergency room.

In the state of Indiana, a beautiful baby girl, named Cora, died in her mother's arms while breastfeeding 5 days after her birth. No mother should have to experience this tragedy especially when there is a simple screening test available to detect CHD.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention both endorse Pulse Oximetry Screening for Critical Congenital Heart Defects. Danbury Hospital, where I work as a R.N., are implementing this test without a mandate because without screening, some newborns with CCHDs might be missed because the signs of CCHD might not be evident before an infant is discharged from the hospital after birth as was the case with Cora. Please mandate screening.

Sincerely,

Olwen M. Gurry, RN