Strategies for Implementing Screening for Critical Congenital Heart Disease
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Background
Although newborn screening for critical congenital heart disease (CCHD) was recommended by the US
Health and Human Services Secretary's Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders in Newborns and
Children to promote early detection, it was deemed by the Secretary of the HHS as not ready for adoption
pending an implementation plan from HHS agencies.

Objective
To develop strategies for the implementation of safe, effective, and efficient screening.

Methods
A work group was convened with members selected by the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Heritable
Disorders in Newborns and Children, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of
Cardiology Foundation, and the American Heart Association.

Results
On the basis of published and unpublished data, the work group made recommendations for a
standardized approach to screening and diagnostic follow-up. Key issues for future research and
evaluation were identified.

Conclusions
The work-group members found sufficient evidence to begin screening for low blood oxygen saturation
through the use of pulse-oximetry monitoring to detect CCHD in well-infant and intermediate care
nurseries. Research is needed regarding screening in special populations (eg, at high altitude) and to
evaluate service infrastructure and delivery strategies (eg, telemedicine) for nurseries without on-site
echocardiography. Public health agencies will have an important role in quality assurance and
surveillance. Central to the effectiveness of screening will be the development of a national technical
assistance center to coordinate implementation and evaluation of newborn screening for CCHD.