

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives

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House Bill 184: Newborn Screening for Heart Defects **(28-LS0506\N)** **Sponsor Statement**

HB 184 sets forth in statute a requirement for all newborns, born in a healthcare facility, to be screened for critical congenital heart defects (CCHDs) using a technique known as pulse oximetry. CCHDs afflict approximately 1 in 100 newborns and are one of leading causes of infant mortality. Pulse oximetry testing is a non-invasive procedure that costs about the same as a diaper change in the nursery.

This bill is modeled after legislation endorsed by the Council of State Government's Suggested State Legislation committee. That committee used legislation passed in New Jersey as the basis for its recommendation. On the first day that New Jersey's law went into effect the screening procedures detected an abnormal reading and subsequent medical interventions saved an infant boy's life.

The State of Alaska already performs dozens of tests on newborns to screen for other diseases, including phenylketonuria and cystic fibrosis. In 2011, the Department of Health and Human Services added screening for CCHDs to the Recommended Uniform Screening Panel.

Pulse oximetry testing for CCHDs will save lives of newborn Alaskans.

Please contact my legislative aide, Ted Madsen, at 465-2840, with any comments or concerns.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 184.