

'Twas the Night before Christmas

*'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the lab,
Newborn screenings were done with a little heel stab.*

*The blood was applied to the cards with care,
In hopes that the courier soon would be there.*

*The babies were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.*

*When out in the hall there arose such clatter,
I sprang from my chair to see what was the matter.*

*Away to the door I flew like a flash,
To see if I could help resolve the clash.*

*What to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a rejected sample and a mother in fear.*

*Because of the holidays all the staff there were new,
So a nurse came to me asking "What do I do?"*

*I went to my office and took off the wall,
Guidelines that should be followed by all.*

*Collect blood at 24 to 48 hours of age,
And make sure it dries before folding the page.*

*Fill up the circle in one application,
This will prevent any test complication.*

*Fill out forms completely and check all the boxes,
Make sure all I's have dots and all T's have crosses.*

*Ensure hand writing is neat and clear,
Even at this busy time of the year.*

*Send them off promptly so the lab gets them quick,
You can save a life with this one little stick.*

*Snail mail is too slow so courier is best,
But UPS and FedEx also pass the test.*

*The nurse nodded her head and swept off like a broom.
The mom with babe followed to a collection room.*

*I heard down the hallway the anxious mom ask,
"How much blood are you taking, a drop or a flask?"*

*I heard the nurse giggle and I had to grin,
Until the cries of the baby begin.*

*The cries of her child were hard to ignore,
So she asked the nurse "What is this test for?"*

*Without missing a beat the nurse did proclaim,
"So many tests!" then she called them by name:*

*"For biotinidase deficiency and galactosemia,
For cystic fibrosis and sickle cell anemia,*

*For endocrine disorders and PKU,
For amino acid disorders and MCAD too,*

*For conditions of organic and fatty acids,
To find rare diseases out among the masses.*

*And many more tests, all-in-all over thirty,
Provided to you by Kansas for free!"*

*And then, in a twinkling, the crying was done.
The mom and babe left as quick as they'd come.*

*Who should come next through the door with a shiver,
But the courier picking up specimens to deliver.*

*He grabbed today's batch without any sound,
Placed them in his pack and turned right around.*

*He rushed out the door and on to the next,
To pick up more samples from other subjects.*

*The courier exclaimed as he drove out of sight,
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"*

Newborn screening error rates and specimen transit times increase every year around the holidays.

Help us celebrate the miracle of birth ensuring proper collection and timely submission of specimens for all babies born this holiday season.

Thank you and Merry Christmas!

From the Kansas Department of Health and Environmental Laboratories Newborn Screening Staff