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# Campbell infant's genetic disorder leads to new law requiring newborns to be tested for 5 diseases

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By Chris Blank, Associated Press Writer

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) - Missouri will become one of a few states to test newborns for several kinds of rare and often fatal genetic disorders under a new law signed Wednesday.

Gov. Jay Nixon signed into law a measure that adds five lysosomal storage disorders to the 67 other diseases for which infants already are screened. By July 2012, state tests will include checks for Krabbe, Pompe, Gaucher, Niemann-Pick and Fabry.

The legislation is named for Brady Cunningham, a southeast Missouri boy who died in April from Krabbe disease. Earlier this year, Jessy and Dustin Cunningham brought their son to the Capitol from their Campbell home to urge lawmakers to approve the bill.

Speaking at Wednesday's bill signing ceremony, they expressed appreciation for support from family members and thanked the bill's backers.

"We know that Brady's purpose here on this Earth was to get this bill passed, and we just thank him for that," Jessy Cunningham said.

Nixon, a Democrat, said the expanded newborn screening is a "wonderful tribute" to Brady that will make "the future for so many families less challenging than it would have been."

The state Department of Health and Senior Services reported in an analysis of the expected costs of the additional testing that about 80,000 babies are born in Missouri annually. The department estimated screening would diagnose eight to 10 infants per year with one of the five diseases.

Currently only New York - which checks for Krabbe - is screening newborns for a lysosomal disorder. The disorder was highlighted there after the son of former Buffalo Bills quarterback Jim Kelly died after being diagnosed with Krabbe. Next year, Illinois is to begin checking newborns for five lysosomal disorders.

The expanded newborn screening legislation was among seven bills Nixon approved during a ceremony, in which legislative sponsors and advocates received signed, ceremonial bills and the pens used by the governor.

Among the other measures endorsed by Nixon was legislation requiring school districts to set up policies for dealing with food allergies by July 2011 and forcing mortgage loan originators to be licensed.

Nixon said the mortgage and allergy bills are examples of how state government should seek to prevent problems rather than simply responding.

"If you don't have a problem in the future, if your kid doesn't get into a coughing fit at school and if a mortgage broker doesn't rip somebody off, it will be because of bills like this," he said.

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