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## **NEW ASE GUIDELINE PROVIDES FRAMEWORK AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ASSIST ADULT CARDIAC SONOGRAPHERS IN SCREENING NEWBORNS FOR CRITICAL CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE**

March 3, 2021, Durham, NC – Congenital heart disease (CHD) is the most common form of physical defect present in a baby at birth. While it occurs in nine of every 1,000 live births, it is not always identified early and referred to a pediatric cardiologist. Lack of early detection may lead to the need for urgent evaluation in a hospital that does not have access to pediatric specialists. Therefore, there is a need for all cardiac sonographers, regardless of their pediatric experience, to be able to detect CHD and recognize those cases that are critical in nature. To assist these clinicians, the American Society of Echocardiography created [Recommendations for the Adult Cardiac Sonographer Performing Echocardiography to Screen for Critical Congenital Heart Disease in the Newborn](#), which provides the adult sonographer, who does not typically screen for critical congenital heart disease (C-CHD), with the essential information and tools needed to detect C-CHD in newborns and aid in life-saving diagnosis.

Critical congenital heart disease (C-CHD) is a major contributor to death despite the development of specialized pediatric cardiac centers. A common occurrence in many forms of C-CHD is hypoxemia which occurs when the levels of oxygen in the blood are lower than normal. Pulse oximetry screening (POS), a test used to measure the oxygen level in a newborn's blood, is a common screening. If a newborn's POS shows a low oxygen reading, there is a need for immediate evaluation for C-CHD using echocardiography and this can be challenging for adult sonographers.

The document not only describes the pathology, but also includes over 30 videos demonstrating the 12 most common forms of C-CHD that are detectable by POS, in addition to videos demonstrating the exact red-flag findings and the echocardiographic views recommended. Additionally, this document provides a framework for establishing a relationship between centers performing screening echocardiograms in newborns and a referral center with expertise in C-CHD.

Chair of the ASE guideline writing group, Melissa Wasserman, RDCS, RCCS, FASE, Satellite Operations Sonographer Lead, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, said, "Adult cardiac sonographers are often asked to perform echocardiograms on newborns to screen for CHD, though many are unfamiliar with CHD echo findings, specifically findings for C-CHD lesions. A sonographer's worst nightmare is to miss a critical cardiac lesion. The ASE Councils on Pediatric and CHD and Cardiovascular Sonography collaborated to provide these guidelines that contain essential information and tools for all cardiac sonographers. This document describes C-CHD screening targets and specific imaging recommendations, and the correlating videos show sonographers exactly what is being described. Our hope is that these guidelines will help all cardiac sonographers, regardless of their pediatric experience, to be able to detect C-CHD, and ultimately improve patient care and outcomes." This peer-reviewed guideline has been endorsed by 18 ASE International Alliance Partners and other societies.

In conjunction with the publication of this guideline, Ms. Wasserman and writing group co-chair Bruce Landeck, MD, FASE, will conduct a live webinar, including a question-and-answer section, on April 20, 2021 at 5:00 PM ET. The webinar will be available for free to all ASE members and open to all other clinicians for just \$25 USD. Registration will open soon and access to all ASE-hosted guideline webinars is available on the [ASE Learning Hub](#).

The full guideline document is available on the *Journal of American Society of Echocardiography* (JASE) website ([OnlineJASE.com](#)). This document and all ASE Guideline documents are also available to the medical community at [ASEcho.org/Guidelines](#).

### **About ASE**

ASE is the Society for Cardiovascular Ultrasound Professionals™. Over 17,000 physicians, sonographers, nurses, veterinarians, and scientists are members of ASE, making it the largest global organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging and as such the leader and advocate, setting practice standards and guidelines for the field. The Society is committed to advancing cardiovascular ultrasound to improve lives. For more information about ASE, visit: [ASEcho.org](#) and follow us [@ASE360](#).

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