

## **BDRIS History**

In 1982, Maryland Law established a Birth Defects Reporting and Information System(BDRIS) mandated by Health Article-General Section 18-206: Annotated Code of Maryland. Data collection began in September 1, 1983. During this time there were 12 specific birth defects chosen by the World Health Organization (WHO) for their international birth defects surveillance program. The sentinel birth defects included: Anencephaly, Spina Bifida, Hydrocephalus, Cleft Lip with or without Cleft Palate, Cleft Palate, Esophageal Atresia/Tracheo-Esophageal Fistula, Rectal/Anal Atresia, Hypospadias, Reduction Deformity (upper limb), Reduction Deformity (lower limb), Congenital Hip Dislocation, and Down Syndrome.

However, in October 2008, the law was changed to require the reporting of all birth defects, noted or suspected at birth, within the State of Maryland. It is the responsibility of the institution in which the infant is born to report the birth defect to BDRIS. In addition, liveborns and stillborns weighing more than 500 grams or at least 20 weeks gestation are to be reported. In the event of a home birth, it is the responsibility of the person who is required by law to file the birth certificate to report the birth defect to BDRIS. In the majority of home birth cases, a physician or nurse-midwife attends the birth and files the report.

The information is reported through the use of the Birth Defects Report Form. Contacts are established at each hospital to ensure accurate reporting and to provide additional information to the BDRIS staff when requested. The BDRIS nurse will provide training and in-services to birth facility staff on the Birth Defects law and the Birth Defects Reporting procedure.

Parental permission is not required in order to complete the form; however, parents should be informed of the reporting mandate. Informational pamphlets are available at the birth hospital and should be given to the parent by the physician at the time the birth defect is being explained.

It is the responsibility of the BDRIS staff to send a letter to the parents within six months of the infant's birth to offer information on the diagnosed birth defect, available resources and available services to providing support and assistance.