

# CollegeNews

## **New ACMG Practice Guideline: Population-Based Carrier Screening Recommended For Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA)**

The American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG) has just released a comprehensive new ACMG Policy Statement recommending Carrier Screening for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). This document is the first recommendation to address population-based SMA carrier screening. It was developed by Thomas W. Prior, PhD, FACMG for the ACMG Professional Practice and Guidelines Committee and approved by ACMG's Board of Directors. The new Practice Guideline is available online at [www.acmg.net](http://www.acmg.net) under the Publications/Policy Statements section and also appeared in the November issue of *Genetics in Medicine*. The statement includes five key recommendations for offering SMA Carrier Screening in the general population. The ACMG is developing the necessary educational materials to support the implementation of SMA carrier screening programs.

## **Dr. Barry H. Thompson Joins ACMG as Medical Director**

Barry H. Thompson, MD, FAAP, FACMG joined the ACMG in October as Medical Director. "This new clinical geneticist position will play a vital role in representing geneticists' interests across the medical field and will have broad, significant responsibilities including active involvement in ACMG's interactions with other medical associations, specifically, and the AMA," says ACMG President Joe Leigh Simpson, MD, FACOG, FACMG. "Dr. Thompson will work with ACMG's Executive Director Michael S. Watson, PhD, FACMG in extending many current initiatives and also in developing others."

Dr. Thompson will also have substantial involvement in ACMG's cooperative agreement with HRSA to operate the National Coordinating Center for Regional Genetics and Newborn Screening Collaboratives and a contract with the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development of the National Institutes of Health to establish and direct the Newborn Screening Translational Research Network (NBSTRN). In addition, the Medical Director will be active with ACMG's clinical committees and the development of practice guidelines funded from other sources.

Dr. Thompson is board-certified in pediatrics, clinical genetics and clinical cytogenetics. He is Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics/Medical Genetics at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and mentor for medical students in medical ethics. He is a member of the Washington Academy of Medicine.

"I consider it essential to continue efforts to address the concerns of members regarding allocation of clinical and laboratory activities and just compensation for these activities. The appreciation, in the general population, of the results of genetic and genomic research, demands that the College redouble its efforts to make available to primary care providers such information that promotes effective interaction with increasingly informed patients," says Dr. Thompson. "The Newborn Screening Translational Research Network (NBSTRN) will help meet our goal of improving the knowledge base that underpins our medical practices. I look forward to working with the staff and members to build on past successes for future achievements."

Dr. Thompson received his MD from Vanderbilt University in 1965 and completed his residency in pediatrics. Drafted into the Air Force in 1968, he completed sponsored post-doctoral training (1971-1974) in the Department of Medical Genetics, Indiana University Medical Center, Indianapolis. He then continued a 30-year career that included clinical, academic and administrative duties. In 1979, Dr. Thompson was tasked by the Surgeon General to establish the USAF Medical Genetics Center at Keesler AFB, MS and served for six years as its director. From 1985-1987, Dr. Thompson was chair of the professional staff at Wilford Hall Medical Center, San Antonio, and from 1987-1991, he commanded the Medical Center at Keesler. He then spent four years at Ramstein AB, GE, as Command Surgeon, United States Air Forces, Europe, overseeing repositioning of medical assets, following the first Gulf War. Coming to Washington in 1995, Dr. Thompson was assigned to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology as Director, Center for Medical and Molecular Genetics, and tasked by the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Affairs with development a tri-Service network of clinical and laboratory genetics. Included was a pilot program in telegenetics to provide services to patients in areas underserved by existing genetic resources.

### **Myths and Facts About Family Health History: New ACMG Tool Can Be Given to Patients**

The American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG) encourages every American to know their family medical history and if they haven't already gathered this potentially life-saving information, to "start the conversation" about family medical history. "Be proactive! Begin preparing now to be an active participant in the personalized medicine

movement by learning and recording your family health history," says Judith Benkendorf, MS, CGC, Project Manager at the American College of Medical Genetics. To help the public better understand Family Health History, ACMG developed Myths and Facts About Family Health History. This easy-to-read news release can be printed and given to patients and colleagues. Go to the ACMG Newsroom at [www.acmg.net](http://www.acmg.net).

### **ACMG Foundation Reveals New Web Site**

The ACMG has unveiled a new web site specifically for the ACMG Foundation. A few of the features will include donor and partner commentary, up-to-date Foundation news releases, and articles that spotlight ACMGF donors. You'll find in-depth information about the annual Luminex, Genzyme, Signature Genomics and other awards, and simple methods to donate online in honor or in memory of a loved one. Discover the many ways the Foundation supports the important work of ACMG and how you can become involved. Whether through our Corporate Partner Program (CPP) or individual donations, it's through your support that ACMG is able to translate genes into health.

Don't forget to visit [www.acmgmeeting.net](http://www.acmgmeeting.net) often for updated programming information  
Don't forget to register!

Mark Your Calendar for the upcoming ACMG  
Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting

March 25-29, 2009  
Tampa Convention Center & Marriott  
Waterside Hotel and Marina  
Tampa, Florida