



*Universal Fetal Cardiac Ultrasound-  
At the Heart of Newborn Well-Being*

## **FAST FACTS ON FETAL CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE (CHD)**

- Incidence, 1:200 – 1:300 pregnancies with the profound majority having no risk factors
- CHD is the most common, the most serious and nationally the most frequently missed of all fetal malformations
- Current detailed/level II accreditation guidelines have not improved the 15-30% national detection rate of fetal CHD. This failure acknowledges that “it is not the mere performance of ‘outflow tract’ imaging but the detailed knowledge of fetal cardiac pathology, its recognition and the interpretive expertise that is necessary to substantially increase detection rate of CHD.”
- CHD is the malformation most responsible for infant morbidity and mortality accounting for greater than one-third of infant deaths related to congenital malformation.
- Without a prenatal diagnosis, even severe forms of congenital heart disease commonly go undetected until after discharge to home leading to avoidable morbidity and mortality.
- 20-55% of infants with CHD are not diagnosed until after hospital discharge. Most obstructive left heart lesions (such as aortic coarctation) are not diagnosed at birth or at six weeks.
- Aortic coarctation is one of the three undiagnosed conditions (the others are hypoplastic left heart and interrupted arch) most likely to lead to death soon after discharge from hospital.

Prenatal Detection of Congenital Heart Disease in Southern Nevada, The Need for Universal Cardiac Evaluation. J. Ultrasound in Medicine, 26:1715-1719.

Prenatal Screening of Major Congenital Heart Disease. J. Ultrasound in Medicine, 28: 889-899.