



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
Division of Family Health and Wellness  
Andrew Johnson Tower  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243

**PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT**

**PROGRAM: Perinatal, Infant, and Pediatric Care**

**PROGRAM CONTACT: Margaret Major**  
Margaret.Major@tn.gov  
615-741-0377

**RE: Religious Declination of Newborn Eye Treatment**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016**

**APPROVED BY: Morgan McDonald, MD FAAP FACP**  
Assistant Commissioner, Family Health and Wellness

*Morgan McDonald*  
6/27/16

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Public Chapter 989 will go into effect July 1, 2016. This amends TCA 68-5-502 to allow for a religious exemption to newborn eye treatment as long as there is a written statement filed with the Tennessee Department of Health. Should families have a religious objection to the prophylactic treatment of a newborn's eyes, hospitals should document that declination according to protocols established by the facility. This should include a statement of religious objection and parental signature. The hospital's religious declination form should be sent to the Tennessee Department of Health via secure email to NBS.health@tn.gov or secure fax (615)532-8555. These will then be kept on file by the Tennessee Department of Health, Division of Family Health and Wellness Newborn Screening Section. Questions may be directed to Margaret Major.