

## **A Lucky Baby**

***Katie O'Keefe, DNP, APRN-NP***

Baby A was 44 days old when she took her first helicopter ride but it was not for fun. She was being transported from her small rural town to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at a metropolitan children's hospital hundreds of miles from home. Her admission diagnosis was respiratory failure and she was in very critical condition.

Baby A had already been to this hospital once when she was born 5 weeks early. But she did well in the neonatal intensive care unit and required minimal oxygen support. She gained weight and stopped needing medicine to remind her to breathe. At 2 weeks of age she was discharged to home with her twin sister. Mother was able to stay home and care for Baby A, her twin sister and 3 older siblings.

Baby A had been healthy and thriving until one day when she developed a cough and some nasal congestion. Mother called her family physician and she was told to give some aerosolized medication for the cough. Mother also reported that baby A's older siblings had all had some "colds" in the last week. Within 24 hours of the beginning of Baby A's cough and nasal congestion she was fighting for her life.

At the children's hospital, Baby A was diagnosed with pneumonia and subsequent respiratory failure that was caused by *haemophilus influenza* type B (Hib). As soon as we knew the cause of her problems we quickly started her on antibiotics specific to kill the Hib bacteria. Because she was so young this Hib infection could still be life threatening—she needed mechanical respiratory support (ventilator) for 5 days in the intensive care unit. It was a long, scary time for Baby A's parents.

"Lucky" Baby A slowly improved and was able to breathe on her own after 5 days of life support. She was discharged home with her very relieved parents after 10 days in the hospital. Baby A had not been able to receive the Hib vaccination because of her young age. But her grateful parents plan on getting her the Hib vaccination when she is old enough because they have seen what can happen without the vaccine!