Rep. Beutler's "Miracle" Baby: What Is Potter's Sequence?

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Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, R-Wash. has welcomed a 2 lbs., 12 ounce "miracle" baby [1].

Abigail Rose Beutler was born on July 15 at Emanuel Legacy hospital in Portland. The infant suffered from a severe form of Potter's sequence as a fetus, and was not expected to live long after birth.

However, the two-week-old infant is reportedly thriving in neonatal intensive care unit at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital in San Francisco. Not only does the infant seem to be in stable condition, but she is breathing on her own -- something that doctors say has never have been seen before in a patient of her condition.

Potter's sequence or syndrome is a condition that occurs when the fetus experiences kidney dysfunction or failure while in the womb. In Abigail's case, she had developed without kidneys.

Dr. Charles Kwon, director of the Center of Pediatric Nephrology at the Cleveland Clinic, explained to CBSNews.com that the fetus' kidneys are especially important in the second trimester of pregnancy because they maintain the balance of amniotic fluid. The protective fluid that surrounds the fetus while it is growing is mostly made up of the fetus' urine during this time, and if the fetus' kidneys cannot function, the fluid levels dip dangerously low.

There are no established rates on the condition because most of these children die in utero and may not be diagnosed with the condition before their demise, Kwon added.

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