

Introduction

The New Jersey Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program (EHDI) at the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, is pleased to provide the 2010 New Jersey Pediatric Hearing Health Care Directory. The purpose of this Directory is to assist both parents and professionals in locating a variety of pediatric audiology, hearing aid dispensing, and otolaryngology facilities throughout the State. The NJ EHDI Program is dedicated to ensuring early detection of childhood hearing loss and aims to improve access to newborn hearing health care services for all children in New Jersey.

The information contained in this Directory was obtained from a New Jersey EHDI survey sent to audiologists and hearing aid dispensers who currently hold active licenses in the state of New Jersey and to otolaryngologists with admitting privileges to New Jersey hospitals. Providers who chose to respond to the survey and who requested inclusion are listed in this Directory. It should be noted that a listing in this Directory in no way implies the endorsement by the New Jersey EHDI Program or the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

The New Jersey EHDI Program was established in 2002 in response to passage of New Jersey's universal newborn hearing screening legislation (P.L. 2001, Chapter 373 and N.J.S.A. 26:2:2-103.9). The goals outlined in the Law and corresponding Rules (N.J.A.C.8:19-1) aim to ensure universal hearing screening of all infants born in New Jersey by one month of age (preferably prior to nursery discharge); complete audiologic evaluation (of each ear) of infants who do not pass newborn hearing screening no later than three months of age; enrollment of children with hearing loss into an appropriate, family-centered, culturally competent early intervention program no later than six months of age; and periodic audiologic monitoring of children who passed their newborn hearing screening, but who present with risk indicators for possible late-onset hearing loss. Many federal agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH), and Healthy People 2010 support these goals.

Hearing loss is considered the most common health condition screened for in the newborn period. National data suggests that the incidence of bilateral congenital hearing loss is one to six children per thousand with even higher estimates noted when including infants and children who present with unilateral hearing loss, fluctuating hearing loss or late-onset hearing loss. Left undetected, hearing loss in infants can delay speech and language acquisition, academic achievement and social and emotional development. The most important time for a child to be exposed to and learn language is in the first three years of life. Studies have shown that enrollment of children with hearing loss in early intervention services during the first six months of life can improve language development and academic performance at levels comparable to their normally hearing peers by three to five years of age. In addition, when parents and children communicate effectively with each other from the onset of hearing loss identification, a foundation for language acquisition (both spoken and signed language)

is established and language delays may be prevented or minimized. Provision of these services in a timely manner will help ensure that all children with hearing loss acquire communication and language skills that will last a lifetime.

Presently there are fifty-three hospitals with maternity units in New Jersey with approximately 110,000 infants born each year. While over 99% of all infants born in New Jersey undergo at least one hearing screening prior to nursery discharge, about 3% require re-screening and/or audiologic evaluation.

Without appropriate follow-up and intervention, the true value of screening newborns for hearing loss cannot be achieved. Birthing hospitals, pediatricians, audiologists and parents/caregivers are in need of easy access to a statewide resource directory that can provide information as to where infants can go for follow-up services. In addition to having access to a comprehensive resource that shows parents and professionals where to find the hearing screening/audiologic assessment, hearing aid fitting, and otolaryngology services they need, there is also a need for a directory that has special considerations including a listing of insurance carriers, availability of interpreting services and accessibility for disabled individuals. The New Jersey Pediatric Hearing Healthcare Directory serves as this essential resourced and has been developed through the cooperation of licensed audiologist, hearing aid dispensers and otolaryngologists throughout New Jersey who responded to the New Jersey EHDI Program's Pediatric Hearing Health Care Directory survey. We hope this Directory assists you in locating appropriate pediatric hearing health care services throughout the state and guides all New Jersey's infants and children along the way to receiving early hearing detection and intervention services.

This resource is only available online through the New Jersey EHDI website and will continue to be updated on a regular basis allowing for ongoing additions of new pediatric hearing health care facilities as well as updates to those facilities listed in the Directory that reflect increased pediatric hearing healthcare pediatric services; and/or changes to insurance providers. It also lists national, state and local resources that would be helpful to families of children with hearing loss from birth through age twenty-one.