

EARLY HEARING DETECTION AND INTERVENTION

ACTION

Urge your members of Congress to cosponsor the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act (EHDI) that would reauthorize this important and highly successful initiative for the next five years. [S.652, H.R.1539]

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Early hearing detection and intervention grants were first authorized in the Newborn Infant Hearing Screening and Intervention Act of 1999, which was incorporated into the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2000, and signed into law. That law provided federal funds for state grants to develop infant hearing screening and intervention programs. The following year, Congress reauthorized these grants through the Children's Health Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-310) and included provisions related to early hearing screening and evaluation of all newborns, coordinated intervention, rehabilitation services, and research. In 2010, Congress passed the EHDI of 2010, which authorized these programs through 2015.

EHDI legislation passed the House (H.R. 1344) in September 2015 on the suspension calendar. It was introduced in the Senate in December 2015, but was unable to come up for a vote before the end of the legislative session. Senate and House leaders have said this legislation is a priority for 2017.

WHAT YOU NEED TO SAY?

- About two to three out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears.*
- EHDI grants to states have significantly increased the number of infants screened for hearing loss.
- In 1999, only 46.5% of infants were screened for hearing loss. In 2014, 97.9% of infants were screened for hearing loss.
- Loss to follow-up continues to be a concern, which is why funding for EHDI continues to be important.
- Continued federal funding is necessary to ensure that state EHDI programs become fully operational and successful so that they properly link screening programs with diagnosis and early intervention.

* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Identifying infants with hearing loss - United States, 1999-2007. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 59(8): 220-223. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5908a2.htm>.

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