



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson

Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, Director and State Health Officer

2018

To All Physicians,

I am Dr. Alan Mease, the Medical Director for Child and Adolescent Health at the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Chapter Champion for the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in Arkansas and I need your help. The Joint Committee for Infant Hearing (JCIH) requires each physician to follow the 1-3-6 Newborn Hearing Screening Guidelines set by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the AAP. (See enclosed *Just In Time* info-graphic available at <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss/freematerials/136poster.pdf>.)

The good news is that our birthing hospitals are doing a good job screening with 99% of Arkansas babies being screened at birth. Out of those screened about 2% of babies fail. The bad news is that we are not meeting the recommended guideline of having diagnostic audiology evaluations done before 3 months of age (See enclosed EHDI Guidelines for Pediatric Medical Home Providers). Currently only about 7% of our babies meet this standard. This leads to delays in getting all deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) babies enrolled in early intervention (EI) services before 6 months of age.

In my role I provide medical consultation to the Arkansas Infant Hearing Program (IHP) also known as Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Arkansas. The EHDI team, here at ADH, and I need the help of all physicians with patients less than three years old to work together to meet these JCIH guidelines.

A failed hearing screen should be viewed as a potential ***“Developmental Emergency”*** until normal hearing is documented or an audiological diagnosis is made. Repeat hearing screenings will only delay the process (See Reducing Loss to Follow-up/Documentation Guideline algorithm and 1-3-6 Newborn Hearing Screening Checklist). They should only be completed in babies less than 1 month regardless of your physical exam. Therefore, please refer all infants 1 month or older who fail the screen for a Pediatric Audiological Evaluation. It is important for parents to understand the importance of doing this before the baby is 3 months of age. The *Just In Time* Info-graphic is a useful parent education handout.

This will greatly help increase the percentage of our D/HH babies who get into early intervention by 6 months of age. For further information visit https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/ehdi_101_presentation.pdf.

After a diagnosis of D/HH is made, these babies need re-evaluation by a pediatric audiologist every 6 months and developmental screenings by you. CDC has a very useful mobile phone app for parents to monitor their child's development. This is useful for all parents but especially for those at high risk of developmental delay such as D/HH babies. To download the free Milestone Tracker app, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>.

If you would like for us to visit your practice to do a presentation /training for you and your staff please let me know. I am available by telephone or email for any questions.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Mease". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alan" and last name "Mease" clearly distinguishable.

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