

**HB**

**109**

**Representative Jay Ramras**  
**Co-Chair, House Resources**  
**V-Chair, Economic Develop.**  
**Tourism & Trade**

**House State Affairs**  
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# Alaska State Legislature



While in Session  
**State Capitol, Room 104**  
**Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182**  
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**House District 10**

## House of Representatives

### Sponsor Statement

CSHB 109(FIN)

Hearing impairment has been shown to be the most common disability in newborns, affecting about 3 in every 1,000 babies. House Bill 109 will protect newborns in the State of Alaska by mandating that newborns receive hearing screening at birth, or within thirty days of birth, if not born in a hospital. Once at risk infants have been identified, this bill will then serve to assist parents of at risk children with appropriate, available follow-up care. Finally, the Department of Health and Social Services shall prepare an annual report to the Governor detailing the program's needs and success.

Statistics show that in Alaska, 30 to 40 babies are born each year with some type of congenital hearing defect. Further studies have shown that children with hearing impairment not detected at birth, will not be detected, until 2-3 years of age, and that the most critical period for speech and language development is from birth to three years of age. When children are not identified and served early, special education for a child with a hearing loss may cost an additional \$420,000, and deafness has an estimated lifetime cost of approximately \$1 million per individual. These savings in special education costs will pay for universal newborn hearing screening many times over.

As of December 2003, 80% of newborns in Alaska have been screened for hearing impairment. Even though 80% sounds like a large number, because newborn hearing screening is not mandated and the screening, reporting, and follow-up is not institutional in facilities across the state, Alaska remains in the "unsatisfactory" category when rated nationally.

# LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY  
STATE OF ALASKA

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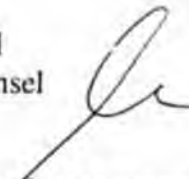
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

## MEMORANDUM

February 4, 2005

**SUBJECT:** CSHB 109( ), Infant Hearing Screening  
(Work Order No. 24-LS0450\G)

**TO:** Representative Jay Ramras  
Attn: Jane Pierson

**FROM:** Jean M. Mischel  
Legislative Counsel 

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

**Section 1.** Describes legislative findings with respect to newborn and infant hearing loss, the value of early intervention and the relationship to language ability.

**Section 2.** Describes legislative intent to cover 100 percent of newborns and infants under the hearing screening and intervention program established by the act by January 1, 2008.

**Section 3.** Adds certain individuals who have been authorized by the Department of Health and Social Services to the list of individuals who may perform hearing screening tests without an audiology license.

**Section 4.** Requires the state Bureau of Vital Statistics to forward names and addresses of parents of newborns born outside of a hospital to the Department of Health and Social Services for notification of the merits of hearing screening.

**Section 5.** Requires certain minimum insurance coverage for newborn and infant screening.

**Section 6.** Establishes a newborn and infant hearing screening, tracking, and intervention program within the Department of Health and Social Services.

Representative Jay Ramras

February 4, 2005

Page 2

**Section 7.** Authorizes the Department of Health and Social Services to promulgate regulations required to implement the act before the effective date of the act.

**Section 8.** Adds a revisor's instruction to make conforming amendments.

**Section 9.** Provides an immediate effective date for secs. 6 through 8 of the act.

**Section 10.** Provides a January 1, 2006 effective date except as stated in sec. 9.

JMM:lmb

05-031.lmb

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Version: HB109CS(FIN)-DHSS-DPH-04-15-05  
( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): corrected 4/15/05

Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services

Title: RELATING TO NEWBORN HEARING  
SCREENING

RDU: Public Health

Component: Women, Children and Family Health

Sponsor: RAMRAS

Requester: HOUSE (FIN)

Component No. 2788

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	31.9	39.4	47.4	55.8	64.6	64.6
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>64.6</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)</b>						
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FUND SOURCE	(Thousands of Dollars)					
1002 Federal Receipts			( 29.7)	( 111.6)	( 115.9)	( 119.8)
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	31.9	39.4	77.1	167.4	180.5	184.4
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>64.6</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The intent of this bill is to ensure all newborns are provided with hearing screening within 30 days of their birth, and that those identified with a positive screen or high risk factors receive a second screen or diagnostic work-up, are enrolled in early intervention and receive treatment as needed. Projected costs associated with maintenance of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program (EHDI) are based on the following assumptions: 1) The number of newborns screened is based on the average number of births currently at 10,000 per year. 2) The diagnostic rate of hearing loss is estimated to be at 0.3% of the 10,000 births=30 newly diagnosed infants per year, however, not all newborns with hearing loss will be immediately identified. 3) 90% of newborns would be screened by FY 06; 95% by FY 07; and 100% by FY 08 and beyond. (Continued on P.2)

Prepared by: Richard Mandsager, M.D.  
Division: Public Health  
Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner  
Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Phone 465-3090  
Date/Time 04/13/2005  
Date 04/15/2005

FISCAL NOTE  
FN #

STATE OF ALASKA  
2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO HB109CS(FIN)-DHSS-DPH-04-15-05

**ANALYSIS CONTINUATION**

4) There is a need to follow an additional 10% of all newborns each year who are at high risk for later onset hearing loss during their first three years of life. Thus, the program requires a reporting and surveillance system for tracking all newborns and assisting them with ongoing hearing screening, diagnostic and intervention services.

At present the Division of Health Care Services is receiving two federal grants to support the development of this program. One grant, scheduled to be completed in March of FY 05, covers the expenses associated with development of the newborn hearing program, including assisting hospitals with implementation and education, and professional and public educational information. The second grant will end in August of 2005 and covers start up costs associated with the statewide early detection/intervention surveillance and tracking system. Both grants have been submitted for continuation funding for three additional years. This would provide funds for infrastructure costs through March 2008 if awarded. General Funds are also being requested in FY08 to fund the fourth quarter activities after the expiration of the continuation grant. This portion is shown as a switch fund from Federal to GF.

The increased line item expenditures shown on page 1 will be utilized for:

GRANTS AND CLAIMS (\$31.9 in FY 06): Additional funds for special hearing resources would be needed for the existing Early Prevention/ILP programs to work with the anticipated increased volume as children are identified earlier and thus require services during the 0-3 period. The additional grant funds would be awarded incrementally over the next five fiscal years to allow for increased capacity-building to support special hearing services for children identified with hearing loss in preparation for school readiness and learning. The dollar figure is based on:

1) An average FY 05 cost of \$3,100 per newly enrolled infant, with a 3% inflation factor built in annually. 2) Only assumes about 50% of the newly diagnosed infants would enroll in the early intervention hearing resources program (10 new infants in FY 06; 12 in FY 07; 14 in FY 08; 16 in FY 09; and 18 in FY 10 and FY 11).

The General Funds replacing Federal Funds (and so not shown as line item expenditures on page 1) will be allocated by cost category as follows:

PERSONAL SERVICES ( \$72.0 covers all of these personnel expenses in FY 09 and assumes a 3.5 percent annual merit increase):

a) 0.5 FTE - EHDI Health Program Manager II (R/19). This position oversees the maintenance of the reporting and surveillance activities of the program, assures early intervention referrals, tracks high-risk infants through the age of 3, provides outreach education to providers, and technical assistance to health care facilities throughout the state.

b) 0.5 FTE - Administrative Clerk III (R/10). This position provides administrative support and data entry for the activities required for maintenance of a statewide newborn hearing screening program.

TRAVEL (\$1.0 in FY 08): Travel costs are included for the EHDI manager to visit screening sites for TA and program compliance. Additional travel funds would be required in FY 09 with the termination of federal funding.

(Continued on P. 3)

**FISCAL NOTE**

**FN #**

**STATE OF ALASKA  
2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

**BILL NO. HB109CS(FIN)-DHSS-DPH-04-15-05**

**ANALYSIS CONTINUATION**

**SUPPLIES (\$1.0 in FY 08):** This includes the cost of postage to mail brochures and technical assistance resources.

**CONTRACTUAL (\$27.7 in FY 08):** Includes the actual cost of supporting web-based data and surveillance system. Cost averages at \$3.00 per newborn. Costs also include those needed for the reprinting of educational materials for parents and providers. Slight increases in contractual costs are included in FY09 and beyond.

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: 3  
 Bill Version: CSHB 109(FIN)  
 (H) Publish Date: 4/14/05

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development  
 Title: "An Act relating to establishing a screening, track- RDU: TLS  
ing, and intervention program related to the hearing of newborns" Component: Special & Supplemental Services  
 Sponsor: Representative Ramras  
 Requester: Labor and Commerce Component No.: 166

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	0.0					
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: 0.0  
 Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Sec. 47 20.330 relates to the establishment of guidelines for the provision of follow-up care for newborn and infant children in the state who have been identified as having or being at risk of developing a hearing loss. The Department of Education & Early Development identifies no costs at this time.

Prepared by: Barbara Thompson, Director Phone 465-8727  
 Division: Teaching & Learning Support Date/Time 4/12/05 10 08 AM  
 Approved by: Karen Rehfeld, Deputy Commissioner Date 04/12/2005  
 Agency: Education & Early Development

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: 2  
 Bill Version: CSHB 109(FIN)  
 (H) Publish Date: 4/14/05

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):  
 Title: Screening Newborns for Hearing Ability  
 Sponsor: Ramras, et al  
 Requester: House Finance

Dept. Affected: Commerce  
 RDU: Occupational Licensing (117)  
 Component: Occupational Licensing  
 Component No.: 2360

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other 1156 - Receipt Supported Services						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The amendment made to the Audiology statute in Section 3 of this bill does not require new funding to be implemented.

Prepared by: Jennifer Strickler, Administrative Manager  
 Division: Occupational Licensing  
 Approved by: Edgar Blatchford, Commissioner  
 Agency: Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

Phone: (907) 465-2144  
 Date/Time: 4/11/05 6:24 PM  
 Date: 4/11/2005

### **Why Is Mandatory Newborn Hearing Screening and Reporting So Important?**

1. Every day, 33 babies (or 12,000 each year) are born in the United States with permanent hearing loss, or 3 in every 1,000 births (1). In Alaska, approximately 10,000 babies are born each year and according to statistics 30-40 will likely have some type of congenital hearing loss.
2. The evidence for the benefits, practicability, and cost-efficiency of universal newborn hearing screening is so compelling that 38 other states have passed legislative mandates requiring that newborns be screened for hearing loss (2).
3. Hearing impairment is the most common disability in newborns, with a higher incidence than cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, and severe mental retardation (3).
4. Hearing impairment is approximately 30 times more prevalent than PKU and hypothyroidism, screened through the metabolic disorder screening programs, and mandated by law in all 50 states. (4).
5. The cost of identifying a newborn with hearing loss is less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> the cost of identifying newborns with metabolic disorders such as PKU and hypothyroidism, for which screenings are required in every state (5). For most birthing hospitals, the cost for newborn hearing screening per child is between \$20 - \$60 and continues to decrease (6). Many birthing facilities in Alaska, implementing newborn hearing screening voluntarily, include the cost in the total labor and delivery package cost.
6. Children not detected at birth or soon after, will not be detected, on average, until 2-3 years of age, and the most critical period for speech and language development is from birth to three years of age (7).
7. When children are not identified and served early, special education for a child with hearing loss may cost an additional \$420,000, and deafness has an estimated lifetime cost of approximately \$ 1 million per individual (8). These savings in special education costs will pay for universal newborn hearing screening many times over.
8. If left undetected, hearing loss can impair a child's language, speech, psychosocial and cognitive development. Recent research has compared children with hearing loss who receive early intervention and amplification (i.e. hearing aids) before 6 months of age versus after 6 months of age. By the time they enter first grade, children identified earlier (prior to 6 months of age) are 1-2 years ahead of their later-identified peers in language, cognitive, and social skills (9, 10, 11).
9. If it remains undetected, even mild hearing loss or hearing loss in only one ear has substantial detrimental consequences. For example, research shows that children

with hearing loss in one ear are ten times as likely to be held back at least one grade compared to a matched group of children with normal hearing (12).

10. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Institutes of Health, the American Academy of Audiology, the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing, and the National Association of the Deaf have recommended that all babies be screened for hearing loss before they leave the hospital (13).
11. To date, 23 of 23 communities in Alaska with birthing hospitals have voluntarily implemented universal newborn hearing screening programs. The majority of the screenings are performed in hospitals by nurses prior to discharge. However, in some smaller communities, public health nurses perform the screenings during home visits after hospital discharge. As of December 2003, the total number of newborns in Alaska that received hearing screening was approximately 80% (14).
12. Even though 80% sounds like a large number of Alaska's newborns, because newborn hearing screening is not mandated and the screening, reporting and follow-up is not institutionalized in facilities across the state, Alaska remains in the "unsatisfactory" category when rated nationally.
13. Due to Alaska's large geographic size, high staff turnover occurs as well as difficulty recruiting and keeping healthcare providers in many of its more rural communities. And because the screening and reporting is not mandated, it is often times not a priority at birthing facilities and among providers. As a result, it is increasingly difficult to keep nurses and other providers with the knowledge necessary to maintain a newborn hearing screening program. Gaps in screening occur in hospitals, thus babies miss their screening and are not followed for high risk factors.

# **Alaska Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Program Overview**

**January 2005**

In Alaska each year, approximately 10,000 babies are born and according to national statistics, about 30 of them will have some type of congenital hearing loss.

Hearing impairment is the most common disability in newborns, with a higher incidence than cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome and severe mental retardation.

## **Early Identification is important because:**

- The most important period of speech and language development is from birth to age three.
- Delay in diagnosis can impair a child's language, speech, psycho-social and cognitive development.
- The average age of identification of a hearing impairment in the absence of newborn hearing screening is 2-3 years of age.
- Through early identification, children identified at birth with a hearing loss can learn and progress at a rate comparable to those with normal hearing.

## **Alaska EHDl Program**

The Alaska Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDl) Program began in April 2000. the EHDl Program is funded by two federal grants from: the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) and Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

### **Key program include the following:**

- Ensure that babies born in Alaska have newborn hearing screening prior to hospital discharge
- Ensure that all newborns who fail hearing screening receive an audiological evaluation by three months of age.
- Ensure that infants diagnosed with hearing loss are referred to and enrolled in appropriate early intervention and other needed services by six months of age.

### **Screening**

To date, 23 of 23 communities within Alaska have implemented universal newborn hearing screening programs. The majority of screenings are performed in hospitals by nurses prior to discharge. However, in some smaller communities, public health nurses perform the screen during home visits after hospital discharge.

### **Legislation**

Nationwide, 38 states have enacted legislation requiring hospitals to implement newborn hearing screening programs. In Alaska, newborn hearing screening was introduced and worked on during the 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 legislative sessions.

### **Data & Evaluation**

A primary role of the Alaska EHDI Program is to support hospitals, audiologists and other health care providers, and assist early intervention programs (Infant Learning Program) in their tracking and follow-up efforts. The EHDI Program received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) to develop an electronic data tracking and surveillance system to facilitate the follow-up process and ensure smooth transition occurs through services. The EHDI Program is purchasing the web-based database, Oz, and will begin implementing in communities in 2005.

### **Loaner Program**

The EHDI Loaner Program provides assistive hearing devices (i.e. hearing aids) for children (0-3 years) whose families cannot otherwise afford them. For example, these families are not eligible for Denali Kid Care and/or do not have private insurance that covers hearing aids and/or cannot afford to purchase hearing aids themselves. The Loaner Program allows these families to "borrow" money to purchase hearing aids for 6-12 months. The Loaner Program is made possible through a grant from the Mental Health Trust Authority.

### **Education & Outreach**

The EHDI Program travels to communities introducing the Alaska EHDI Program. Presentations target primary health care providers in those communities (i.e. pediatricians, public health nurses, community health aide/practitioners) regarding newborn hearing screening and early hearing detection and intervention.

To assist with this effort, educational materials were developed by EHDI Program with assistance by many dedicated providers and parents. The following materials are available from the EHDI Program: 1) general brochure regarding: universal newborn hearing screening for parents and prospective parents, 2) brochure outlining the protocol for parents to follow if their newborn does not pass the newborn hearing screening, 3) basic hearing loss information for parents and the general public, 4) parent resource manual for families of children diagnosed with hearing loss, 5) provider guide for health care providers, 6) hospital orientation manual regarding implementation of universal newborn hearing screening, and 7) video/DVD for community health aide/practitioners (CHA/Ps) in rural Alaskan communities.

For copies of the materials and/or information regarding the EHDI Program, contact:

Margaret Lanier Kossler  
4501 Business Park Blvd. Suite 24  
Anchorage, AK 99503-7167  
[Margaret.lanier@health.state.ak.us](mailto:Margaret.lanier@health.state.ak.us) e-mail

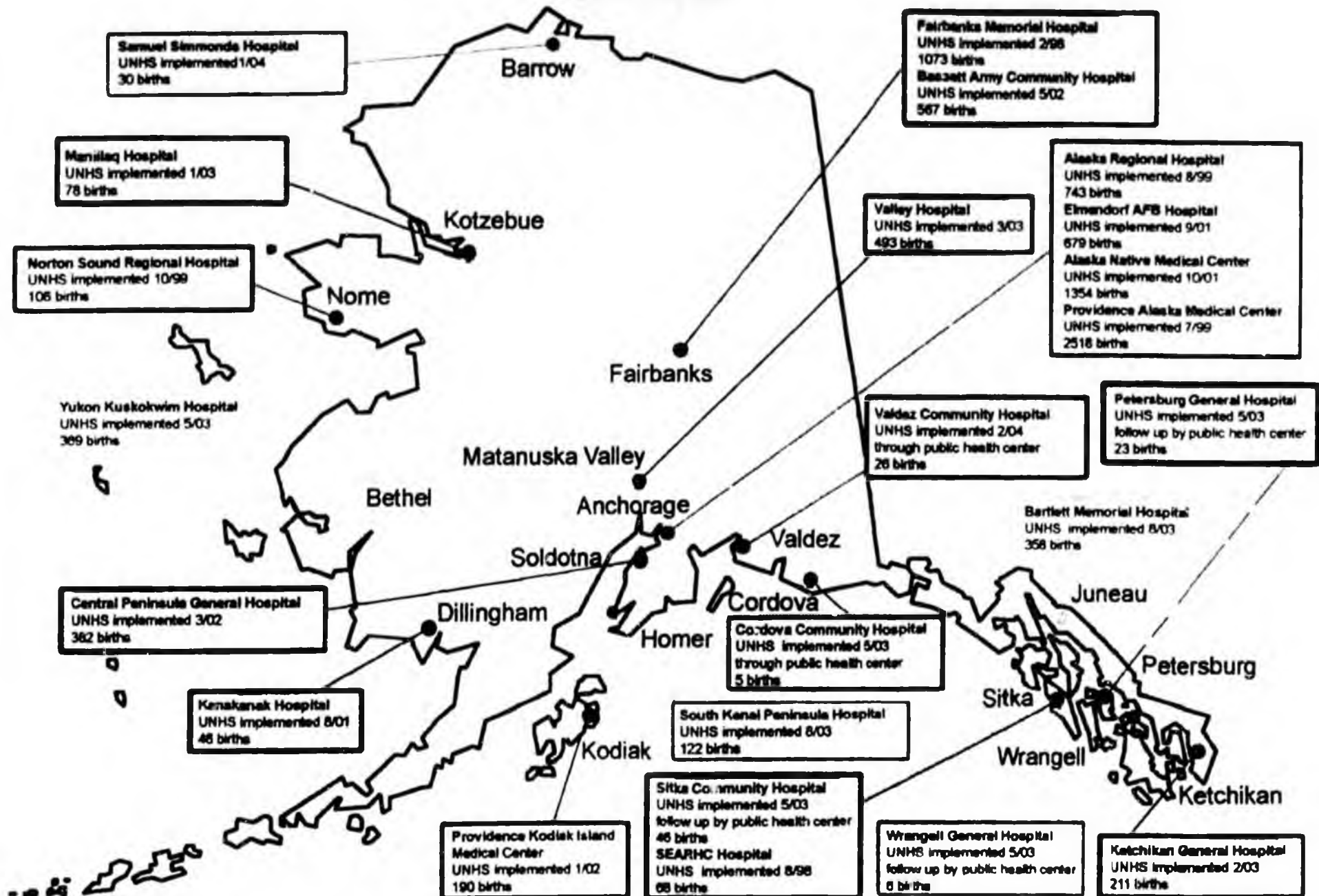
(907) 269-3466 – telephone  
(907) 269-3465 – fax

<http://hss.state.ak.us/dhcs/newborn>



# Locations of Newborn Hearing Screening Hospitals

## 2003 births



# Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is one of the most common birth defects, affecting about 3 in 1,000 babies. Hearing loss that is present at birth is called congenital hearing loss. Hearing loss also can develop later in childhood or during adulthood.

Hearing loss can have a major impact on the life of a child and his family. Because language and communication develop so rapidly during the first 3 years of life, an undetected hearing loss is likely to interfere with a child's speech, language and communication with others. Hearing loss also can result in learning problems that affect a child's performance at school. The goal of early screening, diagnosis and treatment is to help children with hearing loss to develop language and academic skills equal to their hearing peers.

Because hearing loss in infancy is hard to recognize, most hospitals screen all newborns before they are discharged. Most states have an Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program to help ensure that infants who don't pass the screening receive follow-up care. The March of Dimes, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and others strongly support these programs.

**What causes hearing loss in babies and children?**

Hearing loss can be inherited (genetic) or can be caused by illness or injury. In some cases, the cause of hearing loss is not known. About 90 percent of babies with congenital hearing loss are born to hearing parents.

Genetic factors are believed to cause about 50 percent of cases of congenital hearing loss. About 25 genes that play a role in hearing loss have been identified.

About 30 percent of children with hearing loss also have other birth defects. In such cases, hearing loss is part of a syndrome (group of birth defects that occur together).

Illnesses that can cause congenital hearing loss include infections during pregnancy, such as rubella (German measles), cytomegalovirus, toxoplasmosis, herpes or syphilis. Babies born preterm also are at increased risk.

After birth, head injuries or childhood infections, such as meningitis, measles or chickenpox, can cause permanent hearing loss. Certain medications, such as the antibiotic streptomycin and related drugs, also can cause hearing loss. Ear infections (otitis media) may cause temporary hearing loss.

**Are there different types of hearing loss?**

Hearing loss is the decreased ability to hear sounds. When sound enters the outer ear (auricle or pinna), it moves through the ear canal to the eardrum (tympanic membrane). Incoming sound causes the eardrum to vibrate which moves three small bones (ossicles) in the middle ear. In this way, the ear canal, the eardrum and the middle ear transmit sound from the outside world to the inner ear (cochlea). Within the inner ear, thousands of tiny hair cells detect the incoming vibrations and convert them into signals that are relayed to the auditory nerves, which send neural impulses to the hearing center in the brain.

Hearing loss is often discussed in terms of where the loss occurs in the hearing pathway.

- Conductive hearing loss occurs when something interferes with sound passing through the outer or middle ear. A blockage in the ear canal, damage to the eardrum, or fluid or an infection in the middle ear (called otitis media) are examples of conditions that can cause a conductive hearing loss. This type of hearing loss is usually temporary and can often be corrected with medication or surgery.
- Sensorineural hearing loss usually occurs when the hair cells in the inner ear cannot detect all incoming vibrations or when neural impulses are not transmitted to the brain. Prenatal infections, lack of oxygen at birth, or genetic factors can cause this type of hearing loss, which is generally permanent. However, many children can be aided with devices that amplify sound. Sensorineural hearing loss also can result from damage to the brain's auditory center.
- Mixed hearing loss occurs when a child who has a sensorineural hearing loss also has a conductive loss (such as fluid in the middle ear). It is very important that children with

permanent hearing loss be monitored and treated for middle ear problems so hearing is not further reduced.

**How are newborns screened for hearing loss?**

Newborns are screened with one of two tests, both of which measure how a baby responds to sound. Both tests take 5 to 10 minutes, are painless, and can be done when the baby is resting.

In the otoacoustic emissions (OAE) test, a small microphone is placed in the baby's ear. The microphone, connected to a computer, sends soft clicking sounds into the ear and records the inner ear's response to sound.

In the automated auditory brainstem response (AABR) test, soft clicking sounds are presented to the ear through small earphones. Sensors placed on the head and connected to a computer measure brain wave activity in response to sound.

**What happens if a baby doesn't pass the hearing screening?**

If a baby does not pass the OAE or the AABR, the test should be repeated or the baby should be referred to a hearing specialist (audiologist) or an ear, nose and throat specialist (ENT or otolaryngologist) for more extensive tests to determine if the baby has a hearing loss. It is important for babies to be assessed by specialists who have experience testing very young children. Diagnostic testing should be completed by 3 months of age.

Parents must keep in mind that the screening tests cannot diagnose hearing loss. Up to 5 percent of babies will have abnormal results on their hearing screening test. However, additional tests show that only about 1 in 10 of these babies actually have hearing loss.

**How are babies and children tested for hearing loss?**

The most common hearing test for infants under 6 months of age is the diagnostic auditory brainstem response test. It is similar to the automated screening test, but it provides more information and must be administered by a specialist.

Children between 6 months and 2 years of age often are tested with visual reinforcement audiometry (VRA).

During VRA testing, a series of sounds is presented to the child through earphones or speakers. The child is trained to turn toward any sound, and is then rewarded with an entertaining visual image for responding.

Children between 2 and 4 years of age are tested with conditioned play audiometry (CPA). They are asked to perform a simple play activity (like placing a ring on a peg) when they hear a sound. This is similar to the test for older children and adults, who are asked to press a button or raise their hand when they hear a sound.

These tests also may be recommended if a child was not screened as a newborn; if he has had persistent ear infections, meningitis or other illness that can cause hearing loss; has been diagnosed with a syndrome that can include hearing loss; or if a parent suspects the child is not responding normally to sounds.

**What are some signs of hearing loss in infants and young children?**

Parents should be alert to any signs of hearing loss and discuss them with their child's pediatrician. Some signs include: failure to startle at loud sounds; not turning toward the sound of a voice or imitating sounds after about 6 months of age; lack of babbling at 9 months; not using single words by 18 months; or using gestures instead of words to express needs. Parents should be concerned about hearing loss in older children if they develop vocabulary more slowly than their peers; have speech that is difficult to understand or that is too loud or too soft; often ask you to repeat what was said; turn the TV too loud. At school age, children with hearing loss often appear inattentive and have difficulties learning to read or perform simple mathematics, and fall behind at school.

**How is hearing loss treated?**

A child with a congenital hearing loss should begin receiving treatment before 6 months of age. Studies suggest that children treated this early are usually able to develop communication skills (using spoken or sign language) that are as good as those of hearing peers. Because of a federal law (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), children with a hearing loss between birth and 3 years of age have the right to receive interdisciplinary assessment and early intervention services at little or no cost. After age 3, early intervention and special education programs are provided through the public school system.

There are a number of treatment options available, and parents will need to decide which are most appropriate for their child. They will need to consider the child's age, developmental level and personality, the severity of the hearing loss, as well as their own preferences. Ideally a team of experts including the child's primary care provider, an otolaryngologist, a speech-language pathologist, audiologist and an educator will work closely with the parents to create an Individualized Family Service Plan. Treatment plans can be changed as the child gets older.

Children as young as 4 weeks of age can benefit from a hearing aid. These devices amplify sound, making it possible for many children to hear spoken words and develop language. However, some children with hearing loss are helped more than others by hearing aids. Some children with severe to profound hearing loss may not be able to hear enough sound, even with a hearing aid, to make speech audible. A behind-the-ear hearing aid is often recommended for young children because it is safer and more easily fitted and adjusted as the child grows as compared to one that fits within the ear.

Parents also will need to decide how their family and child are going to communicate. If the child is going to communicate orally (speech), he may need assistance learning listening skills and lip reading skills to help him understand what others are saying. Many children with hearing loss also need speech or language therapy.

A child also can learn to communicate using a form of sign language. The type preferred by most deaf adults is American Sign Language (ASL), which has rules and grammar that is distinct from English. There are also several variations of sign language that can be used along with spoken English.

Surgery may be recommended if a child has a permanent conductive hearing loss caused by malformations of the outer or middle ear, or by repeated ear infections. Although fluid in the middle ear usually results in only temporary hearing loss, chronic ear infection can cause a child to fall behind in language skills. In some cases, a doctor may suggest inserting a tube through the eardrum to allow the middle ear to drain. This procedure generally does not require an overnight hospital stay.

Surgery also may be an option for some children with severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss. A device

called a cochlear implant can be surgically inserted in the inner ear of children as young as 12 months of age to stimulate hearing. The surgery requires a hospital stay of one to several days. With additional language and speech therapy, children with cochlear implants may learn to understand speech and speak reasonably well, but the amount of improvement is variable.

**Does the March of Dimes support research on hearing loss?**

Several March of Dimes grantees are exploring the role that specific genes play in causing hearing loss, with the goal of developing treatments for hereditary hearing loss. Others are seeking to prevent hearing loss by preventing infections that can cause it and to improve treatment of individuals with hearing loss. One is developing improved hearing aids that amplify speech more clearly.

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## QUESTIONS?

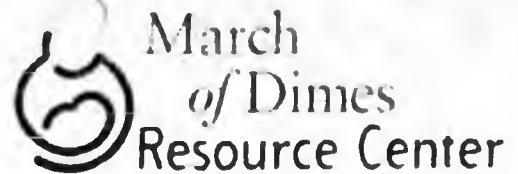
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# Newborn Screening Tests



Every state and U.S. territory now screens newborns for certain disorders of body chemistry. These birth defects have no immediate visible effects on a baby but, unless detected and treated early, can cause physical problems, mental retardation and, in some cases, death. A number of states are also screening babies for hearing loss.

Fortunately, most babies are given a clean bill of health when tested. But when test results are abnormal, early diagnosis and proper treatment can make the difference between lifelong impairment and healthy development.

Here are the answers to some common questions parents ask about newborn screening tests.

**Which newborn screening tests are most likely to be given to my baby?**

All states and U.S. territories screen newborns for phenylketonuria (PKU). This was the nation's first newborn screening test. Developed with the help of the March of Dimes, it has been routinely administered since the 1960s. PKU affects about 1 baby in 12,000. Babies with the disorder cannot process a part of protein called phenylalanine, which is found in nearly all foods. Without treatment, phenylalanine builds up in the bloodstream and causes brain damage and mental retardation.

When PKU is detected early, mental retardation can be prevented by feeding the baby a special formula that is low in phenylalanine. This low-phenylalanine diet will need to be followed throughout adolescence and, generally, for life.

Women of childbearing age with PKU need to remain on this special diet prior to and during pregnancy. This will prevent mental retardation in their children by avoiding fetal exposure to high maternal phenylalanine levels.

Along with PKU testing, all states and U.S. territories test newborns for hypothyroidism, and most test for galactosemia. Congenital hypothyroidism is the most common disorder identified by routine screening. It affects about 1 baby in 4,000. Congenital hypothyroidism is a thyroid hormone deficiency that retards growth and brain development. If it is detected in time, a baby can be treated with oral doses of thyroid hormone to permit normal development.

Galactosemia, which affects about 1 baby in 50,000, can cause death in infancy, or blindness and mental retardation. A baby with galactosemia is unable to convert galactose, a sugar present in milk, into glucose, a sugar the body uses as an energy source. The treatment for galactosemia is to eliminate milk and all other dairy products from the baby's diet; this dietary restriction is lifelong.

You can find out which tests are routinely done in your state by asking your health care provider or state health department. You can also visit the web site of the National Newborn Screening and Genetics Resource Center at <http://genes-r-us.uthscsa.edu/resources/newborn/state.htm>.

**What other disorders can newborn screening tests detect?**

Currently, tests are available for over 30 inborn errors of body chemistry. Babies are not tested for all of these disorders for a number of reasons, including the fact that not all of these disorders are treatable. The March of Dimes would like to see all babies, in all states, screened for at least nine specific inborn errors of body chemistry including: PKU, congenital hypothyroidism, congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH), biotinidase deficiency, maple syrup urine disease, galactosemia, homocystinuria, sickle cell anemia, medium chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency (MCAD), as well as hearing screening.

All of these disorders can be accurately diagnosed in newborns, and treatment is likely to improve the health of these children.

More than 40 states screen newborns for sickle cell anemia, an inherited blood disease that can cause bouts of pain, damage to vital organs such as the lungs and kidneys and, sometimes, death in childhood. Sickle cell anemia affects about 1 in 400 African-American babies and also occurs at a lower frequency among people of Hispanic, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and South Asian descent.

Early treatment can prevent some of the complications of sickle cell anemia. Young children with the disease are especially prone to certain dangerous bacterial infections, such as pneumonia and meningitis. Studies in recent years

have shown that treatment with penicillin, beginning by 2 months of age and continuing to about 5 years, dramatically reduces the risk of these infections and the deaths that result from them. Newborn screening alerts the physician to begin antibiotic treatment before infections begin.

More than 25 states test for CAH. This group of disorders, in which there is a deficiency of certain hormones, affects genital development and, in severe cases, can disturb kidney function and cause death. Lifelong treatment with the missing hormones suppresses this disease, which occurs in about 1 in 5,000 babies.

One newborn screening test, developed by a March of Dimes grantee, detects biotinidase deficiency. About 20 states screen for this disorder. Biotinidase is an enzyme that recycles biotin, one of the B vitamins, in the body. A deficiency of this enzyme, which occurs in about 1 in 70,000 babies, may cause frequent infections, hearing loss, mental retardation and even death. If the deficiency is detected in time, problems can be prevented by giving the baby extra biotin.

Maple syrup urine disease and homocystinuria are rare life-threatening disorders that affect fewer than 1 baby in 250,000. About 20 states screen for maple syrup urine disease, and 15 for homocystinuria.

At least eight states are now testing for MCAD, a disorder that can cause sudden death in infancy and serious disabilities in survivors, such as mental retardation. MCAD affects about 1 baby in 15,000. Normally the body burns fat for energy when it runs out of stored sugar (glucose). Babies with MCAD cannot make this switch, so they may suddenly develop seizures, respiratory failure, cardiac arrest or go into a coma or get infections or other illnesses if they do not eat regularly. When diagnosed early, the disorder can be successfully treated with a steady food intake and avoidance of fasting.

About half of all states now screen newborns for hearing loss. Approximately 1 to 3 in 1,000 babies in well-baby nurseries and 2 to 4 in 100 in intensive care nurseries have significant hearing loss. Without testing, most babies with hearing loss are not

diagnosed until 2 to 3 years of age. By this time, they often have delayed speech and language development. Detection of hearing loss in the neonatal period allows the baby to be fitted with hearing aids before 6 months of age. Recent studies show that this early intervention helps prevent serious speech and language problems.

**How are the tests for inborn errors of body chemistry and hearing loss done?**

Inborn errors of body chemistry are detected by a blood test. The baby's heel is pricked to obtain a few drops of blood for laboratory analysis. The same blood sample can be used to screen for a number of disorders. Usually, the baby's blood specimen is sent to a state public health laboratory for testing, and findings are sent to the health care professional responsible for the infant's care.

Babies are tested for hearing loss with one of two tests that measure how the baby responds to sounds. The tests use either a tiny soft earphone or microphone that is placed in the baby's ear. If either of these tests shows abnormal results, the baby may need more extensive hearing testing to see if he or she does have hearing loss.

**How soon after birth should screening tests be done?**

A blood specimen should be taken from every newborn prior to hospital release. Some of the tests (such as the one for PKU) may not give accurate results, however, if they are done too soon after birth. Because of early hospital discharge, some babies are tested within the first 24 hours of life. Because some cases of PKU can be missed when the test is performed this early, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a repeat specimen be taken 1 to 2 weeks later from infants whose initial test was taken within the first 24 hours of life. Hearing tests are also usually performed before the baby is discharged from the hospital. Babies born outside the hospital should have newborn screening tests done before the 7th day of life.

**What does an abnormal test result mean?**

Parents should not be overly alarmed by abnormal test results, as the initial screening tests give only preliminary information that must be followed up by more precise testing. Most babies with abnormal thyroid screening test results, for example, prove normal in further testing, as do many with abnormal hearing test results.

**What should I do if my child is diagnosed with one of the conditions for which he was tested?**

Your child may need follow-up treatment at a pediatric center that specializes in children with inborn errors of body chemistry. It is essential for your child's healthy development that you follow the recommendations of his or her doctor. As your child grows, he or she will need careful, continued evaluations and monitoring.

**If one of my children has a disorder, will my other children also have it?**

When one child in a family has PKU, galactosemia, biotinidase deficiency, sickle cell anemia, CAH or MCAD, the chance of the same birth defect occurring in a sibling is 1 in 4. The chances remain the same with each pregnancy. Parents who have a baby with one of these disorders can discuss their risk of having another affected child with their health care provider or a genetic counselor.

These disorders are inherited when both parents have the same abnormal gene and pass it on to their baby. A parent who has the abnormal gene, but not the disease, is called a carrier. The health of a carrier is rarely affected.

Congenital hypothyroidism usually is not passed on through parents' genes. The siblings of those who have this disorder are seldom affected.

Hearing loss can be passed on through parents' genes. However, other causes of hearing loss, such as infections that are passed on to the baby during pregnancy or birth, are unlikely to recur in another pregnancy.

You also may wish to read these other March of Dimes Fact Sheets:

Hearing Loss  
PKU  
Sickle Cell Disease

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# Birth Defects

About 150,000 babies are born each year with birth defects. The parents of one out of every 28 babies receive the frightening news that their baby has a birth defect.

A birth defect is an abnormality of structure, function or metabolism (body chemistry) present at birth that results in physical or mental disability, or is fatal. Several thousand different birth defects have been identified. Birth defects are the leading cause of death in the first year of life.

## What causes birth defects?

Both genetic and environmental factors can cause birth defects. However, the causes of about 60 to 70 percent of birth defects currently are unknown.

A single abnormal gene can cause birth defects. Every human being has at least 30,000 to 35,000 genes that determine traits like eye and hair color, as well as direct the growth and development of every part of our physical and biochemical systems. Genes are packaged into each of the 46 chromosomes inside our cells.

Each child gets half its genes from each parent. A person can inherit a genetic disease when one parent (who may or may not have the disease) passes along a single faulty gene. This is called dominant inheritance. Examples include achondroplasia (a form of dwarfism) and Marfan syndrome (a connective tissue disease). Many other genetic diseases are inherited only when both parents (who do not have those diseases) happen to carry the same abnormal gene and pass it on to a child. This is called recessive inheritance. Examples include Tay-Sachs disease (a fatal disorder seen mainly in people of European Jewish heritage) and cystic fibrosis (a fatal disorder of lungs and other organs, affecting mainly Caucasians). There also is a form of inheritance (X-linked) where sons can inherit a genetic disease from a mother who carries the gene (usually with no effect on her own health). Examples include hemophilia (a blood-clotting disorder) and Duchenne muscular dystrophy (progressive muscle weakness).

Abnormalities in the number or structure of chromosomes can cause numerous birth defects. Due to an error that occurred when an egg or sperm cell was

developing, a baby can be born with too many or too few chromosomes, or with one or more chromosomes that are broken or rearranged. Down syndrome, in which a baby is born with an extra chromosome 21, is one of the most common chromosomal abnormalities. Affected children have varying degrees of mental retardation, characteristic facial features and, often, heart defects and other problems. Babies born with extra copies of chromosome 18 or 13 have multiple birth defects and usually die in the first months of life.

Missing or extra sex chromosomes (X and Y) affect sexual development and may cause infertility, growth abnormalities, and behavioral and learning problems. However, most affected individuals have essentially normal lives.

Birth defects also may result from environmental factors such as drug or alcohol abuse, infections, or exposure to certain medications (such as the acne drug Accutane) or other chemicals. Many birth defects appear to be caused by a combination of one or more genes and environmental factors (called multifactorial inheritance). Some examples include cleft lip/palate, clubfoot and some heart defects.

## What are some common types of birth defects?

Birth defects generally are grouped into three major categories: structural/metabolic, congenital infections, and other conditions.

### • Structural/metabolic abnormalities

When a baby has a structural birth defect, some part of the body (internal or external) is missing or malformed. Heart defects are the most common type of structural birth defect, affecting one baby in 125. While advances in surgery have dramatically improved the outlook for affected babies, these remain the leading cause of birth defect-related infant deaths. Doctors usually do not know what causes a baby's heart to form abnormally, although genetic and environmental factors are believed to play a role.

Spina bifida (open spine, in which the backbone never completely closes and the spinal cord is usually malformed) affects one in 2,000 babies. Affected babies suffer varying degrees of paralysis, and bladder and bowel problems.

Both genetic and nutritional factors appear to play a role.

About one baby in 135 has a structural defect involving the genitals or urinary tract. These vary greatly in severity, ranging from abnormal placement of the urinary opening in males (hypospadias) to absence of both kidneys. The cause of hypospadias, which is surgically correctable, is unknown. Babies who lack both kidneys die in the first hours or days of life. This tragic defect is sometimes inherited.

Metabolic disorders affect one in 3,500 babies. These disorders are not visible, but can be harmful or even fatal. Most are recessive genetic diseases. These diseases result from the inability of cells to produce an enzyme (protein) needed to change certain chemicals into others, or to carry substances from one place to another. An example is Tay-Sachs disease. Affected babies lack an enzyme needed to break down certain fatty substances in brain cells. These substances build up and destroy brain cells, resulting in blindness, paralysis and death by age five. Phenylketonuria (PKU) is another metabolic disorder, in which affected babies cannot process a part of protein, which builds up in blood and causes brain damage. PKU is routinely detected with newborn screening tests, so affected babies can be placed on a special diet that prevents mental retardation.

### • Congenital infections

Rubella (German measles) probably is the best known congenital infection that can cause birth defects. If a pregnant woman is infected in the first trimester, her baby has a one-in-four chance of being born with one or more features of congenital rubella syndrome (deafness, mental retardation, heart defects, blindness). Fortunately, with widespread vaccination, this syndrome is now rare in this country.

The most common congenital viral infection is cytomegalovirus (CMV). About 1 percent (40,000 babies a year) of all newborns in this country are infected, although only about 10 percent of them (3,000-4,000) have serious consequences, including mental retardation, and loss of vision and hearing. Pregnant women often acquire CMV from young children, who usually have few or no symptoms.

Sexually transmitted infections in the mother also can endanger the fetus and newborn. For example, untreated syphilis can result in stillbirth, newborn death, or bone defects. About one baby in 2,000 is affected.

• *Other causes*

Other causes of birth defects include fetal alcohol syndrome, which affects one baby in 1,000. This pattern of mental and physical birth defects is common in babies of mothers who drink heavily during pregnancy. Even moderate or light drinking during pregnancy can pose a risk to the baby.

Rh disease of the newborn, which is caused by an incompatibility between the blood of a mother and her fetus, affects about 4,000 infants a year. It can result in jaundice (yellowing of the skin), anemia, brain damage and death. Rh disease usually can be prevented by giving an Rh-negative woman an injection of a blood product called immunoglobulin at 28 weeks of pregnancy and after the delivery of an Rh-positive baby.

Babies of mothers who use cocaine early in pregnancy may be at increased risk of birth defects. A large study has suggested that these babies are five times more likely to be born with urinary tract defects than babies of women who don't use cocaine.

**Can birth defects be prevented?**

While the causes of most birth defects are not known, there are a number of steps a woman can take to reduce her risk of having a baby with a birth defect. One important step is a pre-pregnancy visit with her health care provider. During this visit, the provider can obtain valuable information about a woman or couple's family history, which may help identify risk factors for birth defects or inherited genetic conditions. This information allows for appropriate testing and screening to be offered prior to or during pregnancy. During a pre-pregnancy visit, providers also can take a good look at a woman's health and lifestyle, and guide her in any changes that could improve her chances of having a healthy baby.

A pre-pregnancy visit is especially crucial for women with medical problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, and epilepsy, which can affect pregnancy. For example, women with poorly controlled diabetes are several times more likely than women without diabetes to have a baby with a serious birth defect. However, if their blood sugar levels are well controlled starting before pregnan-

cy, they are almost as likely to have a healthy baby as women without diabetes.

If a woman has never had chickenpox (and has not been vaccinated), a pre-pregnancy visit is a good time to check whether she should be vaccinated prior to pregnancy. Like rubella, chickenpox can cause birth defects when contracted by the pregnant woman, although the risk is low. If she has not been vaccinated against rubella since childhood, she should ask her doctor about the rubella vaccine or a combination vaccine such as measles-mumps-rubella (MMR). She should avoid pregnancy for one month after chickenpox, rubella or MMR vaccination.

All women who could become pregnant should take a daily multivitamin containing 400 micrograms of the B-vitamin folic acid. Studies show that taking this vitamin prior to and in the early weeks of pregnancy reduces the risk of having a baby with certain birth defects of the brain and spine, including spina bifida. If a woman already has had a baby with one of these birth defects, she should consult her doctor prior to pregnancy about how much folic acid to take. Generally, a higher dose, 4 milligrams, is recommended.

A woman who is pregnant or planning pregnancy should avoid alcohol, smoking, and street drugs — these can cause birth defects and other pregnancy complications. She should not take any medication — prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal — without first checking with her health care provider.

**Can some birth defects be diagnosed before birth?**

Some birth defects can be diagnosed before birth, using one or more prenatal tests including ultrasound, amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling (CVS). Ultrasound can help diagnose structural birth defects, such as spina bifida, heart and urinary tract defects. Amniocentesis and CVS are used to diagnose chromosomal abnormalities, such as Down syndrome. They also can detect, or rule out, numerous genetic birth defects that may be suspected because of family history or ethnic background.

**Can birth defects be treated before birth?**

A small percentage of couples will learn through prenatal diagnosis that their baby has a birth defect. While this news can be devastating, prenatal diagnosis sometimes can improve the outlook for the baby. Advances in prenatal therapy now make it possible to treat some birth defects before birth. For example,

biotin dependence and methylmalonic acidemia — two life-threatening inherited disorders of body chemistry — have been diagnosed by amniocentesis and treated in the womb, resulting in the births of healthy babies.

Prenatal surgery has saved babies with urinary-tract blockages, rare tumors of the lung, and congenital diaphragmatic hernia (a hole in the muscle that separates the chest from the abdomen). More than 100 babies have undergone experimental prenatal surgery to repair spina bifida before birth. Preliminary results appear promising: fewer babies who have had surgery for spina bifida require shunts to drain fluid from their brain. However, it is too soon to know how well most of these babies will walk, and the procedure leads to preterm birth. Prenatal blood transfusions have saved numerous babies with severe Rh disease, and heart medications given to the pregnant woman have saved babies with serious heart rhythm disturbances. However, even when a fetus has a condition for which prenatal treatment is not yet possible, prenatal diagnosis permits parents to prepare themselves emotionally, and to plan with their provider the safest timing, location and method of delivery.

Couples who have had a baby with a birth defect, or who have a family history of birth defects, should consider consulting a genetic counselor. These health professionals help families understand what is known about the causes of a birth defect, and the chances of the birth defect recurring in another pregnancy. Genetic counselors also can provide referrals to medical experts as well as to appropriate support groups.

**References**

March of Dimes Perinatal Data Center. Maternal, Infant, and Child Health in the United States, 2001.

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### **Mandated Benefits Added by the Legislature in the Last Ten Years**

- 42.345 Coverage of newly born children (federal requirement) (1975, amended in 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997)
- 42.347 Postpartum hospital stay coverage (federal requirement) (1996, amended in 1997)
- 42.353 Acupuncture coverage (offer only, does not mandate coverage) (1990, amended in 1995, 1996, 1997)
- 42.355 Coverage for services of midwives (1981, amended in 1995, 1996, 1997)
- 42.365 Substance abuse treatment coverage (1988, amended in 1996, 1997, 2002)
- 42.375 Mammography coverage (1991, amended in 1995, 1996, 1997)
- 42.380 Phenylketonuria (1992, amended in 1995, 1996, 1997)
- 42.385 Dental, Vision, Health coverage (offer only, does not mandate coverage) (1992, amended in 1996, 1997)
- 42.390 Coverage for diabetes treatment (2000, amended in 2002)
- 42.395 Prostate and cervical cancer screening (1996, amended in 1997, 2000)
- 42.400 Reconstructive surgery following mastectomies (federal requirement) (2000)

# American Academy of Pediatrics

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February 4, 2005

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**Representatives:** Tom Anderson, Chair, House Labor and Commerce  
 Pete Kott, Vice-Chair  
 Gabrielle LeDoux  
 Bob Lynn  
 Norm Rokeberg  
 Harry Crawford  
 David Guttenberg

Dear Representative Anderson and Members of the House L&C Committee:

On behalf of the pediatricians of the Alaska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics I am writing to encourage your support of HB 109: Newborn Hearing Screening, Tracking and Intervention. We recommend that all babies be screened for hearing loss before they leave the hospital.

The cost of identifying a newborn with hearing loss is less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> the cost of identifying newborns with metabolic disorders such as PKU and hypothyroidism, for which screenings are required in every state. For most birthing hospitals, the cost for newborn hearing screening per child is between \$20 and \$60 and continues to decrease. The evidence for the benefits, practicability and cost-efficiency of universal newborn hearing screening is so compelling that 37 states have passed legislation requiring that newborns be screened for hearing loss. Most importantly, children not detected at birth or soon after, will on average not be detected until 2-3 years of age. The most critical period for speech and language development is from birth to three years of age.

Thank you for supporting HB 109.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Porter, MD FAAP  
 President  
 American Academy of Pediatrics, Alaska Chapter



February 3, 2005

The Honorable Tom Anderson, Chair  
House Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 408  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 109 (Ramras)—Support

Dear Chair Anderson:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we encourage you and your colleagues on the House Labor and Commerce Committee to support HB 109, authored by Representative Jay Ramras and co-sponsored by Representatives Gara, Elkins, Wilson, Gruenberg and McGuire.

AARP is not only a "senior organization." We are also an organization of grandparents concerned about the quality of health of all Alaskans of all ages.

The goal of HB 109 is to have all children born in Alaska screened for hearing problems soon after birth. If screening is not done early, very often hearing losses or problems will not be detected until a child is two or three years of age. The most important period for speech and language development is from birth to three. Most of our newborns are offered this screening. AARP hopes you will enable us to have 100% of them screened at birth. We are pleased to join the March of Dimes in support of this bill.

We urge an "AYE" vote on HB 109.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Marie Darlin*

Marie Darlin, Coordinator  
AARP Capital City Task Force  
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Representative David Guttenberg  
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**Representative Jay Ramras**  
**10th House District**

**Fax: (907) 455-2070**

**Re: House Bill 109**

February 1, 2005

Dear Representative Ramras:

I am writing in support of House Bill 109 ("related to screening Newborns for Hearing Ability"), which you have agreed to sponsor. I am a pediatrician in private practice in Anchorage with 28 years of experience. I also serve as the Alaska Chapter Champion for the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program for the American Academy of Pediatrics. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports the development of programs in each state for universal screening of all infants for hearing deficits at or soon after birth in order to allow for early identification and intervention of hearing impaired children in order to maximize their potential. There are several reasons that this program is important:

1. Hearing loss is one of the most common birth defects. One in 3000 infants are born in Alaska with permanent congenital hearing loss. Without universal newborn hearing programs, the average age of detection of even severe hearing loss is 2-3 years old
2. Hearing loss has a significant negative effect on children. This would seem obvious but many studies indicate the negative impact of hearing loss on a child's emotional and social development as well as language delays that do not seem to progress even after diagnosis, in some children, when that diagnosis is delayed. Even mild and unilateral hearing loss - problems that often defy detection much longer without an objective early hearing screen- may have long lasting negative effects to the child.
3. Early detection and intervention of hearing deficits significantly helps children. Numerous studies show that when children are diagnosed with hearing loss and appropriate intervention to augment hearing and provide appropriate communication options are started early in life, preferably before 6 months of age, significant and long lasting benefits are achieved by the children in language skills, emotional development, social and familial adjustment.

In order to achieve these benefits for children and their families, there are several steps that must occur that are benchmarks for a successful early hearing detection and intervention program and each of these can be greatly aided by HB 109 as written:

1. Universal hearing screen for all newborns - This first step is already nearly achieved in Alaska. Due to new advancement in screening technology almost all birthing hospitals either are or soon will be screening newborns for hearing loss. By allowing non-audiologists to administer the screen and bill appropriately for this service, and asking insurance companies to cover this "standard of care" evaluation, all infants in the state can have this evaluation before they leave the hospital or birthing facility.
2. When a hearing screen is failed, they are referred for evaluation - This step may have one or two parts. A child who fails the initial screen is referred for re-screen and if still abnormal, diagnostic intervention is performed by 3 month of age. Each institution and/or the infant's medical provider are responsible for this step. The failure to return for re-screening or for diagnostic testing markedly reduces the effectiveness of the entire program. With the tracking provision of your bill,

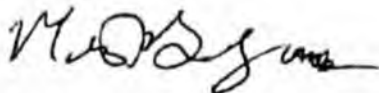
February 1, 2006

information will be shared with a state program that can make sure that each infant that needs further intervention have this option provided for them. Without a state mandate, this information will have to be shared voluntarily between institutions, which will allow for some institutions to ignore this critical step. Diagnostic intervention involves testing called auditory brainstem response testing (ABR) which is only done by audiologists trained in this procedure.

3. Once diagnosed, in order to receive maximum benefit, parents should be presented with communication options and intervention should begin before 6 months of age. These options may include hearing aids (which are accepted by infants much better if started in early infancy), and various communication options including sign language and other visual cues. The parents and the infant's medical provider must serve as a medical home and have information to make appropriate referrals for subspecialty evaluation and community based resources in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Thank you for sponsoring HB 109 which will assure that our youngest Alaskans have the opportunity to have this most common, but invisible, birth defect diagnosed early with appropriate intervention that will offer long term benefits for their future. If I can be of any assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Martin F. Beals, Jr., M. D., FAAP  
Alaska AAP Chapter Champion, EHDI program



**March  
of Dimes**  
*Saving babies, together.*

**Alaska State Chapter**  
255 E. Fireweed Lane, Suite 102  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
(907) 276-4111  
1-800-478-5245  
Fax: (907) 276-3375

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005

Senator Fred Dyson  
State Capitol, Room 121  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Dyson,

I am writing to express March of Dimes' support of House Bill 109 related to newborn hearing screening. March of Dimes is a national charitable organization whose mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality. There is a lot of public support for this excellent bill, and it seems, considerable support in the Senate! **Senator Dyson, please schedule HB 109 for a hearing of the Senate HESS Committee before the end of the session!**

Hearing loss is THE MOST COMMON BIRTH DEFECT. That fact is a surprise to many people. Alaska is one of only 11 states that have not passed newborn hearing screening legislation. House Bill 109 is important because it not only assures that all Alaskan babies are tested for hearing at birth, but that those requiring confirmatory testing and referrals to services do receive them. Children who receive these services early learn better and are less likely to need special education services during their school years. The fiscal note on this bill is very modest and has the potential to save many dollars in special education and other associated costs.

Newborn screening has been conducted in most hospitals in Alaska for several years. The cost of hearing screening has been already been factored into their negotiated rate with insurance companies and has been covered by Medicaid, Blue Cross and Aetna policies for a number of years. So, newborn hearing screening will not be a burden to insurance companies. In fact, Aetna and Premier Blue Cross/Blue Shield are neutral on HB 109.

I am attaching a copy of postcards recently completed by 111 fellow Alaskans to show their support for newborn hearing screening and HB 109. Please, Senator Dyson, schedule a Senate HESS hearing for HB 109 right away!

Best regards,

Debbie Golden, MS, RN, BC  
Director of Program Services  
March of Dimes, Alaska Chapter

**Representative Jay Ramras**  
**Co-Chair, House Resources**  
**V-Chair, Economic Develop.**  
**Tourism & Trade**  
**House State Affairs**

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## Alaska State Legislature



While in Session  
State Capitol, Room 104  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
(907) 465-3004  
Fax: 465-2070  
Toll Free: (877) 465-3004

House District 10

### House of Representatives

## MEMO

To: Senator Fred Dyson Chair, Senate Health, Education & Social Services

Fm: Representative Jay Ramras

Date: April 22, 2005

Re: House Bill 109 – Newborn Hearing Screening and Tracking

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Please accept this Memo as a request for the Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee to hear HB 109. "An Act relating to establishing a screening, tracking, and intervention program related to the hearing ability of newborns and infants; providing an exemption to licensure as an audiologist for certain persons performing hearing screening tests; relating to insurance coverage for newborn and infant hearing screening; and providing for an effective date." HB 109 will protect newborns in Alaska by mandating that infants receive hearing screening at birth, and that follow-up care is provided for at risk infants.

Thank you in advance for scheduling HB 109 before the Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee.

Attachment to this memo:

- Sponsor Statement
- CSHB 109 (FIN)
- CSHB 109 (L&C)
- Original Copy of HB 109
- Sectional
- Fiscal Note - Health & Social Services
- Zero Fiscal Note – Education & Early Development
- Zero Fiscal Note - Commerce
- House Labor and Commerce Committee Report

- House Health, Education & Social Services Committee Report
- House Finance Committee Report
- Applicable statutes - AS 08.11.120, AS 21.42.347 - 347, AS 47.20
- Summary of articles with the following articles - (1) Why is Mandatory Newborn Hearing and Screening and Reporting So Important? (2) Alaska Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Program Overview, (3) Locations of Newborn Hearing and Screening Hospitals, (4) March of Dimes - Hearing Loss, (5) March of Dimes -- Newborn Screening Tests, (6) March of Dimes – Birth Defects, and (7) The Governor’s Council on Disabilities : d Special Education – FY06 Legislative Priorities
- Correspondence and written testimony concerning HB 109

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**Thank you**

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: HB109CS(FIN)-DHSS-DPH-04-15-05  
 ( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): corrected 4/15/05

Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services

Title: RELATING TO NEWBORN HEARING  
SCREENING

RDU: Public Health

Component: Women, Children and Family Health

Sponsor: RAMRAS

Requester: HOUSE (FIN)

Component No.: 2788

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	31.9	39.4	47.4	55.8	64.6	64.6
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>64.6</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts			( 29.7)	( 111.6)	( 115.9)	( 119.8)
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	31.9	39.4	77.1	167.4	180.5	184.4
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>64.6</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The intent of this bill is to ensure all newborns are provided with hearing screening within 30 days of their birth, and that those identified with a positive screen or high risk factors receive a second screen or diagnostic work-up, are enrolled in early intervention and receive treatment as needed. Projected costs associated with maintenance of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program (EHDI) are based on the following assumptions: 1) The number of newborns screened is based on the average number of births currently at 10,000 per year. 2) The diagnostic rate of hearing loss is estimated to be at 0.3% of the 10,000 births=30 newly diagnosed infants per year, however, not all newborns with hearing loss will be immediately identified. 3) 90% of newborns would be screened by FY 06; 95% by FY 07; and 100% by FY 08 and beyond. (Continued on P.2)

Prepared by: Richard Mandsager, M.D.  
 Division: Public Health  
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner  
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Phone 465-3090  
 Date/Time 04/13/2005  
 Date 04/15/2005

FISCAL NOTE  
FN #

STATE OF ALASKA  
2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO HB109CS(FIN)-DHSS-DPH-04-15-05

**ANALYSIS CONTINUATION**

4) There is a need to follow an additional 10% of all newborns each year who are at high risk for later onset hearing loss during their first three years of life. Thus, the program requires a reporting and surveillance system for tracking all newborns and assisting them with ongoing hearing screening, diagnostic and intervention services.

At present the Division of Health Care Services is receiving two federal grants to support the development of this program. One grant, scheduled to be completed in March of FY 05, covers the expenses associated with development of the newborn hearing program, including assisting hospitals with implementation and education, and professional and public educational information. The second grant will end in August of 2005 and covers start up costs associated with the statewide early detection/intervention surveillance and tracking system. Both grants have been submitted for continuation funding for three additional years. This would provide funds for infrastructure costs through March 2008 if awarded. General Funds are also being requested in FY08 to fund the fourth quarter activities after the expiration of the continuation grant. This portion is shown as a switch fund from Federal to GF.

The increased line item expenditures shown on page 1 will be utilized for:

GRANTS AND CLAIMS (\$31.9 in FY 06): Additional funds for special hearing resources would be needed for the existing Early Prevention/ILP programs to work with the anticipated increased volume as children are identified earlier and thus require services during the 0-3 period. The additional grant funds would be awarded incrementally over the next five fiscal years to allow for increased capacity-building to support special hearing services for children identified with hearing loss in preparation for school readiness and learning. The dollar figure is based on:

1) An average FY 05 cost of \$3,100 per newly enrolled infant, with a 3% inflation factor built in annually. 2) Only assumes about 50% of the newly diagnosed infants would enroll in the early intervention hearing resources program (10 new infants in FY 06; 12 in FY 07; 14 in FY 08; 16 in FY 09; and 18 in FY 10 and FY 11).

The General Funds replacing Federal Funds (and so not shown as line item expenditures on page 1) will be allocated by cost category as follows:

PERSONAL SERVICES ( \$72.0 covers all of these personnel expenses in FY 09 and assumes a 3.5 percent annual merit increase):

a) 0.5 FTE - EHDI Health Program Manager II (R/19). This position oversees the maintenance of the reporting and surveillance activities of the program, assures early intervention referrals, tracks high-risk infants through the age of 3, provides outreach education to providers, and technical assistance to health care facilities throughout the state.

b) 0.5 FTE - Administrative Clerk III (R/10). This position provides administrative support and data entry for the activities required for maintenance of a statewide newborn hearing screening program.

TRAVEL (\$1.0 in FY 08): Travel costs are included for the EHDI manager to visit screening sites for TA and program compliance. Additional travel funds would be required in FY 09 with the termination of federal funding.

(Continued on P. 3)

**FISCAL NOTE**  
**FN #**

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

**BILL NO. HB109CS(FIN)-DHSS-DPH-04-15-05**

**ANALYSIS CONTINUATION**

**SUPPLIES (\$1.0 in FY 08):** This includes the cost of postage to mail brochures and technical assistance resources.

**CONTRACTUAL (\$27.7 in FY 08):** Includes the actual cost of supporting web-based data and surveillance system. Cost averages at \$3.00 per newborn. Costs also include those needed for the reprinting of educational materials for parents and providers. Slight increases in contractual costs are included in FY09 and beyond.

Sec. 08.11.120. Audiology exemptions.

(a) This chapter does not apply to an individual who practices audiology consistent with the accepted standards and code of ethics of the individual's profession as part of the individual's duties as

(1) a physician licensed under AS 08.64;

(2) an employee of the federal government who is required to practice audiology during the employment, if

(A) the employer maintains appropriate supervision of the individual's practice of audiology;

(B) the individual practices audiology as part of the duties for which the individual is employed;

(C) the individual practices audiology in the facility where the individual is employed or under the supervision of the federal governmental unit where the individual is employed; and

(D) the individual does not render or offer to render audiology services to the public for compensation in addition to the salary the individual receives from the federal governmental unit;

(3) a student, intern, or resident pursuing a course of study in audiology at an accredited college or a clinical training facility approved by the department, if the activities of the student, intern, or resident constitute part of a supervised course of study and the student, intern, or resident is designated as an "audiology intern," "audiology trainee," or other title approved by the department that clearly indicates that the person is training to be an audiologist.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of this chapter,

(1) a nurse licensed under AS 08.68 may perform hearing sensitivity evaluations;

(2) an individual licensed as a hearing aid dealer under AS 08.55 may deal in hearing aids;

(3) an individual holding a class A certificate issued by the Conference of Executives of American Schools of the Deaf may teach the hearing impaired;

(4) an individual may engage in the testing of hearing as part of a hearing conservation program that complies with the regulations of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the federal government if the individual is certified to do the testing by a state or federal agency acceptable to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

(c) An individual who is not an audiologist, but who is exempt under this section, may not use a title or description stating or implying that the person is an audiologist.

(d) An individual exempt under (a)(2) of this section may consult with and disseminate research findings and scientific information to accredited academic institutions or governmental agencies, and offer lectures to the public for a fee, monetary or otherwise, without being licensed under this chapter.

(e) An individual who is not licensed under this chapter but who teaches the practice of audiology in an audiologist training program at a college or university may use the title "audiologist" but may not practice audiology.

**Sec. 21.42.347. Coverage for costs of birth.**

(a) A health care insurer who provides coverage for the costs of childbirth shall also provide coverage for the costs of hospitalization or medical care following childbirth for a period of not less than

(1) 48 hours after a vaginal birth; and

(2) 96 hours after a caesarean birth.

(b) Except as otherwise required to provide coverage specified under (a) of this section, this section does not affect a payment arrangement entered into between a hospital or health care provider and a health care insurer.

(c) This section may not be construed to require hospitalization or medical care as described under (a)(1) or (2) of this section if the mother giving birth and the mother's health care provider agree that the mother and any newborn child of the mother should be discharged earlier than required under (a)(1) or (2) of this section.

(d) In this section,

(1) "health care insurer" has the meaning given in AS 21.54.500; "health care insurer" includes the Comprehensive Health Insurance Association as described in AS 21.55.010;

(2) "health care provider" means a person licensed in this state to provide health care services.

*Sec. 21.42.350. Exemption of proceeds, annuity contracts. [Repealed, Sec. 14 ch 62 SLA 1982. For current law see AS 09.38.025 (a)].*

AS 47.20

Sec. 47.20.060

It is the purpose of this chapter to

(1) subject to the availability of funding, provide quality learning and related early intervention family support services to eligible children under the age of three who have developmental delays or disabilities and, on a discretionary basis, to those children under the age of three who are at risk of developmental delays or disabilities;

(2) bring together and make optimal use of all available federal, state, local, and private resources for the benefit of children under the age of three with developmental delays or disabilities and their families;

(3) expand and improve existing learning and early intervention services and to provide and arrange for comprehensive services through local agencies and statewide support programs.

Sec. 47.20.070. Establishment of program.

(a) The department, with the assistance of the Governor's Council for the Handicapped and Gifted, shall establish a coordinated, comprehensive, statewide system of multidisciplinary interagency programs that provide appropriate early intervention services to eligible persons under this chapter.

(b) The department is the lead agency for purposes of federal law with respect to the administration of the early intervention services system required under (a) of this section. The department shall establish and administer the system required under (a) of this section so that the state is eligible for the maximum available funding from public and private sources.

(c) In connection with the system established under (a) of this section, the department shall

(1) develop a state plan that identifies the best methods of providing services to children under the age of three with developmental delays or disabilities and their families and report to the governor on the extent to which that plan is being implemented in the state;

(2) develop and implement an educational program concerning the nature and effects of developmental delays and disabilities;

(3) serve as a clearinghouse for educational materials and information about developmental delays and disabilities;

(4) organize and encourage training programs for persons who provide services to children under the age of three with developmental delays and disabilities and their families;

(5) establish a training program for paraprofessionals who provide services to children under the age of three with developmental delays and disabilities and their families;

(6) cooperate with other public and private agencies and individuals to facilitate the transition of children served in the early intervention system to the formal education system;

(7) identify and use all public and private resources available to the state;  
and

(8) monitor and evaluate the services provided to ensure the demonstrable effectiveness of the services and compliance with state and federal law and department policy regarding the provision of early intervention services.

**Sec. 47.20.075. Grant authority.**

The department may award grants for covered services to children and their families who are eligible under this chapter.

**Sec. 47.20.080. Program eligibility.**

(a) A child and the child's family are eligible for core early intervention services and additional early intervention services under this chapter if the child is under the age of three and

(1) experiencing developmental delay or disability; or

(2) at risk of experiencing developmental delay or disability if early intervention services are not provided.

(b) If the department estimates that funding available for services under this chapter will be insufficient to provide services to all persons who are eligible under (a) of this section, the department shall eliminate coverage for services in the following order:

(1) additional early intervention services for persons eligible under (a)(2) of this section;

(2) additional early intervention services for persons eligible under (a)(1) of this section;

(3) core early intervention services for persons eligible under (a)(2) of this section; and

(4) core early intervention services for persons eligible under (a)(1) of this section.

**Sec. 47.20.090. Finding and evaluating eligible participants.**

(a) The department shall establish a comprehensive system for finding children and their families who are eligible for services under this chapter. This child find system must

(1) include a public awareness program focusing on early identification of developmentally delayed and disabled children under three years of age;

(2) provide for participation by primary referral sources; and

(3) include procedures with timelines for referral of eligible participants to service providers.

(b) The department shall, within 45 days after a child's referral for services under (a) of this section, ensure that all affected public agencies and service providers

(1) provide for a comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluation of the functioning of the child and the needs of the child's family so that the family can appropriately assist in the development of the child;

(2) in consultation with the child's parents, develop a written individualized service plan that identifies how the needs of the child and the family could be met.

Sec. 47.20.100. Individualized family service plan.

The individualized family service plan developed under AS 47.20.090(b)(2) shall be based on the evaluation conducted under AS 47.20.090(b)(1) and must include, subject to AS 47.20.080 (b),

(1) provisions for case management services to implement the plan, including the name of the case manager from the profession most immediately

relevant to the child's or family's needs who will be responsible for the implementation of the plan and coordination with other agencies and persons;

(2) a statement of the child's present levels of physical development, cognitive development, language and speech development, psychosocial development, and self-help skills, based on appropriate objective criteria;

(3) a description of the family's concerns, priorities, and resources as they relate to the future enhancement of the child's development;

(4) a description of the specific early intervention services that will help meet the unique needs of the child and the family, including the frequency, intensity, and method with which the services should be delivered;

(5) the projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of the services;

(6) an outline of the major outcomes expected to be achieved for the child and the family along with the criteria, procedures, and timelines that will be used to determine the degree to which progress toward achieving the outcomes are being made and whether modifications or revisions of the outcomes or services are necessary; and

(7) a statement of the steps that will be taken to support the transition of the child and the family to the use of services available under other appropriate programs, including programs for children who are three years of age or older.

Sec. 47.20.110. Other duties of the department.

(a) The department shall adopt regulations necessary to implement this chapter, including regulations

(1) for personnel development, including preservice and in-service training programs for providers of early intervention services;

(2) to govern resolution of intra-agency and interagency disputes about the provision of services under this chapter and the financial responsibility of the respective parties for those services;

(3) that ensure that services are provided to children and their families in a timely manner pending the resolution of disputes among public agencies or service providers;

(4) providing for due process with respect to the rights of children and parents who are eligible for services under this chapter; the regulations must provide that during the pendency of a complaint about a change in services, the child and family shall continue to receive the prior services unless the state and the family otherwise agree, or, if the complaint relates to an application for initial services, the child and family shall receive the services that are not in dispute; and

(5) for the award of grants under this chapter.

(b) The department shall establish a system for compiling data on the numbers of children and their families in the state who need early intervention services, the numbers being served, the types of services provided, and other information as required under federal law. Personally identifiable information obtained under this chapter is confidential for purposes of AS 40.25.110 - 40.25.120.

Sec. 47.20.290. Definitions.

In this chapter,

(1) "additional early intervention services" means

(A) family training and counseling;

(B) speech pathology and audiology;

(C) occupational therapy;

(D) physical therapy;

(E) psychological services;

(F) medical services only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes; and

(G) health services for the child that are necessary to enable the child to benefit from the other early intervention services;

(2) "core early intervention services" means

(A) case management services;

(B) special instruction; and

(C) early identification, screening, and assessment;

(3) "department" means the Department of Health and Social Services;

(4) "developmentally delayed" means functioning at least 15 percent below a chronological or corrected age or 1.5 standard deviations below age appropriate norms in one or more of the following areas: cognitive development, gross motor development, sensory development, speech or language development, or psychosocial development, including self-help skills and behavior, as measured and verified by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures or through systematic observation of functional abilities in a daily routine by two professionals and a parent, developmental history, and appropriate assessment procedures;

(5) "disability" means having an identifiable physical, mental, sensory, or psychosocial condition that has a probability of resulting in developmental delay even though a developmental delay may not be exhibited at the time the condition is identified, including

(A) chromosomal abnormalities associated with delays in development, such as Down's syndrome, Turner's syndrome, Cornelia de Lange syndrome, or fragile X syndrome;

(B) other syndromes and conditions associated with delays in development, such as fetal alcohol syndrome, cocaine and other drug-related syndromes, metabolic disorders, cleft lip, or cleft palate;

(C) neurological disorders associated with delays in development, such as cerebral palsy, microcephaly, hydrocephaly, spina bifida, or periventricular leukomalacia;

(D) sensory impairment, such as hearing loss or deafness, visual loss or blindness, or a combination of hearing and visual loss that interferes with the child's ability to respond effectively to environmental stimulus;

(E) congenital infections, such as rubella, cytomegalovirus, toxoplasmosis, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome;

(F) chronic illness or conditions that may limit learning or development, such as cystic fibrosis, bronchopulmonary dysplasia, tracheostomies, amputations, arthritis, or muscular dystrophy;

(G) psychosocial disorders, such as reactive attachment disorder, infant autism, or childhood schizophrenia; or

(H) atypical growth patterns consistent with a prognosis of developmental delay based upon parental and professional judgment, such as failure to thrive;

(6) "early intervention services" or "services" means services that are designed to help meet the developmental needs of a child under the age of three who is developmentally delayed or disabled or at risk of developmental delay or disability or the needs of the child's family so that the family can support the child's development.



**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

P.O. Box 240249 • Anchorage, Alaska 99524-0249 • Phone: 907-269-8990 • Fax: 907-269-8995 • Toll Free 888-269-8990

*Disability & Special Ed.  
Benarsi Lal*

**FY06 Legislative Priorities**

**Fiscal Plan**

Home and community-based services funded by Medicaid and state grants enable Alaskans with severe disabilities to live independently and become productive, gainful members of their communities. In an economy where the source of revenues is unpredictable, Alaskans with severe disabilities, whose independence and productivity is linked to government supports, are at risk for negative, unpredictable life changes.

Recommendation: The Council urges the Legislature to meet the needs of Alaskans with disabilities by developing a consistent revenue stream for supports and services as a part of a long range fiscal plan.

**Dental Services**

Governor Murkowski will introduce legislation to expand Medicaid coverage for adult recipients that will include preventive and restorative dental services. Proposed coverage will be capped at \$1,150 annually. The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has agreed to contribute \$5.4 million over five years toward the costs of dental services for Trust beneficiaries. In FY03, costs of emergency dental care totaled \$2.2 million. Over time, the State's investment, coupled with the Trust funded donated dental and dental training programs, will significantly reduce the cost for emergency dental services.

Recommendation: The Council urges adoption of the Governor's legislation to include adult preventive dental coverage under Medicaid.

**Bring the Kids Home**

At any given time approximately 400 children are served in costly out-of-state placements. Governor Murkowski's initiative will develop a support system within the state to allow Alaskan children to receive services near their homes and families. State expenditures will decrease as children are moved home and supported in their communities. The Council recommends that all cost savings realized in this initiative be reinvested in Keeping Kids Home.

Recommendation: The Council urges the legislature to support the Governor's Bring the Kids Home Initiative.





# Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS Committee  
 Committee name

Committee on HB 109 dated 17 February 2005  
 Bill/Subject

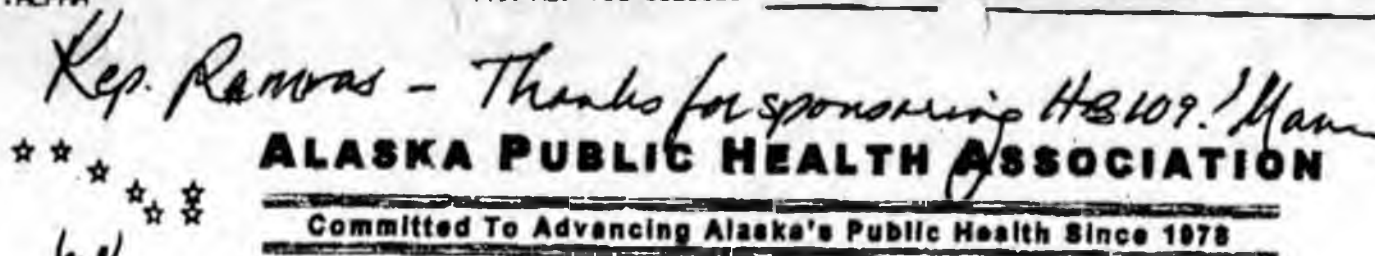
I would like to write in support of HB 109. The Grange, the organization I belong to, has supported mandatory infant hearing screening since 1999. I have 2 children of my own and know firsthand how important the first years of life are in language development. Early identification and intervention of hearing loss is so very important. I consulted the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management website, [infanthearing.org](http://infanthearing.org), and learned that 2-4 babies per 1000 screened at birth had permanent congenital hearing loss. Alaska's babies deserve early identification and care. Please help Alaska join the 32 other states that have enacted legislation for Newborn Hearing Screening.

Signed: Lou Bittel  
 Testifier

Northland Pioneer Grange No. 1  
 Representing (Optional)

Po Box 2304 Palmer  
 Address

746-4900  
 Phone number



February 17, 2005  
 (H) HESS HB 109

**IN SUPPORT OF HB 109 "SCREENING NEWBORNS FOR HEARING ABILITY"**

Dear members of the (H)HESS Committee:

On behalf of the Alaska Public Health Association, representing two hundred and twenty public health professionals who are deeply committed to developing sound public health policy to improve the health of all Alaskans, we encourage you to vote yes on HB 109 and move it out of Committee today.

Recognizing the importance of universal hearing screening of newborns as a critical public health intervention, the Alaska Public Health Association encourages you to support HB 109. Hearing impairment is the most common disability in newborns, impacting 2-3 children out of every thousand. Identified early, these children will not be left behind during the most critical period for speech and language development: birth to 3 years.

Late identification of infant hearing loss presents a significant public health problem. Without screening, children with hearing loss are usually not identified until two years of age or later, which results in significant delays in speech, language, social, cognitive, and emotional development - and a greater cost for services.

Research has shown that children identified at birth with mild-to-severe hearing loss who receive intervention before they are 6 months of age fall within a normal range of language comprehension and expression as well as social development by the time they are ready to begin school. By contrast, children with hearing loss diagnosed after six months of age experience significant delays in both language and social development. The cost savings of early intervention is significant.

HB 109 offers an important first step in providing newborn hearing loss screening. Yet we urge you to not stop at the hospital or birth center, as what happens after screening is also important. Families need to receive appropriate information and services following newborn hearing screening and to have their child begin receiving intervention services by six months of age. It is also critical the team working with the child measure the impact of early identification of hearing loss on development, tracking gains made and areas to develop. The public health surveillance system must be in place for the Early Hearing Detection Program to be effective.

To quote from Dr. Marlon Downs, the world-renowned pioneer in pediatric audiology, "If a child can be identified at birth and receive immediate intervention, we have done our jobs," she said. "On the other hand, if we don't detect the hearing loss until the child reaches 2 years of age or later, that child has, in most cases, lost the opportunity to catch up with others his or her own age. *Why, with all the tools we have, would we not speed the time to establish a model for screening and early intervention in our nation's hospitals?*" That is the challenge before us in Alaska.

HB 109 takes an important step in bringing forth universal hearing, building on the success of Alaska's hospitals and birthing centers who are already voluntarily screening, to assure all newborns will be screened. With appropriate screening and follow up services, HB 109 will assure our children who are deaf or hearing impaired receive the early intervention services they need to develop their fullest potential. Thank you.

Marie J. Lavigne, Executive Director Alaska Public Health Association

Hello my name is Pam Mueller-Guy. I work for Southeast Alaska Independent Living as the Deaf Services & Interpreter Referral Coordinator. I am representing for SAIL in support for the Newborn Hearing Screening test, House Bill 109 and Senate Bill 68.

I was born as a hearing child. However, I had to have a blood transfusion from a stranger when I was five days old, due to my rare blood type. Due to this blood transfusion, I became deaf, but no one realized it till I was about 2 years old.

Even as a toddler, I could speak a little bit and mimicked by brother while playing with toys. My grandmother finally figured out that I could not hear, realizing I never responded when they called my name. Only when a loud noise occurred, such as a stomp on the floor, did I look their way.

They finally took me to have a hearing test and I was diagnosed with severe profound nerve deafness. They were in shock and wept for me because they didn't know what to do. They asked, "How can she can hear music?" My whole family is musical! They had grief until they realized I could experience music.

I started speech classes at 2 ½ years old then started wearing hearing aids at 3 1/2 years old and started half days till four years old to stay at boarding parents house during the week because deaf school was 25 miles away from my home.

I was held back in school twice due to my hearing disability. One time, just because they wanted to keep all the students who were deaf together in one grade. I had to make friends all over again.

If this bill is passed, it will also allow parents of newborn babies with hearing loss to get information immediately and begin preparing for life with a child who is deaf. It is difficult for organizations like SAIL to identify and assist persons who have hearing loss; a much better way to do this is to catch the baby and family at the beginning of life. I do not want to see people with hearing loss have to go the hard way like me.

I hope for the new generation that they can be diagnosed early and begin to learn early so they may be capable of writing English easy instead of the hard way. I see most deaf and hard of hearing have a hard time in alaska for jobs. Schools also should have programs specifically for children who are deaf so they won't be isolated. I am hopeful children who are deaf will be able to communicate in both the hearing world and the deaf world.

The newborn hearing screen would be best for all needs so the parents of the baby can start early to learn to cope with the child and their lives would be easier! This bill will

save a lot of money for the government, schools, and insurance, including Medicaid, in the long run. Thank you for taking your time to listen to me. Keep passing those bills for better lives in Alaska!

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT of HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES  
DIVISION of PUBLIC HEALTH

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
P.O. BOX 110610  
JUNEAU, AK 99811-0610  
PHONE: (907) 465-3090  
FAX: (907) 465-4832

February 3, 2005

The Honorable Jay Ramras  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 104  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Ramras:

Thank you for your support of newborn hearing screening. I write to offer some suggested amendments to HB 109 on behalf of the Administration. We believe these changes, mostly technical amendments to update language and programmatic information but a couple more substantive, will help make the bill more supportable. Our proposed amendments are as follows:

1. Page 2:

Line 15: Change the "90 percent" to 100%."

Line 16: Change the date of "January 1, 2007" to "January 1, 2008."

2. Page 3:

Line 19: change the word "test" to "screen."

Line 20 change the word "test" to "evaluation."

3. Page 4:

Line 3: change the word "tested" to "screened."

Line 11: add the following: "Results of all newborns screened will be reported to the state early hearing, detection and intervention (EHDI) program on a regular basis to ensure appropriate tracking, surveillance and intervention."

Line 14: Change the number of births from 50 to 20.

(Rationale: We currently have screening programs and equipment in place in all 23 of the communities where birthing centers exist (either hospital based or free standing birthing centers). The screening equipment is either owned by the hospital and the hospital administers the program or the equipment is owned by the state program and in place at the public health nursing centers. Additional equipment could possibly be purchased and placed in other public health nursing centers as needed if the number of out of hospital births in the community warranted its placement.)

Line 18: Change the word "testing" to "screening."

Line 20: Change the word "tested" to "screened."

Line 24: after the words "speech and language skills" include the words "psychosocial

and cognitive development.”

Line 25: add “(3): notify the state early hearing, detection and intervention (EHDI) program of the newborn’s screening results.”

Line 30: Change the word “testing” to “screening.”

4. Page 5:

Line 1: Change the word “testing” to “screening”

Line 10: Change the word “testing” to “screening”

Line 14: Add the following: “Signed refusals by the parent(s) will be sent to the state program for tracking”.

Lines 15-19: Delete this entire section.

Rationale: Payment methodologies for screening both during the hospital stay have been established with the recent revision of Medicaid regulations and the accompanying provider billing manuals. It is not feasible for the department to take on the costs and reimbursement processes that would need to be established in order to reimburse the hospitals for non-paying patients.

Line 22: Change the word “tested” to “screened”

5. Page 6: Section 47.20.320:

Line 12: include the words: “certified nurse midwife, direct entry midwife,....”

6. Page 7:

Line 6: change “and the value of early hearing testing” to “and the value of early hearing screening, tracking and intervention.”

Line 10: change the word “testing” to “early hearing screening, detection, and intervention.”

Line 13: add a new section:

Section: 47.20.360. Performance Evaluation. The Department will collect and compile performance data to ensure that the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program is in compliance with this section, including the number of infants born, the proportion of all infants screened, the referral rate, the follow-up rate, the false-positive rate, and the false-negative rate.

(a) Testing Performance Standards.

(1) Each newborn hearing screening program should have a false-positive rate of 3% or less.

(2) Each newborn hearing screening program should have a false-negative rate of 3% or less.

(b) Oversight Responsibility. The Department shall exercise oversight responsibility for EHDI programs, including establishing a performance data set and reviewing performance data collected pursuant thereto by each hospital, birthing center or public health nursing center.

Line 25: Change “30 decibels” to “40 decibels.”

7. Page 8: After line 2, add the following definitions:

9. "Health Care Insurer" means any entity regulated by the Insurance Commissioner, including, but not limited to, health care insurers; health, hospital or medical service plan corporations; or health maintenance organizations.

10. "Hearing screening test" means automated auditory brain stem response, otoacoustic emissions, or another appropriate screening test approved by the state Department of Health and Social Services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Mandsager".

Richard Mandsager, MD  
Director, Division of Public Health

Susan Walker  
P.O. Box 770658  
Eagle River, Alaska  
Ph. 907-696-1995 Email: [jsjk@mtaonline.net](mailto:jsjk@mtaonline.net)

February 3, 2005

Representative Jay Ramras  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Subject: Letter in Support of House Bill 109  
"An Act relating to establishing a screening, tracking, and intervention program related to the hearing ability of newborns and infants..."

Dear Representative Jay Ramras:

I am writing to thank you for your sponsorship of HB 109. I am a parent of two children with hearing loss. I serve as a parent representative on the State's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Programs' advisory group and am on the March of Dimes steering committee to introduce newborn and infant screening legislation.

My son Jack has a bilateral profound loss and my daughter Kate has a unilateral mild/moderate loss. Their hearing loss was not identified until six months of age and four years respectively. Identification of my son's loss at 6 months, appropriate intervention from highly skilled professionals, and technology have all been instrumental in providing him access to sound – a critical element in his language, social, and emotional development. Our family goal for Jack was that he will be oral and just prior to his second birthday he received a cochlear implant. His language and speech skills are on par with hearing children his age. Jack is now 5 years old, a phenomenal reader, and mainstreamed in kindergarten at his local elementary school. He receives support services but does not require an interpreter or full-time assistance. The degree of Kate's hearing loss is minor compared with her brother but a unilateral loss can still affect a child's ability to receive clear information. And it is harder to detect because they are obviously hearing.

HB 109 is one of two bills before the Legislature relating to newborn hearing screening. The other is SB 68. HB 109 contains the elements that are needed to successfully implement a screening, tracking, and intervention program for newborns and infants in the State of Alaska. Hearing loss is invisible – it cannot be seen at birth. For many toddlers, the possibility that there may be a problem only begins to emerge when they should be talking but seem to be delayed. By then, it is very hard to make up lost time. Early detection is the first critical step, but the other elements are extremely important and part of the process that will allow newborns and infants with hearing loss to maximize the critical brain development window (0 to 3 years) for language acquisition.

I have testified for previous versions of this bill at an earlier time and stage in my son's speech and language development when we (the family) were still hoping it was all going to work. Now we have no doubts – he is cruising! I make no attempt to quantify or reduce his progress to a dollar value or to predict what he will be when he moves on into the world of work. But I know

Susan Walker  
P.O. Box 770658  
Eagle River, Alaska  
Ph. 907-696-1995 Email:jsjk@mtaonline.net

one thing for certain - he will not be limited by his hearing loss. At 5 years old he can have telephone conversations with family and friends, communicate with them directly when visiting, advocate for himself in the classroom and in the recreational and cultural activities in which he participates.

How often do you think about the importance of good language and writing skills to your success and effectiveness as a legislator? Communication is key to your job. Early detection and intervention works. Early detection and intervention opens doors that have been closed to many: children with hearing loss deserve that key to open up their world to language and sound.

Sincerely,

Susan Walker

Distribution:

Sponsor and Co-Sponsors

Representative Jay Ramras  
Representative Les Gara  
Representative Jim Elkins  
Representative Peggy Wilson  
Representative Max Gruenberg  
Representative Lesil McGuire

Labor and Commerce Committee

Representative Pete Kott  
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux  
Representative Bob Lynn  
Representative Norman Rokeberg  
Representative Harry Crawford  
Representative David Guttenberg

House Leaders

Representative Ethan Berkowitz  
Representative John Coghill

Suzanne Rust  
7930 Ingram Street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99502  
907-243-3160

February 1, 2005

Representative Tom Anderson  
Special Assistant Health and Human Services  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Anderson:

I want to take this opportunity to tell you about Lauren, my 12-month-old daughter. Besides being a marvelous girl, she happens to be hard of hearing. Providence Hospital's New-Born Screening identified Lauren's condition at birth. Although it took us 13 weeks of hard work to verify that she has a hearing loss, the screening was essential. Since she is hard of hearing, we may not have detected her loss until her language was affected. We would have lost the opportunity for laying a solid foundation of speech and language development.

I am contacting you today because I would like you to support House Bill 109 which requires universal hearing screening for new-born infants and mandatory reporting by birthing facilities of the hearing screening results to the State of Alaska's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program. This will ensure that children with possible hearing loss receive a timely diagnostic evaluation and, if necessary, are enrolled in early intervention services at the earliest possible time. The reasons I believe this bill should be whole-heartedly supported are many but I will list a few:

- Hearing impairment is the most common disability in newborns.
- The low cost of screening is minimal when compared to the additional hundreds of thousands of dollars the state may have to spend in special education.
- The most important period of speech and language development is from birth to age three. The average age of identification in the absence of the newborn hearing screening is 2-3 years.
- Children with hearing loss can develop and progress like those without hearing loss if they are identified early.

Because Lauren was identified in the screening process, she has had hearing aids since she was three months old. Her language and speech seem to be on track and, thankfully, she has been able to hear my voice. Please join me in assuring that everyone's child gets the same chance for success Lauren received. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Rust

**Douglas Owen**

---

**From:** Lisa Owens [lowens@tetongravity.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, January 27, 2005 11:23 PM

**To:** Rep. Jay Ramras

Dear Rep. Ramras,

I want to thank you and give my support for HB 109. As an audiologist and speech pathologist working with children with hearing loss I feel that it is critical that children with hearing loss are found early. Research and personal experience show that children who are identified with a hearing loss early and receive appropriate intervention, do better academically. They are provided more choices in communication options and develop better speech and language skills. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help support the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Lisa Owens, M.A., CCC-SLP/A

**Quota International of Fairbanks**  
 P.O. Box 74834  
 Fairbanks, AK 99787  
[www.quotaofairbanks.org](http://www.quotaofairbanks.org)

**Resolution in support of establishing a screening, tracking, and intervention program related to the hearing ability of newborns and infants**

Whereas thirty to forty babies born annually in Alaska are likely to have some type of congenital hearing loss; and

Whereas approximately 50% of newborns with hearing loss are not identified and will not be identified until 18 mos. to 3 years of age; and

Whereas undetected hearing loss can result in lifelong delays in language, cognitive, socio-emotional and academic development; and

Whereas over the educational lifetime of a child, substantial amounts of money would be saved if, as a result of early identification and intervention, the most appropriate educational setting for the child is a regular mainstream classroom instead of a self-contained classroom or a self-contained program; and

Whereas the prevalence of congenital hearing loss at 3 per 1000 births nation wide is substantially higher than the prevalence of phenylketonuria (PKU), hyperthyroidism, or sickle cell anemia, which are required for screening in every state;

Now therefore be it resolved that Quota International of Fairbanks, a service organization focused on the speech and hearing impaired, wholeheartedly supports IIR 109 "an act to establish a screening, tracking, and intervention program related to the hearing ability of newborns and infants....."

Resolution #1 Adopted unanimously by the general membership on February 1, 2005, 6 p.m. Ragency Hotel, Fairbanks, Alaska.

*Amy Richards*

Amy Richards, President  
 907-452-1751 wk  
 907-456-5982 fax

Post-It Fax Note	7671	Date	2/2/05	Page	4
To	INT. DELEGATION	From	MARY		
Co. Dept.		Co.	FBX		
Phone #		Phone #			
Fax #		Fax #			

FROM MARY WEYMILER

Mary Weymll 907-470-7432

Wednesday, February 02, 2005 10:20 AM

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1 Name	Address	Profession	Home Phone	Work Phone	Fax	Cell	Spons.	Entry	B-Day	E-Mail
2 Alexander, Gay	1020 Keburn Street Fairbanks, AK 99701	GDIA, Inc. Chief Fin. Officer	458-6938	452-7213	452-2268				12/7/1989	24-Jan gdmfrc@pikalexa.net
3 Babers, Terri	P.O. Box 85281 Fairbanks, AK 99708	Alzheimers Resource Agency	474-072	452-2277			Cori K. Leslie C.	5/9/2003	6-Jan	babers@crl.net
4 Bidwell, Melissa	P.O. Box 71558 Fairbanks, AK 99707	MB King. Services, Inc. NVI Realty Ragen	488-2118	ext.6	479-5223	322-8873	Cindy Shilling	12/7/1988	29-Jul	mmmg1@prismake.net
5 Borgeson, Diane	P.O. Box 74046 Fairbanks, AK 99707	Machenzia Financial Consultant Program	452-6238	ext. 2	45-8065		Barbara Hornesch	4/2/2002	18-Aug	diane.m.borgeson@psa.safem a.com
6 Bunch, Marla	PO Box 63323 Fairbanks, Ak 99708	Director North Star Youth Court	478-5355	457-8792	457-6781	322-7859	Buzzy	11/4/2003	30-Aug	marlabunch@icloud.com
7 Cameron, Rand	1276 Wall View Dr Fairbanks, AK 99712	Regency Fairbanks Hotel	455-8688	x702	452-6505	590-1166	Melissa Bidwell	12/2/2003	2-Apr	
8 Chagnon, Ricardo	2006 Carr St. Fairbanks, AK 99709	Retiree	456-7285	N/A				4/3/1984	12-Nov	
9 Chiu, Buzzy	P.O. Box 71046 Fairbanks, AK 99707	Fountainhead Dev. Bridgeway Manager	479-8772	452-8861	452-5126			12/7/1999	12-Mar	bchiu@worknetad.net
10 Colledge, Tammie	450 S. Santa Cruz Ln. North Pole, AK 92705	Bald Farm Insurance Agent-Owner	488-5017	488-7082	488-7143	488-2915		1/6/1997	13-Jul	tammie.colledge.colwd@psa.saf a.com
11 Coder, Mary	784 Quasar Drive Fairbanks, AK 99712	FBKS Day Care Food- Exec. Dir. Frontier Bus. Machines- Manager/Gilber son & Assoc.- Owner	457-1662	451-7229	451-7229		Rhonda Curwin	3/5/1988	25-Jan	mcoder@icloud.net
12 Gilbarson, Margarita	3321 Cheyane Dr. Fairbanks, AK 99709	White Spouse Enterprises, Inc.-Owner	457-3969	451-4455	451-8360	322-1445		1/3/1982	10-Jun	MG Gilbarson@psa.safem a.com
13 Gustafson, Leslie	10293 Old Valdez Trail, Selkirk, AK 99714	White Spouse Enterprises, Inc.-Owner	488-2673	488-3034	488-2551	388-4541	Beth Reagin	11/2/1938	25-Dec	lesliegustafson@psa.safem a.com

p 04

Marv Weymill 907-479-7432

Wednesday, February 02, 2005 10:28 AM

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Name	Address	Profession	Home Phone	Work Phone	Fax	Cell	Sponsor	Entry	B-Day	E-Mail
14	Hall, Berrie	10 Trinidad Dr. Fairbanks, AK 99709	Guest & Rued- Parasgel/BKH Parasgel Services- Owner Arctic Office	457-4257	452-8588	452-7015	347-7211	Wendy Harter	6/5/2001	13-Dec	hhall@parasgel.com
15	Harter, Wendy	P.O. Box 70622 Fairbanks, AK 99707	Products- Commercial Designer	457-7442	459-0203	459-0304	560-3612	Cheryl Vansant	11/19/1976	27-Jun	wharter@bcl.com
16	Hasketh, Olga	P.O. Box 10369 Fairbanks, AK 99710	K&K Recycling Inc. Accountant	452-2111	488-1409	488-4058			6/7/1994	4-Nov	olghasketh@aol.com
17	Homesch, Barbara	P.O. Box 27534 Fairbanks, AK 99708	Homesch & Evans PC Tax Accountant	475-9215	452-1700	456-5693		Chris McLear	1/27/2001	14-Jul	bh@homesch.com
18	Howds, Ann	1580 Yaroak Dr Fairbanks, AK 99708	Tupperware In-home Photography	452-8475				Rita Vaenline	10/7/2003	18-Feb	annhowds@comcast.net
19	Kelley, Cora	P.O. Box 70923 Fairbanks, AK 99707	State of AK DOT	458-7183	474-2549	474-2573	878-4087	Melissa Biswell	4/6/1997	14-Aug	corakelley@alaska.gov
20	Kirkness, Keya	P.O. Box 55285 North Pole, AK 99705	Mt. McKinley Bank Manager Gold Coast	468-1610	474-1773	474-1771	322-4110	Amy Richards	5/1/2001	21-Jul	keyakirkness@mtmckinleybank.com
21	Long, Victoria	PO Box 58179 Fairbanks, AK 99711	Mortgage/Long Rentals	488-0399	451-7375	451-7381	322-0888	Ca Vaunline	10/7/2003	2-May	vlong@alaska.net
22	PHips, Becki	P.O. Box 70143 Fairbanks, AK 99707	World Traveler Princess Riverside	451-8821		451-8543	347-3478		2/2/1988	28-Mar	bhipps@aol.com
23	Renzew, Helen	4477 Piles Landing Rd. Fairbanks, AK 99709	Lodge-Sales Manager Mt. McKinley Bank VP	907-322- 0382	455-5022	455-5065	607-441- 5488	Rita Vaenline	11/3/1998	30-Jul	helenrenzew@mtmckinleybank.com
24	Richards, Amy	2405 Englewood Cl. Fairbanks, AK 99709	Bank VP Operations	479-721E	452-7151	456-5982	378-1558	Becki PHips	5/1/2001	2-Jan	arichards@mtmckinleybank.com

Miller, Cyndia 4430 Dena Tronch 99709 NOT Mt McKinley Assistant via President 474-3734 Amy + Keya 9-7-04 12-11-57 Cmiller@mtmckinleybank.com

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Name	Address	Profession	Home Phone	Work Phone	Fax	Cell	Spons.	Entry	3-Day	E-Mail
25	Rodnick, Sher	452 Shannon Dr. Fairbanks, AK 99701	Polar Fuel Owner	456-8772	451-9355	451-9201	590-3930	Patty W. Marguerita	2/4/2003	11-Feb	sherodnick@oci.net sherodnick@oci.net
26	Schock, Elizabeth	1107 Nenana St. Fairbanks, AK 99709	FBKS Monessori School Director	474-4077	451-8185	452-4672	322-9188		5/6/1997	13-Apr	eschock@arcsales.com
27	Shilling, Cindy	P.O. Box 63744 Fairbanks, AK 99708	Schneider & Shilling CPA- Owner	478-8214	474-1631 ext. 2	474-1632			4/2/1995	10-Sep	csilling@arcsales.com
28	Shoemaker, Diana	1140 Chena Ridge Rd. Fairbanks, AK 99708	Fountainhead Dev. Sales Coordinator	457-9340	458-6117	451-8378	378-3827	Maksim Becky	12/1/2001	3-Jan	dshoemaker@moscrite.com
29	Simon, Lisa	2151 Gold Street North Pole, AK 99705	Owner- Compositi	480-5935		480-5935	322-7821	Mari Sally	12/5/2000	28-Oct	lisa@moscrite.com
30	Stenson, Syd	2005 Richardson Hwy. North Pole, AK 99705	M. Recale- Owner	483-4128	488-9407	483-9584	388-3322	Jan Wigdar	5/3/1994	23-Jun	stenson@arcsales.com
31	Thomas, Kris	3111 Penguin Lane Fairbanks, AK 99712	Jack Rantich: Scale Farm Marketing/Publ ic Relations	480-2325	452-1881	451-6058	347-1888	Tammy Collette	12/1/2001	20-Apr	kris@arcsales.com
32	Valentine, Rita	2871 Perimeter Dr. North Pole, AK 99705	Avis Rent-A- Car Manager General	488-7138	474-0500	474-2613	322-3820		2/1/1988	28-Jun	rita@moscrite.com
33	Weaver, Patty	1104 Carr Ave. Fairbanks, AK 99703	Manager "Pikes On The River"	478-7288	458-6200	456-5214	378-8066		3/3/1994	5-May	pweaver@arcsales.com
34	Westerville, Fran	PO Box 73002 Fairbanks, AK 99707	President/Own er - Diamond Fence Co.	452-2570	458-6087	451-2259	322-3244	Becky Fran	11/4/2003	28-Sep	fran@arcsales.com
35	Weymiller, Mary	686 11th Ave. #302 Fairbanks, AK 99701	Retired Nursing	479-4395		479-7432	322-0111	Wency Hertz	5/6/1997	5-Oct	mary@arcsales.com

Mary Weymiller 007-479-7492

Wednesday, February 02, 2005 10:28 AM

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Anchorage Daily News

Print Page

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**Job's Daughters help kids take a HIKE toward hearing****GRANTS: Girls ages 10-20 raise money for fund, other projects.**By ASTA CORLEY  
Anchorage Daily News*(Published: January 26, 2005)*

Lauren Rust, 11-month-old daughter of Suzanne and Todd Rust and unofficial "granddaughter" of former Alaska Rep. Cheryll Heinze, failed her newborn hearing screening at birth. When she was 3 months old, doctors confirmed she had mild to moderate hearing loss at low frequencies, and moderate to severe hearing loss at high frequencies.

Doctors counseled Suzanne to speak clearly while allowing Lauren to see her face during interaction. She was urged to find opportune, quiet times to be expressive and vocal while Lauren absorbed her environment. With the help of hearing aids, Lauren's hearing has significantly improved.

"The minute I knew she could hear me, I was so much more relaxed," Suzanne said.

Lauren's family has applied for help from the Hearing Impaired Kids Endowment, or HIKE, the global charity of the International Order of Job's Daughters.

The HIKE fund was established to provide grants to assist hearing-impaired children and raise public awareness for Job's Daughters, a nonprofit organization for girls ages 10 to 20 who are descendants of Master Masons, a community service organization for men.

Founded in 1920 by Ethel T. Wead Mick in Omaha, Neb., the group gets its name from the 15th verse of the 42nd chapter of the Book of Job: "In all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job; and their fathers gave them inheritance among their brethren." The group promotes citizenship, patriotism, leadership, organization, teamwork, self-reliance and community service.

"This organization is near and dear to me," said adult adviser Susan Anderson of Anchorage. "There's a basis behind everything we do to bring these young girls into womanhood."

Last year, Anchorage Job's Daughters raised \$675 for HIKE. Funds from the national organization allowed them to distribute \$20,000 in HIKE grants to Alaska children, and they hope to award a similar amount this year.



Local members of Job's Daughters participate in a blanket party in December at the Masonic Temple. Pictured from left: Ti'eri Lino, Becky Boggs, Danya Eskridge, Kaylynn St. John, Damesha Shine and Jocelyn Moore. *(Photo courtesy of Job's Daughters)*



Jeanne Hineman, left, the international head of Job's Daughters, attended an October luncheon at the Masonic Temple in Anchorage and visited with Suzanne Rust and her daughter Lauren. The group's Hearing Impaired Kids Endowment project helps children like Lauren, who experiences hearing loss. *(Photos courtesy of Job's Daughters)*

[Click on photo to enlarge](#)

Hearing impairment is the most common disability in newborns, with a higher incidence than cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome and severe mental retardation, according to Early Hearing Detection and Intervention statistics.

In the United States, three children in every 1,000 -- about 12,000 a year -- are born with hearing loss, according to EDHI figures. Of the 10,000 babies born in Alaska annually, 30 to 40 experience some type of congenital hearing loss.

Any child, newborn to age 20, with hearing difficulties is eligible for a HIKE grant. Besides hearing aids, grants may also be used for other hearing devices such as closed-caption converters for television, computers and training. Actual funds disbursed depend on a need assessment by a doctor but can go as high as \$4,000. It's also possible to reapply for funds.

Suzanne and Todd Rust are owners of Rust's Flying Service in Anchorage and K2 Aviation in Talkeetna. Testing for Lauren during her first three months cost about \$5,500. The Rusts estimate they will pay \$8,000 for Lauren's hearing aids, which are accompanied by an FM system (a small one-way radio device that allows one to hear conversation and other sounds within a certain range), as well as audiology services.

"Her hearing aids are super important to her," Suzanne said. "It's healthy for brain development to hear sounds." Early intervention helps the child keep pace with language and speech development and not fall behind in school.

When Heinze decided not to run for re-election for the state House of Representatives, she had to liquidate her campaign account and made a \$1,750 donation to HIKE. Chugach Electric Association also made an unsolicited donation. All donations are channeled to the international fund, and contributions are tax-deductible.

Job's Daughters has more than 20,000 members throughout Canada, Australia, the Philippines, Brazil and the United States. Individual organizations of the group are called bethels. In Alaska there is only one -- Bethel No. 1, Anchorage. Established in 1957, it has 18 active members. Past activities of the Anchorage branch include an Aces hockey night, swim parties, lunches, game board nights, and fund-raising projects for HIKE and the group's travel fund.

East High School freshman Kaylynn St. John, 15, joined last year.

"It's more of a team experience," she said. "It's like we're a big family."

After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the group traveled to Canada on a friendship visit. And this past summer 11 members went to Casper, Wyo., for an international meeting.

The group's community service has included helping a charter school with its fund-raising auction, and conducting food drives, clothing drives and the annual HIKE Penny Drive from April 15 to May 15.

Last year, the Fred Meyer Foundation gave Job's Daughters a \$913 grant to purchase materials and supplies to make no-sew polar fleece blankets for Anchorage organizations. The group is creating 50 blankets for donation to residents of the Anchorage Pioneers' Home and the Salvation Army's McKinneil House. They are looking for a skilled volunteer to make a blanket out of the remaining scraps for a silent auction to raise money for HIKE.

Anderson underscores the value of including the girls in community service at a young age. She enjoys serving as a mentor to them.

"This is an organization where young girls can learn to fail and still succeed, to withstand peer pressure, and above all, to develop logic and reasoning skills that enable them to think for themselves," she said.

Daily News reporter Asta Corley can be reached at [acorley@adn.com](mailto:acorley@adn.com).

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MEETINGS OF THE ANCHORAGE BRANCH OF JOB'S DAUGHTERS are at 10:30 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month at the Masonic Temple, 1431 Eagle St. For more information about Job's Daughters or the HIKE program, call Susan Anderson at 344-6475.

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**Josh Applebee**

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**From:** Phyllis Kiehl [pkiehl@pol.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 04, 2005 8:45 AM  
**To:** Rep. Tom Anderson  
**Subject:** HB 109, Hearing screening

Dear Rep. Anderson,

I am writing to ask you to support and vote for House Bill 109 ("related to screening Newborns for Hearing Ability. I am a pediatrician who has been in private practice in Anchorage for 30 years. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports the development of programs for universal screening of all infants for hearing deficits at or soon after birth. This enables early identification of hearing impaired children in order to be able to intervene to maximize their potential. This program is important because:

1. Hearing loss is one of the most common birth defects. One in 3000 infants are born in Alaska with permanent congenital hearing loss. Without universal newborn hearing programs, the average age of detection of even severe hearing loss is 2-3 years old. Hearing loss has a significant negative effect on children. This would seem obvious, but many studies indicate the negative impact of hearing loss on a child's emotional and social development as well as language delays (that do not seem to progress even after diagnosis in some children, when that diagnosis is delayed).

Even mild hearing loss or even when only one side is affected may have long lasting negative effects to the child. It affects interactions in the family, too.

3. Early detection and intervention of hearing deficits significantly helps children. Numerous studies show that when children are diagnosed with hearing loss and appropriate intervention to augment hearing and provide appropriate communication options are started early in life, preferably before 6 months of age, significant and long lasting benefits are achieved by the children in language skills, emotional development, social and familial adjustment.

Due to new advancements in screening technology, non-audiologists can administer the screen (and bill appropriately for this service). By asking insurance companies to cover this "standard of care" evaluation, all infants in the state can have this evaluation before they leave the hospital or birthing facility.

Universal hearing screen for all newborns is essential for Alaskan children.  
Please support HB 109.

Thank you.  
Sincerely,  
Phyllis Kiehl, M.D.

Phyllis' numbers:  
Home: 907/345-3394  
Office: 907/562-2120  
Beeper: 907/275-2030



**ALASKA CENTER for PEDIATRICS, P.C.**

*Birth Through Adolescent Care*  
1200 Airport Heights Drive, Suite 140  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
Tel: 907.777.1800 - Fax: 907.278.2066

**FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL COVER SHEET**

To: Senator Fred Dyson Fax: (907) 465 4587  
 From: Martin Beals MD Date: 04/28/2005  
 Pages: 3 - Includes Cover Sheet CC:  
 Re: (DOB)

Urgent    For Review    Please Comment    Please Reply    Please Recycle

COMMENTS:

Support for House Bill 109

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Alaska Center for Pediatrics  
1200 Airport Heights Drive, Ste 140  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
Phone: 907.777.1800, Fax: 907.278.2066

**Senator Fred Dyson**  
**Chairman, Senate Health, Education &**  
**Social Services Committee**

**Fax (907) 485-4587**

**Re: House Bill 109**

April 28, 2005

Dear Senator Dyson:

I am a pediatrician in Anchorage, who is serving as Chapter Champion for the Early Detection of Hearing impairment and Intervention (EHDI) Program for the Alaska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The principles of the EHDI Program have been endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control, the National Institute of Health and numerous other organizations. The basic goals of the program are (1) Screening of all newborns for hearing impairment by 1 month of age (preferably before hospital discharge), (2) Identification of all children born with hearing impairment (using diagnostic testing by audiologists) by 3 months of age, and (3) Intervention for children diagnosed with hearing loss with appropriate communication options and technologies by 6 months of age. The essential goal of the program is to allow children with hearing impairment to develop language skills equivalent to hearing children. There is plentiful evidence that deaf children who are diagnosed and receive appropriate help early in life can develop language skills along normal lines, even before school entry.

In order to further the development of the EHDI program in Alaska, I am endorsing and asking for your support of House Bill 109, sponsored by Rep. Jay Ramras. This bill seems to contain elements that will help Alaska achieve the goals of this program for Alaska's children.

Hearing loss is the most common birth defect. The ability to minimize the negative effects of deafness on children is why the Alaskan March of Dimes is supporting this bill. Before the technology that permits the screening of newborns, pediatricians tried to pick up children with hearing problems as early as we could, but it was often not until 2-3 year of age, and often later with milder hearing impairments. Several Alaskan hospitals have been doing routine newborn hearing screening for over 6 years and incorporated the charges into their routine newborn charges. Due to the efforts of our state EHDI coordinator, working through the division of Maternal/Child Health, and using federal grant money, the equipment that is used to test newborn hearing is now available in all the state's birthing hospitals. Despite this availability, without requiring hospitals to routinely offer this service and report their results, we are sure that many of our state's parents do not receive the opportunity to have this (hopefully) reassuring test of their child's hearing. It is estimated that Alaska is 48 out of 50 states in newborn hearing screening.

I hope when you understand better the merits of this bill than you will agree to support it. I understand that there have been some concerns about the insurance ramifications. While I certainly can't speak for the insurance company, they have not opposed this bill. As I said, the test has been done in the largest birthing hospitals in Alaska for many years and will continue to be. Nationwide, over 90% of all newborns undergo this screening and in over half of the states all the hospitals are screening 99% of newborns. In other words, this is not a new burden to the insurance industry and I can't imagine that such a relatively inexpensive screening test that is almost universally accepted as "standard of care" for all newborns would have almost no impact on any insurance plan. It would only affect plans that already cover maternity benefits.

The economic impact of the program is another issue that I'm sure a legislator must consider. I have nothing to do with the fiscal note and I'm sure if a child's deafness is diagnosed earlier, then

● Page 2

April 28, 2005

services to that child will be started earlier. I have already stated the positive benefits of this early diagnosis. I believe there are significant cost savings for children who are diagnosed earlier. I'm sure you could appreciate that a child who starts school with significant language delays require many more special services than children with normal language skills. Special Education students cost about twice what "normal students" cost the school system. But the cost savings go beyond that. One study indicated that, comparing lifetime costs for deaf children with normal language skills and with delayed language skills, children with delayed language skills will cost \$50,000 more in Special Ed services, require 4 times the cost in vocational rehabilitation and have a lost earnings productivity of over \$350,000. How much early diagnosis can offset these discrepancies cannot be calculated. But that there are fiscal as well as social, behavioral, educational, and humanistic advantages to this program are undeniable.

Senator Dyson, I have been a pediatrician for 26 years and this is the first time I have been involved with endorsing a bill and trying to educate legislators about its advantages. As I have said, my task is to support the EHDI program and I have been told that House Bill 109 will be necessary if Alaska is to succeed in effectively offering this program to its citizens. If there are any concerns that you have about the medical aspects of this bill, I want to do all I can to alleviate them. I hope that you will review this letter and other correspondence coming to you and listen to the testimonies when the bill comes before your Health, Education, and Social Services committee. Practice concerns will not allow me to fly to Juneau this session, but if there are any questions about the medical aspects of this bill I can answer, please feel free to call me at my work number during the day or at my home number (907.349.1594) in the evenings.

Thank you for your attention,



Martin F. Beals, Jr., M. D., FAAP  
Alaska AAP Chapter Champion, EHDI program



# March of Dimes

Saving babies, together

To: Senator Dylon From: Debbie Golden

Attn: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 4/29/05

Fax: 165-4587 Fax: 907-276-3375

Phone: 165-2199 Phone: 907-276-2290

Re: HB 104 Pages: 30

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*Urgent!*

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(March of Dimes will forward it to the appropriate legislators.)

Dear Legislator: Please approve House Bill 109 to require screening for hearing loss, the most common birth defect!

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Name Malissa Dreas  
Address 352 N. Eklutna  
City/State/Zip Palmer, AK 99645

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Name Terry Clark
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Name: Judith McCarthy
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Name DAVID ARTHUN  
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Name Debra L. Rice  
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Name Dianne Coursey  
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City/State/Zip Fairbanks, AK 99712  
(Residence - not mailing address)  
PO Box 80485, FBKS, AK 99708  
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Address 1269 Upland Ct.  
City/State/Zip Homer, AK 99603  
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Name Sonja J. Younker  
Address Box 85173  
City/State/Zip Fbks, AK 99708  
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E-mail sonjasjy@alaska.net

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(Carol)  
Name Sue Augustina  
Address PO Box 56321 (3145 Place)  
City/State/Zip North Pole, AK 99705  
To receive Advocacy Alerts about infant health issues, please print your e-mail clearly!  
E-mail augustina@ptialaska.net

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Address 238 E 7th
City/State/Zip North Pole, Alaska 99705

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Address 7816 Brentwood Drive
City/State/Zip Anchorage, Alaska 99502

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Name Gretchen Van Have
Address 12880 Ben Ct
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99515

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Name Susanna Hall
Address 2960 Princeton Way
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99508

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Name DAN CASE

Address 13420 TAHOE CR

City/State/Zip ANCHORAGE AK 99516

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Name Anastasia Truelso

Address 18844 Monastery Dr

City/State/Zip Eagle River, AK 99577

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E-mail stasia\_ak34@yahoo.com

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Name Shannon Marake

Address 611 W 90th Ave

City/State/Zip Anchorage AK 99515

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Address 8520 WILLIWA AVE.  
City/State/Zip ANCHORAGE, AK 99504

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Address 9105 Granite  
City/State/Zip ANCHORAGE, AK 99507

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Address 10126 Baffin  
City/State/Zip Eagle River, AK 99571

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Name JOSH STANFORD  
Address PO BOX 871887  
City/State/Zip WASILLA, AK 99687

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Name Lea Ohren  
Address 6451 Village Pkwy  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99504

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Name Wendy Frazer  
Address 12821 Huffman Cr  
City/State/Zip Anch AK 99516

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Name Mary A. Pape  
Address P.O. Box 790544  
City/State/Zip Anchorage AK 99519

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Name Josie Sison  
Address 3210 Unalut Land  
City/State/Zip Anch AK 99507

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Address 815 East 13th Ave
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Name Bethany Mehner-Weiser
Address 2432 Chassac Drive
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99517

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Address 2800 MADIGAN CIRCLE
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Address 14399 Canyon Rd  
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Name Gloria J. Hensen  
Address 1723 Highland Dr  
City/State/Zip Home, AK 99603

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Name Carol C. Manchester RN  
Address 692 Soundview  
City/State/Zip Home, AK 99603

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E-mail cc.manchester@alaska.net

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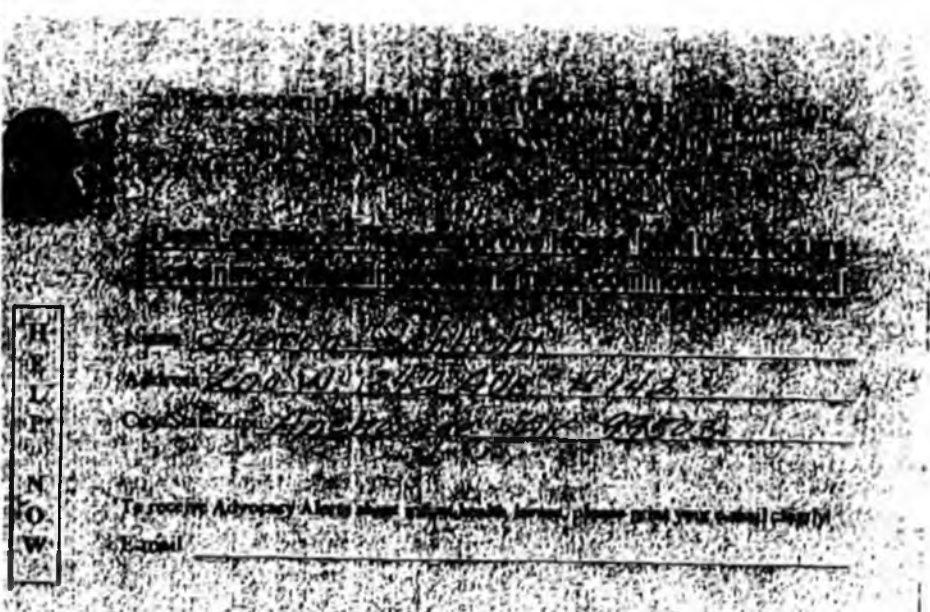
Name Helen Gordon  
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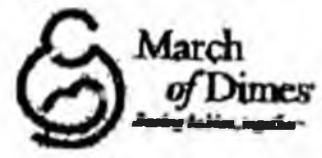


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Name Martha Pelletier  
Address 1821 E. 74th #3  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK, 99507

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Name: Barbara Kovarik
Address: 19600 Citation Road
City/State/Zip: Eagle River, AK 99577

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E-mail: bp\_kovarik@msn.com

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Name: Colleen S. Brown
Address: 11221 Kaskanak Cr.
City/State/Zip: Eagle River, Ak. 99577

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Address: 20743 Philadelphia Way
City/State/Zip: Eagle River, AK 99577

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Name: Jan Webb
Address: 2332 Melanie Ave #2
City/State/Zip: Wasilla AK 99654

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Name Kathy Wright  
Address 1819 E. 124th Ave.  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, Alaska  
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Name Sally duBois  
Address P.O. Box 876116  
City/State/Zip Wasilla, AK 99687

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Name Rosalie Schette  
Address P.O. Box 1318  
City/State/Zip Palmer, AK 99645

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Name Richard DuBois  
Address P.O. Box 876116  
City/State/Zip Wasilla, AK 99687

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Name Julie Pintola  
Address 3020 BRIDLE lane  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99577

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Name Shirley Greeninger  
Address 10129 Raven Crest Circle  
City/State/Zip Eagle River, AK 99577

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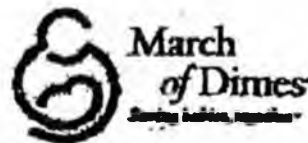
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Name Brandon Pintola  
Address 3020 BRIDLE lane  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99577

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Name Debra Sims  
Address 17470 Rialto Ave  
City/State/Zip Eagle River, AK 99577

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Address 23431 Epper Terrace St.
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Address 18730 Katelyn Circle
City/State/Zip Eagle River AK 99577

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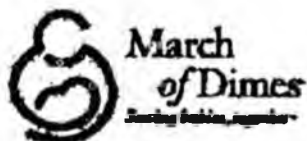
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Address 12800 FOSTER RD
City/State/Zip Anchorage, Alaska 99576

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Address 13006 Algaarin Cir
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Dear Legislator: Please approve House Bill 109 to require screening for hearing loss, the most common birth defect!

HELP NOW

Name Anna Arneveddritz  
Address P.O. Box 190004  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99519-0004

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E-mail AnnaArneveddritz@hotmail.com

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Name Thalia Wood  
Address 1801 E. Tudor Rd #A-301  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99507

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Name John Cartwright  
Address 8251 Stratton Circle  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, Alaska 99507

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Name Christy Johnson  
Address 4400 Shelikof St  
City/State/Zip Anchorage AK 99507

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Name PAT TURNER  
Address 621 GINGKO  
City/State/Zip FAIRBANKS, AK 99709

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Name LouAnn Balensiefer  
Address 6029 Camrose Dr.  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99504

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Name Eleanor Houls  
Address 1511 Holy Cross  
City/State/Zip Fairbanks, AK 99709

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Name Sheri Roach  
Address 403 Henderson Rd  
City/State/Zip Fairbanks AK 99701

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Name: Wendy Ward  
Address: 803 Haida Lane (Haida)  
City/State/Zip: Fairbanks, AK 99712

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Name: Nina Prockish  
Address: 7600 Old Harbor Ave.  
City/State/Zip: Anchorage AK 99504

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Name: Cherilyn Anstey  
Address: 7524 Timber Wolf Cir.  
City/State/Zip: Anchorage, AK 99507

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Name: Kathy Alton  
Address: 710 Box 85293  
City/State/Zip: Fairbanks, AK 99708

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E-mail: kkatton@qci.net

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Name Judy Tolbert  
Address 3032 Riverview Dr.  
City/State/Zip Fairbanks, AK 99709

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Name Wendy Rainey  
Address P.O. Box 4819  
City/State/Zip Palmer, AK 99645

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E-mail wendyrainey@yahoo.com

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Name Edward Moses  
Address 1740 Orca Place  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99501

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Name Molly McGrath  
Address P.O. Box 74848  
City/State/Zip Fairbanks, AK 99707

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Name MARY ANN CHRISTOLAN  
Address 700 W 21<sup>st</sup> AVE, B  
City/State/Zip ANCHORAGE, AK 99503

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Name Sarah P. Thomas  
Address PO Box 1671148  
City/State/Zip Chugiak, AK 99517

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Name Beverly Smith  
Address 8570 Jupiter Drive  
City/State/Zip ANCHORAGE, AK 99507

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Name Amy Verkind  
Address HCB PBox 6078  
City/State/Zip Palmer, AK 99645

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Name John S. Lee

Address 403 R102-T

City/State/Zip Prater AK 99648

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Name TUESA BURKHEAD

Address 1600 BLACKBERRY ST.

City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99502

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E-mail mykal2000@jci.net

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Name Rhonda Spurgeon

Address 14745 W. Lake Ridge Dr

City/State/Zip Fair River Alaska

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E-mail Rhonda@po.box.alaska.net

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Name Patricia Libby

Address 11626 Birch Knoll Cp.

City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK 99515

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E-mail camandtricia@jci.net

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Address: 12540 C. Rd. Effingham  
City/State/Zip: Effingham GA 31741

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Name: Julie Beard RN  
Address: 2137 Tributary Circle  
City/State/Zip: Anchorage, AK 99516

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Address: 2321 Warkshire Ln  
City/State/Zip: Oklahoma OK 73107

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Address: 1201 Denali St #103  
City/State/Zip: ANCHORAGE AK 99501

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Name Brett Poston  
Address 630 W. 88th Ave  
City/State/Zip Anchorage AK 99515

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Name Rebecca Davis-Loosli  
Address 1817 Sturbridge Ct.  
City/State/Zip Anchorage AK 99507

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Name Lisa Larson  
Address 630 W. 88th Ave  
City/State/Zip Anchorage AK 99515

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Name JOEL LOOSLI  
Address 1817 STURBRIDGE CT  
City/State/Zip ANCHORAGE AK 99507

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Address: 3250 Branch Drive  
City/State/Zip: Anchorage, AK 99508

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Name: Barbara Sell  
Address: 14550 Joanne Cir (not mailing)  
City/State/Zip: Anchorage, AK 99516

Nailing # 111949  
Anchorage, AK 99511  
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Name: Howard Golden  
Address: 3741 Tanya Dr  
City/State/Zip: Anchorage, AK 99516

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Name: Dahna Graham R.N.  
Address: 1720 Otter Street  
City/State/Zip: Anchorage, AK 99511

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E-mail: dahna@alaska.net

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Name Kim Erbe  
Address P.O. Box 2263  
City/State/Zip Cardona AK 99574

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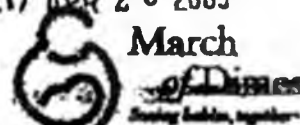
Name RIKA WALTER  
Address 5432 S Northern Lights #429  
City/State/Zip Anchorage AK 99518

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Name Karen Etnel  
Address 12741 Skelburne Rd.  
City/State/Zip Anchorage, AK - 99516

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Wasilla, AK 99654

RECEIVED  
FEB 06 2004

January 31, 2006

Senator Fred Dyson  
10928 Eagle River Rd. Ste 238  
Eagle River, AK 99577

Dear Sen. Dyson,

I am writing as one of your constituents concerned about the public health importance of the major birth defect, congenital hearing loss. I understand that there is a bill which needs to be introduced in order to establish and make mandatory Newborn Hearing Screening at birthing facilities throughout Alaska.

January is designated as Birth Defects Prevention Month. In Alaska each year, approximately 10,000 babies are born. According to national statistics, about 30 of them will have some type of congenital hearing loss. Hearing impairment is the most common birth defect, more common than cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome and severe mental retardation.

Mandatory newborn hearing screening of all babies born in the state allows them to be screened for hearing loss. In the absence of mandatory screening in the newborn period, the average age of identification of a hearing impairment is 2-3 years of age. Since the most important period of speech and language development is from birth to age three, delay in diagnosis can impair a child's language, speech, psycho-social, and cognitive development. Through early identifications, children identified at birth with a hearing loss can learn and progress at a rate comparable to those with normal hearing.

In addition, mandatory reporting by birthing facilities of hearing screening results to the State of Alaska's Early hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program will help to ensure that children with possible hearing loss receive timely diagnostic evaluation and, if necessary, are enrolled into early intervention services at the earliest possible time.

As a Speech/Language Pathologist who works with preschool children with speech and language delays, I want to ensure that all children are given what they need to become productive members of our communities. I know you do also. Please support the introduction of legislation requiring newborn hearing screening, reporting and follow up.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

*Frances Graves*  
Frances Graves, M.S.

**Jason Hooley**

---

**From:** Sen. Fred Dyson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 07, 2006 5:19 PM  
**To:** Jason Hooley  
**Subject:** FW: HB 109

-9

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**From:** Lisa Owens [mailto:lisa@akspeechclinic.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 03, 2006 5:34 PM  
**To:** Sen. Fred Dyson  
**Subject:** HB 109

Dear Senator Dyson,

I am currently in Washington DC attending the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention conference. After meeting with several other state officials I am writing again to ask for your support for HB 109. Thirty nine states now have legislation in this area. Several other states have pending legislation. The results from the states which now have mandatory screening are fantastic. They are screening on a national level 92% of babies born in the United States. They are catching more infants than ever with hearing loss and intervention is beginning by 3-6 months of age. This has reduced the amount of therapy and other intervention services which will be a huge savings to the state. I would love to share the information that I learned at this conference. Rep. Walsh from New York, who sponsored the federal legislation spoke and is committed to providing additional funding to states which are actively working to establish EDHI programs.

Please schedule this bill for the HESS committee as soon as possible. I strongly believe in the democratic process. I feel that this bill deserves to be heard and the citizens of Alaska deserve a chance to testify in support of this bill. There is no objection from insurance companies or any other individuals to my knowledge. Why is this bill not getting scheduled for a hearing? I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you on the information we gathered while attending this important conference on newborn hearing and intervention (EDHI).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lisa Owens, M.A., CCC-SLP/A  
Alaska Speech & Hearing Clinic, LLC  
4048 Laurel Street, #303  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
(907) 562-4550

Cheryl L. Scott  
5000 Country Club Lane  
Anchorage, AK 99516

Representative  
State Capitol  
120-4<sup>th</sup>  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative,

In Alaska each year, approximately 10,000 babies are born and according to national statistics, about 30% of them will have some type of congenital hearing loss. My son is one of those babies. Hearing impairment is the most common birth defect, more common than cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, and severe mental retardation.

Mandatory newborn hearing screening of all babies born in the state allows them to be screened for hearing loss. Without mandatory screening in the newborn period, the average age of identification of a hearing impairment is 2-3 years of age. Since the most important period of speech and language development is from birth to age three, delay in diagnosis can impair a child's language, speech, psycho-social, and cognitive development. Through early identification, children identified at birth with a hearing loss can learn and progress at a rate comparable to those with normal hearing.

My son's hearing loss was not diagnosed until he was 10 and 1/2 years old, due to his other complex medical issues. If he had been screened at birth and his hearing loss detected, hearing aids, sign language training and other needed supports could have been provided during his early years. Maybe he wouldn't even be considered mentally retarded if he had been provided the opportunity to learn to communicate and to access a whole world of sound during those vital early years. He will be 19 in two days and we grieve for his lost potential every time he struggles to make himself understood or to fit in with hearing and speaking people that have little patience with his few words and halting signs.

Mandatory reporting by birthing facilities of hearing screening results to the State of Alaska's, Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Program, will help to ensure that children with possible hearing loss receive timely diagnostic evaluation and, if necessary, are enrolled into early intervention services at the earliest possible time.

I want to ensure that all children have what they need to become productive members of our communities. Please support the addition of HB 109 requiring newborn hearing screening, reporting and follow up. Let me know how I can assist you or your staff with additional information. Thanks for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Cheryl L. Scott, (Justin's mom)

**Wood, Thalia**

---

**From:** Sue Benson (Sue.Benson@matsuk12.us)  
**Sent:** Friday, January 20, 2006 8:08 AM  
**To:** Senator\_Lyda\_Green@legis.state.ak.us  
**Cc:** Thalia\_Wood@health.state.ak.us; Rep\_Vic\_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us  
**Subject:** HB109

1050 Onyx Circle  
Wasilla, AK 99654  
January 20, 2006

Senator Lyda Green  
State Capitol, Room 516  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182  
Senator\_Lyda\_Green@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Representative,

As one of your constituents I am writing to ask you to support the addition of HB 109 requiring newborn hearing screening, reporting and follow up. As a parent of a child with hearing loss I want other children to have earlier diagnostics and intervention than my child had.

My son was diagnosed with a hearing loss in one ear when he was almost two years of age. He had several risk factors for hearing loss at birth, but newborn screening was not done at that time. Without mandatory screening in newborns, the average age of identification of hearing impairment is 2-3 years of age. Since the most important period of speech and language development is from birth to age three, delays in diagnosis can impair a child's speech, language, psychosocial and cognitive development. Through early identification, children identified at birth can learn and progress at a rate comparable to those without hearing loss.

As an audiologist I still see children that are not diagnosed with hearing loss until they are three years of age or older. With mandatory screening and reporting by birthing facilities to the State's Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Program, children with possible hearing loss will receive timely diagnostic evaluation, amplification and/or medical intervention and, if necessary, enrolled into early intervention services.

January has been designated as Birth Defects Prevention Month. Please support HB109 requiring universal newborn hearing screening, reporting and follow up, so more children have a better chance in the first few years of development.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Susanne Benson

Susanne Benson, MS, CCC-A  
Educational Audiologist  
Mat-Su Borough School District  
Wasilla High School, 701 Bogard Rd  
Wasilla, AK 99654

907-352-8279

Daniel E. Knudsen  
P.O. Box 35426  
Juneau, AK 99803

February 24, 2006

Senator Fre. Dyson  
State Capitol, Room 121  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator:

Birth defects are the leading cause of infant mortality in the United States. I am writing as one of your constituents concerned about the public health importance of the major birth defect, congenital hearing loss.

January has been designated as Birth Defects Prevention Month. In Alaska each year, approximately 10,000 babies are born and according to national statistics, about 30 of them will have some type of congenital hearing loss. Hearing impairment is the most common birth defect, more common than cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome and severe mental retardation.

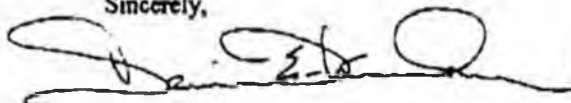
Mandatory newborn hearing screening of all babies born in the state allows them to be screened for hearing loss. In the absence of mandatory screening in the newborn period, the average age of identification of a hearing impairment is 2-3 years of age. Since the most important period of speech and language development is from birth to age three, delay in diagnosis can impair a child's language, speech, psycho-social, and cognitive development. Through early identification, children identified at birth with a hearing loss can learn and progress at a rate comparable to those with normal hearing.

In addition, mandatory reporting by birthing facilities of hearing screening results to the State of Alaska's Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Program, will help to ensure that children with possible hearing loss receive timely diagnostic evaluation and, if necessary, are enrolled into early intervention services at the earliest possible time.

I want to ensure that all children are given what is needed to become productive members of our communities. I know you do also. Please support the addition of HB 109 requiring newborn hearing screening, reporting and follow up. Let me know how I can assist you or your staff with additional information. I can be contacted by email at: [homeauditory@valpo.com](mailto:homeauditory@valpo.com), or by telephone at (907) 957-1828.

Thanks for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Daniel E. Knudsen, M.S., CCC-A  
Audiologist

I work as an audiologist at the Alaska Native Medical Center. I have lived in Alaska for a long time. I previously worked in the Anchorage School District as an audiologist and as a teacher of preschool deaf children. I also am the mother of an adult deaf woman.

I am writing in support of HB 109, Newborn Hearing Screening and Reporting for Alaska's Children. The State of Alaska, since 1999, has been building the hospital programs to screen hearing for all newborns and insure timely diagnostic evaluation and early intervention. This work has been done by people who passionately believe in the program and through federal grants. The voluntary compliance has been great. However, soon the grants will expire and we need to have legislation that will ensure the continuation of the program. Currently, 38 states have legislation in place mandating newborn hearing screening.

I have worked with persons with hearing impairment for a long time and have seen the positive changes early diagnosis and intervention makes. Before newborn hearing screening, the average age of diagnosis of hearing loss was 2 to 3 years of age. Even with mild/moderate losses of hearing, but especially with severe to profound hearing losses, the impact on speech and language development was devastating. Hearing impaired children maintained lower language levels than their peers and deaf children often left high school with less than 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading levels. Good research in the last five years has shown that babies who have newborn hearing screening and receive early diagnosis and intervention develop speech and language that is age appropriate by age 2 to 6 years, no matter the level of their hearing loss. Included in this intervention is the improvement in cochlear implants for young children. If diagnosed with profound hearing loss and receiving a cochlear implant before age 2 years, many children are developing age appropriate speech and language skills and are being included successfully in regular education classes.

Early diagnosis is even more important for children who live in remote villages. These children already have more limited access to early intervention. By receiving early diagnosis and intervention, their access to normal speech and language development will be greatly enhanced. This is so important for these children. Without this access to auditory intervention, rural Alaskan deaf children either are sent to Anchorage to live in group homes in order to attend the State School for the Deaf, stay in their villages with no one to communicate with, or their families move to Anchorage and lose their community support system.

On a personal note, my daughter who is deaf is married to a deaf man. They have three children who are hearing. My daughter has worked hard and completed a college degree. However, the opportunities for employment for her are limited due to her communication abilities. She and several of her friends who went to the Alaska State School for the Deaf and completed college degrees are either unemployed or under-employed (e.g. engineering degree working as a teacher assistant). If she was identified today, I would opt for a cochlear implant for her in a heartbeat because I have seen how much they improve a deaf person's access to auditory communication.

The key to an improved quality of life for children with hearing loss is early identification and intervention. We need to ensure that our hospitals are required to screen hearing of newborns and that diagnosis and intervention occurs in a timely manner. Please pass this bill.

Robin M. Gibson  
631 W. Gail Drive  
Wasilla, AK 99654  
March 4, 2006

Representative  
State Capitol  
120-4<sup>th</sup>  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative,

In Alaska each year, approximately 10,000 babies are born and according to national statistics, about 30 of them will have some type of congenital hearing loss. Hearing impairment is the most common birth defect, more common than cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and severe mental retardation.

Mandatory newborn hearing screening of all babies born in the state allows them to be screened for hearing loss. Without mandatory screening in the newborn period, the average age of identification of a hearing impairment is 2-3 years of age. Since the most important period of speech and language development is from birth to age three, delay in diagnosis can impair a child's language, speech, psycho-social, and cognitive development. Through early identification, children identified at birth with a hearing loss can learn and progress at a rate comparable to those with normal hearing.

My daughter was born with mild hearing loss, though we were lucky enough to be diagnosed early, we have still encountered language and speech development issues. We have as a family, learned some sign language that would allow her more opportunity to communicate. I can't imagine what the consequences might have been like if this had not been detected within the imperative time frame.

Mandatory reporting by birthing facilities of hearing screening results to the State of Alaska's, Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Program, will help to ensure that children with possible hearing loss receive timely diagnostic evaluation. If necessary, the child can be enrolled into early intervention services at the earliest possible time.

I want to ensure that all children have what they need to become productive members of our communities. Please support the addition of HB 109 requiring newborn hearing screening, reporting and follow up. Let me know how I can assist you or your staff with additional information. I can be contacted at [Gibson6@mtaonline.net](mailto:Gibson6@mtaonline.net).

Thanks for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Robin M. Gibson



March 3, 2006

The Honorable Fred Dyson, Chair  
Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 121  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 109-- (Ramras)--Support

Dear Chair Dyson:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we encourage you and your colleagues on the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee to support HB 109, authored by Representative Jay Ramras and co-sponsored by your Committee colleague Kim Elton as well as Senators Ellis, Davis, Guess and Kookesh. Twenty House members signed on as co-sponsors, including twelve Republicans and eight Democrats.

AARP is not only a "senior organization." We are also an organization of grandparents concerned about the quality of health of all Alaskans of all ages.

The goal of HB 109 is to have all children born in Alaska screened for hearing problems soon after birth. If screening is not done early, very often hearing losses or problems will not be detected until a child is two or three years of age. The most important period for speech and language development is from birth to three. Most of our newborns are offered this screening. AARP hopes you will enable us to have 100% of them screened at birth. We are pleased to join the March of Dimes in support of this bill.

AARP members often were not fortunate enough to be born when newborn screening was readily available. Many of our members have hearing losses that have been exacerbated by age but they originated at birth. Any efforts to assure that all Alaskans are screened at birth and treatment made available will enhance their lives as long as they live.

AARP urges an "AYE" vote on HB 109.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Marie Darlin*

Marie Darlin, Coordinator  
AARP Capital City Task Force  
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506  
Juneau, AK 99801  
586-3637 (voice)  
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Vice-Chair Gary Wilken  
Senator Lyda Green  
Senator Kim Elton  
Senator Donny Olson  
Representative Jay Ramras

Message

Page 1 of 2

**Wood, Thalia**

**From:** Sherris, Carl  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 01, 2006 11:51 AM  
**To:** Birch, Stephanie; Wood, Thalia; 'Lisa@aktherapedics.com'  
**Subject:** FW: A plea from a constituent- Letter to Senators

---

**From:** "Stephen Popichak" <spopichak@catg.org>

**To:**

<Senator\_Lyda\_Green@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator\_Kim\_Efton@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator\_Donald\_O  
CC: "Christina Keenan" <ckeenan@catg.org>, "Carl Sherris" <csherris@msn.com>, "Craig L. Fleener" <cfleener@catg.org>

**Subject:** A plea from a constituent

**Date:** Wed, 1 Mar 2006 11:11:21 -0900

Honorable Senators-

I am writing to you to implore you to vote to have mandatory hearing screening on all newborns, which is to be addressed in HB 109 on Monday, March 6. My name is Stephen Popichak and I am hearing impaired. I was born with German Measles in 1965, and my hearing loss is a result of that disease. I was not diagnosed as being hearing impaired until I entered kindergarten. I was not fitted for hearing aides until I was 16 years old.

Why is this important? What did it do to my school life and home life? It is very simple, I struggled in almost every aspect of my life. Learning was a struggle for me, as I was unable to hear instructors and had to ask repeatedly to have things shown to me. I could not hear my friends who were trying to help me. It made learning and living very very difficult. Had I been diagnosed earlier and fitted for hearing aides earlier, I believe that my life, both in school and outside, would have been much easier. The need for early detection of possible hearing loss can greatly help children. If parents and teachers are made aware of problems with a child, they can compensate so that learning is individualized making the child feel included, not special or different, thereby providing them with an environment that will help them more efficiently. Having hearing loss detected at birth would increase the chances that a child can get the help they need so they do not lag in school and life.

I cannot stress how important early detection of hearing loss can be. No, you can't make the hearing come back, but you can get hearing aides and teach children. As a child, I felt so different and so alone because I could not understand what was going on around me. When I did get hearing aides, it was at a point where they did nothing but confuse me because I had been used to hearing one way and suddenly I was overwhelmed by the new sounds. Had I gotten them earlier my perception of sound and hearing would have been something that I could have adjusted to easier and it would have made my chances of learning and understanding that much better. Getting the hearing aide at an early age allows for adjusting to new sounds and being accustomed to them.

I hope that you truly consider making the screening of hearing a mandatory requirement from birth onward. Give the children a fighting chance to do the best that they can in school and in life. Every day, hour, minute that is wasted not screening a child, is pushing that child's learning back farther. I treasure the sounds that I hear...give newborns that opportunity as well.

3/3/2006

Message

Page 2 of 2

*Thank You--*

# Stephen Popichak

*Early Head Start Family Services Manager*

*Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments*

*PO Box 33, Fort Yukon, AK 99740 907.662.3266 [spopichak@catg.org](mailto:spopichak@catg.org)*

*PO Box 367, Fort Yukon, AK 99740-0367 907.662.6440*



# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Version: CSHB 109(FIN)  
( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: Screening Newborn For Hearing/Audiologist  
Sponsor: Ramras et al  
Requester: Senate Health & Social Services

Dept. Affected: Commerce  
RDU: Corp, Bus & Prof Licensing (117)  
Component: Corp, Bus & Prof Licensing  
Component No.: 2360

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
1156 Receipt Supported Services						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0  
Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This legislation amends the Audiology statute Sec 3. AS 08.11.120(b). It does not have a fiscal impact the operations of the division.

Prepared by: Katherine Mason, Administrative Manager Phone (907) 465-2144  
Division: Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing Date/Time 3/3/06 5:14 PM  
Approved by: William C. Noll, Commissioner Date 3/3/2006  
Agency: Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: HB109CS(FIN)-DHSS-DPH-03-06-06  
 ( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): Updated 3/3/06

Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services

Title RELATING TO NEWBORN HEARING  
SCREENING

RDU Public Health

Component: Women, Children and Family Health

Sponsor RAMRAS

Requester SENATE (HES)

Component No. 2788

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	39.4	47.4	55.8	64.6	64.6	64.6
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>64.6</b>
<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)</b>						

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts		( 29.7)	( 111.6)	( 115.9)	( 119.8)	( 126.2)
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	39.4	77.1	167.4	180.5	184.4	190.8
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>64.6</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The intent of this bill is to ensure all newborns are provided with hearing screening within 30 days of their birth, and that those identified with a positive screen or high risk factors receive a second screen or diagnostic work-up, are enrolled in early intervention and receive treatment as needed. Projected costs associated with maintenance of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program (EHDI) are based on the following assumptions: 1) The number of newborns screened is based on the average number of births currently at 10,000 per year. 2) The diagnostic rate of hearing loss is estimated to be at 0.3% of the 10,000 births=30 newly diagnosed infants per year, however, not all newborns with hearing loss will be immediately identified. 3) 95% of newborns would be screened by FY 07; and 98% by FY 08 and beyond. (Continued on P.2)

Prepared by: Richard Mandsager, M.D.  
 Division: Public Health  
 Approved by: Karleen Jackson, Commissioner  
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Phone 465-3090  
 Date/Time 03/03/2006  
 Date 03/06/2006

FISCAL NOTE  
FN #

STATE OF ALASKA  
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO HB109CS(FIN)-DHSS-DPH-03-06-06

**ANALYSIS CONTINUATION**

4) There is a need to follow an additional 10% of all newborns each year who are at high risk for later onset hearing loss during their first three years of life. Thus, the program requires a reporting and surveillance system for tracking all newborns and assisting them with ongoing hearing screening, diagnostic and intervention services.

At present the Division of Public Health is receiving two federal grants to support the maintenance of this program. One grant, scheduled to expire in March 2008, covers the expenses associated with maintaining the newborn hearing program, including assisting hospitals with implementation and education, and professional and public educational information. The second grant will end in August of 2008 and covers costs associated with the statewide early detection/intervention surveillance and tracking system. This provides funds for infrastructure costs through FY08. General Funds are also being requested in FY08 to fund the fourth quarter activities after the expiration of the continuation grant. This portion is shown as a fund switch from Federal to GF.

The increased line item expenditures shown on page 1 will be utilized for:  
GRANTS AND CLAIMS (\$39.4 in FY 07): Additional funds for special hearing resources would be needed for the existing Early Prevention/ILP programs to work with the anticipated increased volume as children are identified earlier and thus require services during the 0-3 period. The additional grant funds would be awarded incrementally over the next five fiscal years to allow for increased capacity-building to support special hearing services for children identified with hearing loss in preparation for school readiness and learning. The dollar figure is based on:

1) An average FY 05 cost of \$3,100 per newly enrolled infant, with a 3% inflation factor built in annually. 2) Only assumes about 50% of the newly diagnosed infants would enroll in the early intervention hearing resources program (12 new infants in FY 07; 14 in FY 08; 16 in FY 09; and 18 in FY 10, FY 11 and FY12).

The General Funds replacing Federal Funds (and so not shown as line item expenditures on page 1) will be allocated by cost category as follows:

PERSONAL SERVICES ( \$72.0 covers all of these personnel expenses in FY 09 and assumes a 3.5 percent annual merit increase):

- a) 0.5 FTE - EHDI Health Program Manager II (R/19). This position oversees the maintenance of the reporting and surveillance activities of the program, assures early intervention referrals, tracks high-risk infants through the age of 3, provides outreach education to providers, and technical assistance to health care facilities throughout the state.
- b) 0.5 FTE - Administrative Clerk III (R/9). This position provides administrative support and data entry for the activities required for maintenance of a statewide newborn hearing screening program.

TRAVEL (\$1.0 in FY 08): Travel costs are included for the EHDI manager to visit screening sites for TA and program compliance. Additional travel funds would be required in FY 09 with the termination of federal funding.

(Continued on P. 3)

**FISCAL NOTE  
FN #**

**STATE OF ALASKA  
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

**BILL NO. HB109CS(FIN)-DHSS-DPH-03-06-06**

**ANALYSIS CONTINUATION**

**SUPPLIES (\$1.0 in FY 08):** This includes the cost of postage to mail brochures and technical assistance resources.

**CONTRACTUAL (\$27.7 in FY 08):** Includes the actual cost of supporting web-based data and surveillance system. Cost averages at \$3.00 per newborn. Costs also include those needed for the reprinting of educational materials for parents and providers. Slight increases in contractual costs are included in FY09 and beyond.

Comments presented at Senate HFS hearing on March 6, 2006 regarding HB 109 - An act relating to establishing a screening, tracking and intervention program related to the hearing ability of newborns and infants.  
Prepared by: Leena Ongley, Ed. CCC-A/SLP, PO Box 1005, Barrow, AK 99723  
907.852.4523 ongleyl@barrow.com



FOR HB 109

My name is Leena Ongley and I work as an Early Intervention Specialist on the North Slope. I have a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education and hold Certificates of Clinical Competence in both Audiology and Speech and Language Pathology.

In the absence of mandatory hearing screening in the newborn period, the average age of identification of a communicatively significant hearing impairment is around the child's second or third birthday. In many parts of rural Alaska this may not happen until the child reaches school age. Since the most important period for speech and language development occurs during the time between birth and the child's second birthday, research has clearly demonstrated that a delay in diagnosing a hearing problem will have a serious negative impact on the child's long-term educational outcome that can last a lifetime.

Each year about 10,000 babies are born in Alaska, and about 30 of them will have some type of congenital hearing loss, a fact based on national statistics. The number sounds small and insignificant, however, hearing impairment is one of the few birth defects where highly specialized methodology of language and communication intervention in the early years prevents future problems and enables these individuals to function as productive adults in literate modern societies.

Furthermore, being able to refer to a normal newborn hearing screening result when evaluating children for hearing loss associated with middle ear fluid provides critically important data on a change in the child's hearing status. Baseline data provided by the newborn hearing screening helps parents understand there has been a change in the baby's hearing, and a timely medical evaluation by a specialist is indicated.

Having provided early intervention services in rural Alaska for years, our program data indicate that five out of ten children living in many villages have chronic ear pathology accompanied by mild to moderate hearing loss by the time they turn one. The most serious long term consequence of frequent ear infections is a language delay that in many cases contributes to difficulty learning to read and write. It is uncanny that schools in this region also report that only about half of their high school graduates read and write at grade level.

Getting back to the early identification of hearing problems, mandatory reporting infant hearing screening results to the State of Alaska's Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Program helps ensure that children with potential hearing loss receive timely diagnostic evaluation and, if necessary, are enrolled into early intervention services as soon as the communicatively significant hearing problem is identified.

In case of hearing impairment, early services make the difference between an adult who has problems reading and writing, and those who can read and write with ease.

Please support HB 109 that mandates newborn hearing screening, reporting and follow up services as needed, and thank you for your attention to this important matter.

277861

# SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 4/22/05

FURTHER: Finance

DATE TURNED  
IN TO OFFICE: 3.6.06

Health, Education and Social Services Committee considered CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 109(FIN)

## HB 109 SCREENING NEWBORNS FOR HEARING ABILITY

"An Act relating to establishing a screening, tracking, and intervention program related to the hearing ability of newborns and infants; providing an exemption to licensure as an audiologist for certain persons performing hearing screening; relating to insurance coverage for newborn and infant hearing screening; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_ CS \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)
- adopt previous \_\_\_\_\_ CS \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by \_\_\_\_\_ Committee
- further referral to \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

<b>CS Senate Bill:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title
<b>SCS House Bill:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Title Change
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title w/ SCR # _____

**NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):**

Department	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
HSS	3/3	x						

**PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):**

Department	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>[Signature]</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>[Signature]</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>[Signature]</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
CHAIR: <i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Senate HES Committee Hearing  
March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Testimony

I'm Debbie Golden, Director of Program Services for the Alaska Chapter of March of Dimes. I've been an Alaskan resident for 26 years, a registered nurse for 24 years and have worked as a public health nurse in Alaska for 15 years. I've lived in Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, and Anchorage, so I've had the opportunity to see health care systems in action in different settings in Alaska.

I'm here to ask you to pass HB 109! For 50 years experts have emphasized the need to detect hearing loss early in life. March of Dimes has a long history of advocating for healthy babies and supports mandatory newborn hearing screening. I think the benefits of babies being able to hear probably go without saying at this point. HB 109 is a very good bill that does 3 things –

- Requires that all newborns are screened for hearing loss
- Tracks follow-up to be sure children who need confirmatory diagnostic testing get it
- Assists parents and health care providers to secure further services for kids who need them

The fiscal note for the bill is a mere \$39,400 for FY 2007.

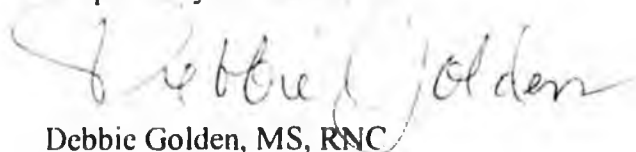
The beauty of this bill is its simplicity. HB 109 simply will assure the good things we have in place to address newborn hearing loss won't go away. It's not about building complex new systems, because the Early Hearing Diagnosis and Intervention program is in place. It's not about burdening rural health care providers with new duties, because they already have equipment and conduct screening. And it's not about making Medicaid or private insurance companies pay for expensive new services, because they've been covering the small cost associated with newborn hearing screening since 1998 and intend to continue. HB 109 simply will assure:

- we can maintain the effective program we already have
- that screening babies all over the state will not fall by the wayside as time goes by, new duties are added, and staff turnover occurs, and
- new insurance companies that may enter the scene will adhere to state standards

In addition, HB 109 will prevent children from falling between the cracks. Newborns will be less likely to be missed being screened and children less likely to have delayed intervention or be lost to follow-up.

We choose to protect children and promote their health in many ways. We know infants benefit from having their hearing loss identified. Appropriate interventions improve their hearing and language dramatically, improve their performance in school, increase the quality of their lives and decrease economic costs to society. Why would we deprive Alaska and its newborns the benefits accorded by HB 109? Thank you for passing HB 109!

Respectfully submitted,



Debbie Golden, MS, RNC  
Director of Program Services

*The mission of the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality.*