January 7, 2020

Dear Medical Provider:

Subject: Best Practice - Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program

Hearing loss is the most common birth defect in the United States. Each year in Alabama, approximately 100 infants are born with hearing loss. Delayed diagnosis and/or untreated hearing loss results in delayed development in speech, language, learning, and social/emotional development. It also can negatively impact academic achievement.

The EHDI goals include the following per the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):
- Ensure every infant and child with hearing loss is diagnosed and receives appropriate, timely intervention.
- Enhance pediatricians' knowledge about EHDI 1-3-6 guidelines - screening by 1 month of age, diagnosis of hearing loss by 3 months of age, and entry into early intervention by 6 months of age.
- Ensure NICU infants admitted for more than five days have auditory brainstem response (ABR) included as part of their screening so that neural hearing loss will not be missed.
- Enhance pediatricians' knowledge of the risk factors for hearing loss and appropriate follow-up to identify delayed onset or acquired hearing loss as soon as possible.
- Ensure newborn hearing screening results are communicated to all parents and reported in a timely fashion according to state laws.
- Ensure middle ear effusion does not delay a hearing loss diagnosis since it has the potential to further compromise hearing.

Health care providers can offer important support for children and their families by encouraging parents to have their children’s hearing, speech, language, behavior, and academic progress carefully monitored. As the AAP EHDI Chapter Champion, I encourage you to implement best practice guidelines endorsed by the AAP, Joint Committee on Infant Hearing, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Alabama Department of Public Health. Should you have any questions please contact the Alabama EHDI Coordinator at (334) 206-2944 or visit the AAP EHDI website at https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/PEHDIC/Pages/Early-Hearing-Detection-and-Intervention.aspx.

Sincerely,

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AAP EHDI Chapter Champion

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