



Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H.
STATE HEALTH OFFICER

April 7, 2020

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program with the Alabama Department of Public Health. Our records show that more testing or follow-up services have been recommended for your child based on their recent newborn hearing screening or diagnostic audiology test results. However, we are aware that scheduling or attending these appointments may be difficult due to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Hearing loss is the number one birth defect found in children today, and each year in Alabama around 100 babies are diagnosed with hearing loss. Early identification of hearing loss and early intervention are critical to speech, language, social and educational development in children. National goals endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Health Resources and Services Administration include the following:

- Infants complete screening by one month of age;
- Infants needing a diagnostic test, have it done by three months of age; and,
- Infants with hearing loss receive intervention, including hearing aids if appropriate, by six months of age.

We understand that this process may be delayed for your child due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we want to highlight the importance of completing any recommended follow-up once you are able to do so. Our team is available to assist you during this time and respond to any questions or concerns you may have about newborn hearing screening, diagnostic testing, or the Alabama EHDI Program. You may reach the Alabama EHDI Program at (334) 206-2944 or 1-866-928-6755.

Sincerely,

Grace Thomas, M.D., F.A.C.O.G.
Medical Officer
Bureau of Family Health Services