



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
OTOLARYNGOLOGY-
HEAD AND NECK SURGERY

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program

Hearing loss continues to be one of the most common birth defects in America, with 1.7 babies per 1,000 screened in the United States identified as deaf or hard of hearing. Universal newborn hearing screening has been standard practice for all U.S. births since the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) was created in 2000, with approximately 98% of newborns now receiving hearing screening tests within days of birth. Before 1993, fewer than 1 in 10 newborns in the U.S. were screened for hearing loss.

The EHDI program has demonstrated the value of early detection and intervention programs to children and infants who face a range of hearing deficiencies. Those identified with all types of hearing loss who are able to access interventions have demonstrated a better chance of developing language, communication, cognitive, and social development skills along with their peers. Since the inception of the EHDI program, states and territories have had unprecedented success identifying and obtaining services for newborns and infants with hearing loss.

This vital program includes initial screening of infants for hearing loss, audiological diagnostic evaluations to confirm hearing loss, and early intervention assessment services in medical facilities nationwide. Congress must act now to reauthorize the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program before its current authorization expires at the end of the current fiscal year.

House: The House of Representatives passed the EHDI reauthorization bill (H.R. 5561) on December 8, 2021, on a bipartisan vote of 410-7.

Senate: The Senate has yet to hold any hearings or votes on H.R. 5561, and there is currently no Senate legislation that would reauthorize the EHDI program.

Congressional Ask

House: Thank you for passing H.R. 5561, the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2021, on December 8, 2021.

Senate: Please initiate the process to reauthorize the EHDI program, by either passing H.R. 5561 or drafting a Senate reauthorization bill and beginning the committee process to mark up and pass this legislation.