



Talking Points: Support for Newborn Screening for Congenital Cytomegalovirus (cCMV)

The Issue

- Congenital cytomegalovirus (cCMV) is the most common infectious cause of birth defects and non-genetic hearing loss in infants.
- Each year, thousands of infants in the U.S. are born with cCMV, yet most go undiagnosed because there is no routine screening.
- Families may not know their child is affected until irreversible developmental delays or hearing loss are already present.
- This is a children's health issue, a family issue, and a cost-saving issue.
- By enacting cCMV screening legislation, legislators can help ensure that children born with this common but hidden infection receive timely care and the best possible chance for healthy development.

Why Screening Matters

- Hearing loss is one of the most prevalent health conditions identified through newborn screening—approximately 2 to 3 in every 1,000 children are affected.
- Early detection saves futures: if cCMV is identified within the first 14–21 days of life, interventions (such as antiviral therapy, audiologic monitoring, and early intervention services) can be started at the most critical time for brain and language development.
- Without early detection, children face a higher risk of lifelong hearing loss, learning difficulties, and developmental disabilities.

The Benefits of Action

- **Cost-effective:** Early diagnosis and treatment reduce the long-term costs of special education, therapies, and healthcare services.
- **Empowers families and providers:** Parents gain critical knowledge and can access early interventions that improve outcomes.



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- **Consistency across states:** Several states—including Minnesota, Utah, Connecticut, and Oregon—have enacted cCMV screening policies.

Role of Otolaryngologists: As physicians specializing in hearing and balance disorders, pediatric otolaryngologists are on the front lines of treating children affected by cCMV-related hearing loss.

- Our Academy strongly supports universal newborn screening for cCMV because early detection leads to better long-term outcomes.

Legislative Ask

- Enact legislation to:
 - To establish a screening protocol for newborns and infants at risk for cCMV.
 - Ensure testing occurs within the first 14–21 days of life, when intervention is most effective.
 - Require coverage of cCMV testing by health plans to eliminate financial barriers for families.