

§ 32.1-64.1. Virginia Hearing Impairment Identification and Monitoring System

A. In order to identify hearing loss at the earliest possible age among newborns and to provide early intervention for all infants so identified as having hearing impairment, the Commissioner shall establish and maintain the Virginia Hearing Impairment Identification and Monitoring System. This system shall be for the purpose of identifying and monitoring infants with hearing impairment to ensure that such infants receive appropriate early intervention through treatment, therapy, training and education.

B. The Virginia Hearing Impairment Identification and Monitoring System shall be initiated in all hospitals with neonatal intensive care services, in all hospitals in the Commonwealth having newborn nurseries, and in other birthing places or centers in the Commonwealth.

C. In all hospitals with neonatal intensive care services, the chief medical officer of such hospitals or his designee shall identify infants at risk of hearing impairment using criteria established by the Board. Beginning on July 1, 1999, all infants shall be given a hearing screening test, regardless of whether or not the infant is at risk of hearing impairment, by the chief medical officer or his designee using methodology approved by the Board. The test shall take place before the infant is discharged from the hospital to the care of the parent or guardian, or as the Board may by regulation provide.

In all other hospitals and other birthing places or centers, the chief medical officer or his designee or the attending practitioner shall identify infants at risk of hearing impairment using criteria established by the Board.

D. Beginning on July 1, 2000, the Board shall provide by regulation for the giving of hearing screening tests for all infants born in all hospitals. The Board's regulations shall establish when the testing shall be offered and performed and procedures for reporting.

An infant whose hearing screening indicates the need for a diagnostic audiological examination shall be offered such examination at a center approved by the Board of Health. As a condition of such approval, such centers shall maintain suitable audiological support and medical and educational referral practices.

E. The Commissioner shall appoint an advisory committee to assist in the design, implementation, and revision of this identification and monitoring system. The advisory committee shall meet at least four times per year. A chairman shall be elected annually by the advisory committee. The Department of Health shall provide support services to the advisory committee. The advisory committee shall consist of representatives from relevant groups including, but not limited to, the health insurance industry; physicians, including at least one pediatrician or family practitioner, one otolaryngologist, and one neonatologist; nurses representing newborn nurseries; audiologists; hearing aid dealers and fitters; teachers of the deaf and hard-of-hearing; parents of children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing; adults who are deaf or hard-of-hearing; hospital administrators; and personnel of appropriate state agencies, including the Department of Medical Assistance Services, the Department of Education, and the

Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. The Department of Education, the Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services shall cooperate with the Commissioner and the Board in implementing this system.

F. With the assistance of the advisory committee, the Board shall promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement this identification and monitoring system. These rules and regulations shall include criteria, including current screening methodology, for the identification of infants (i) with hearing impairment and (ii) at risk of hearing impairment and shall include the scope of the information to be reported, reporting forms, screening protocols, appropriate mechanisms for follow-up, relationships between the identification and monitoring system and other state agency programs or activities and mechanisms for review and evaluation of the activities of the system. The identification and monitoring system shall collect the name, address, sex, race, and any other information determined to be pertinent by the Board, for infants who are screened pursuant to this section.

G. In addition, the Board's regulations shall provide that any person making a determination that an infant (i) is at risk for hearing impairment, (ii) has failed to pass a hearing screening, or (iii) was not successfully tested shall notify the parent or guardian of the infant, the infant's primary care practitioner, and the Commissioner. The Board may provide guidelines for the notification process.

H. No testing required to be performed or offered by this section shall be performed if the parents of the infant object to the test based on their bona fide religious convictions.

1986, c. 419; 1998, cc. [505](#), [506](#), [513](#);2004, c. [855](#);2009, cc. [813](#), [840](#);2012, c. [147](#).