

PRE-PURCHASE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINE FOR AMPLIFICATION DEVICES

It is the position of the American Academy of Audiology that every person seeking treatment of hearing disorders through the use of amplification devices receive a comprehensive audiological evaluation prior to purchase. This evaluation must include any and all necessary procedures to determine: (a) thorough history of hearing loss, (b) auditory sensitivity (thresholds), (c) speech recognition capabilities, (d) type of hearing loss, (e) need for referral to a physician, (f) need for referral to other professionals or agencies, and (g) candidacy for amplification devices.

The comprehensive audiological evaluation must be performed by an audiologist who is licensed or registered in the state wherein the evaluation is completed. The diagnostic evaluation is not conducted for the purposes of selecting or fitting a hearing aid, but to rather assess the functional status of the auditory system, and to assure that amplification or other assistive listening devices are an appropriate treatment strategy.

The American Academy of Audiology recommends a comprehensive hearing assessment by an audiologist prior to the purchase of a hearing aid.

STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF THE AUDIOLOGIST IN THE NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING PROGRAM

Hearing screening is now the standard of care for all newborns. There are many professionals who are responsible for assuring the comprehensive system of an Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program. Licensed audiologists have the expertise and education to appropriately manage the EHDI program (physician exemption notwithstanding). The breadth of knowledge and experience in all aspects of infant hearing programs that audiologists provide (including screening protocols, diagnosis, educational and audiologic management) is necessary to assure that infants and their families receive appropriate and timely services from screening through assessment and early intervention.

Newborn hearing screening programs use either otoacoustic emissions or auditory brainstem response technologies. Both of these technologies, regardless of the equipment or protocols utilized in their administration, are appropriately utilized only when tests are administered, or their administration is supervised, by a licensed audiologist. The understanding and interpretation of the technologies in use today surpasses the knowledge and skill base of individuals not licensed as audiologists.

In the EHDI program, the audiologist provides the following services:

- Identify key community and hospital personnel

who will develop comprehensive, community-based protocols to assure a seamless system for infants and their families. Key community and hospital personnel include audiologists, early interventionists, physicians (pediatrics, family practice, obstetrics, otolaryngology), nursery staff, hospital administrators, risk managers, parents, consumers and Part C coordinators.

- Select the appropriate, objective, physiological screening technologies.
- Provide training and supervision to screeners who may be support personnel such as nurses, technicians and speech-language pathologists.
- Monitor the program's outcome measures for quality assurance such as number of infants screened, refer rate at hospital discharge, number of infants receiving audiological assessments, and number of infants confirmed with a hearing loss.
- Provide education to community/hospital personnel on the importance of early identification and intervention of hearing loss in infants.

The licensed audiologist provides the leadership in management and supervision to assure that EHDI programs are of the highest quality and provide the outcome of early identification and intervention for all infants and their families. 