

On September 2, 2010, the Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) Program at the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) sent an email to audiologists at the request of First Steps to inform audiologists about upcoming changes. Excerpts from that email and attachments to that email included the following messages:

- Effective October 1, 2010: First Steps Early Intervention will no longer provide coordination or funding for audiological evaluations for babies not passing UNHS and those who pass, but are at risk for delayed onset hearing loss. First Steps has communicated the need for this change due to a funding deficit. We appreciate the many years that First Steps has supported families during the diagnostic process and we look forward to their continued assistance with children who have been diagnosed with hearing loss.

What do these changes mean?

- Hospitals will no longer refer children to First Steps for newborn hearing screening follow-up.
- Hospitals will need to develop new procedures to facilitate follow-up of these babies. During September, EHDI will be working with birthing facilities to put new referral procedures into place. EHDI is sharing the attached recommended procedures with hospitals.
- First Steps will continue to cover services for babies once a hearing loss has been identified or in cases where other risk factors to development exist.

Considerations and procedures are attached to this email to assist you as hospitals and doctors may soon be making direct referrals to you.

The EHDI Program is here to provide support to you as your practice makes this transition. I'm sure you recognize that hospitals, doctors, and parents will be depending on you to be ready to accept their referrals on October 1 or sooner.

Thank you for your support of Indiana's children through Early Hearing Detection and Intervention!

The EHDI Program hosted several conference calls for audiologists in September, 2010 to assist in preparation for these changes. Separate conference calls were also scheduled for hospital personnel and Primary Care Providers.

Should you have questions or need assistance from EHDI related to ensuring that children you work with receive appropriate care and follow-up, please contact the EHDI program:

Gayla Hutsell Guignard, EHDI Program Director, (ghutsell@isdh.in.gov, 317-234-3358
Julie Schulte, EHDI Follow-up Coordinator, are available to; juschulte@isdh.in.gov, 317-233-1264).