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MORE INDIANA CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR HEARING AID ASSISTANCE JULY 1

INDIANAPOLIS—The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (Center) at the Indiana State Department of Health is working to make hearing aids more available to deaf and hard of hearing children in Indiana through changes to the Hearing Aid Assistance Program of Indiana (HAAPI).

Effective July 1, 2017, children age 3 and older will be eligible for up to \$2,000 per hearing aid, including bone anchored hearing aids, through a participating audiologist. Previously, children age 5 and up qualified for up to \$1,500 per hearing aid.

Most private insurance carriers do not cover hearing aids, which can cost as much as \$6,000 a pair. The Indiana General Assembly appropriated funding to create HAAPI, which launched in 2016 to ensure that Hoosier children can obtain technology that provides optimal access to their auditory environment.

“These changes help us make hearing aids more available to children who really need them and close the gap between the First Steps coverage offered to children up to age 3 and the previous HAAPI guidelines,” said Christine Moody, executive director of the Center.

As of April 11, 2017, HAAPI had provided 214 hearing aids to children across Indiana. A total of 52 audiologists participate in the program.

“When you hear the stories of the families this program helps, you can’t help but feel good inside,” said State Health Commissioner Jerome M. Adams, M.D., M.P.H. “Money should not be a barrier between a child and hearing aids.”

HAAPI is administered by Hear Indiana. Children ages 3 to 13 receive priority for hearing aids; families can apply for funding every three years.

“Knowing your child needs this help and not being able to afford it is an emotional burden for parents,” said Hear Indiana Executive Director Naomi Horton. “It’s not uncommon for parents to cry when they find out we can help their children.”

Jennie Carr, whose two sons have hearing loss, said her children’s development could have suffered without hearing aids. She said she is thankful that HAAPI is a resource for her family.

“It’s incredible when you have a new baby and find out that they need hearing aids but you did not budget for this unexpected need,” Carr said. “The ability to have hearing aids helps my kids be their best.”

For more information about HAAPI or to find a participating audiologist, contact the Indiana State Department of Health HAAPI administrator at 317-828-0211, email info@HAAPIndiana.org or visit the HAAPI website at www.HAAPIndiana.org.

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