
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEARING AND VISION PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the early
2 identification of hearing and vision loss, with appropriate
3 follow-up services, is critical for the development of
4 children's language and communication skills needed for learning
5 in school.

6 The legislature finds that a hearing and vision program for
7 school children is mandated by section 321-101, Hawaii Revised
8 Statutes, which operated from 1978 in the department of health
9 and ended in 1995 due to budget reductions with the assumption
10 that primary care providers would provide the hearing and vision
11 screening. The department currently provides consultation and
12 training on hearing and vision screening protocols and tools.

13 The legislature further finds that improvement in hearing
14 and vision screening for children is needed. Currently, hearing
15 and vision screenings are conducted by primary care providers
16 and community programs. However, providers and programs vary
17 regarding protocols for hearing and vision screening and



1 follow-up; screeners vary in their training and skills for
2 conducting screenings; and there is no uniform data collection
3 for quality improvement.

4 Hawaii data indicate the need to improve vision screening.
5 The National Survey of Children's Health shows that the Hawaii
6 vision screening rate of eighty-four per cent for children ages
7 six to eleven years ranked low at thirty-nine out of fifty
8 states. The Hawaii vision screening rate of 76.4 per cent for
9 youth ages twelve to seventeen years ranked very low at forty-
10 nine out of fifty states.

11 The Hawaii newborn hearing screening program data show a
12 hearing loss rate of 3.5 per one thousand infants. However,
13 there is a need to continue hearing screening beyond the newborn
14 period, as national data show that the hearing loss rate
15 increases to about six per one thousand children by age six, due
16 to congenital hearing loss that was not identified at birth or
17 late onset or progressive hearing loss.

18 The purpose of this Act is to increase the early
19 identification of children with hearing or vision loss by
20 establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision



1 screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection
2 and reporting.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 321, part IX, Hawaii Revised Statutes,
4 is amended to read as follows:

5 "PART IX. [SYSTEMATIC] HEARING AND VISION PROGRAM

6 §321-101 [~~Systematic hearing~~] Hearing and vision program.

7 (a) There is established a [~~systematic~~] hearing and vision
8 program for children to be conducted by the department of
9 health. The purpose of the program shall be to[+
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10 ~~(1) Detect and identify hearing and vision deficiencies in~~
11 ~~school children; and~~

12 ~~(2) Recommend to their parents or guardians the need for~~
13 ~~appropriate evaluation of children who have hearing or~~
14 ~~vision deficiencies, or both, and follow up and track~~
15 ~~completed evaluations, including diagnostic and~~

16 ~~treatment information]~~ increase the early
17 identification of hearing or vision loss in children
18 by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and
19 vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and
20 data collection for quality improvement.

21 (b) The department shall set recommended standards for:



1 (1) Protocol for evidence-based hearing and vision
 2 screening, including ages or grades for screening;
 3 screening tools, instruments, and passing and referral
 4 criteria for screening that are based on national
 5 guidelines and best practices; and referrals, tracking
 6 of referrals, and follow-up of children who do not
 7 pass screening;

8 (2) Training, certification, and qualifications of
 9 personnel who conduct hearing and vision screening,
 10 other than those who are licensed health care
 11 professionals acting within their legal scope of
 12 practice; and

13 (3) Data collection and reporting on hearing and vision
 14 screening, referral, and follow-up.

15 ~~[(b)]~~ (c) Within available resources, the program shall
 16 include [+

17 ~~(1) Consultation with students, parents, and health and~~
 18 ~~education personnel about treatment and rehabilitation~~
 19 ~~of hearing and vision deficiencies; and~~

20 ~~(2) Education of students, health and education personnel,~~
 21 ~~and the general public about preserving and caring for~~



1 ~~hearing and vision and about preventing hearing and~~
2 ~~vision deficiencies.~~

3 ~~(c) The departments of health and education, in~~
4 ~~cooperation with each other, may conduct classes and lectures in~~
5 ~~hearing and vision conservation and prevention of hearing loss~~
6 ~~and blindness for teachers, public health nurses, and others~~
7 ~~engaged in similar work. The departments shall also cooperate~~
8 ~~with public and private organizations and societies to educate~~
9 ~~the public in the importance of hearing and vision~~
10 ~~conservation.] consultation with and education of students,~~
11 ~~parents, and health and education personnel about hearing and~~
12 ~~vision screening, treatment, and services."~~

13 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
14 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

15 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



Report Title:

Hearing and Vision Program; Hearing Screening; Vision Screening

Description:

Amends the hearing and vision program statute to increase the early identification of children with hearing or vision loss by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement. (SD1)

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