



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 2900
RELATING TO NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING

SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH
Hearing Date: February 19, 2020 Room Number: 229

1 **Fiscal Implications:** There are no fiscal implications for the Department of Health (DOH).

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health **strongly supports** this measure to amend
3 Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §321-361 to 363 to mandate the reporting of diagnostic
4 audiologic evaluation results.

5 This bill mandates the reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve
6 identification and follow-up of infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. The purpose of the
7 amendments is to ensure that diagnostic audiologic reports related to follow-up of newborns who
8 did not pass newborn hearing screening, or when an infant's hearing status changes, are provided
9 to the Department of Health. This is especially important since national data show that the
10 incidence of infants who are born deaf or hard of hearing is about twice the incidence in other
11 states.

12 Newborn hearing screening is mandated by Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §321-361 to 363
13 (2001) as a public health screening program that helps deaf or hard of hearing children reach
14 their developmental milestones and be language ready for school. The national standards for
15 early hearing detection and intervention are screening by 1 month of age, identification by 3
16 months, and enrollment in early intervention services by 6 months. Many studies have shown
17 that the 1-3-6 goal results in children who have better vocabulary outcomes, reach their
18 milestones at the right time, and are language ready for school.

1 In 2018, 191 newborns did not pass newborn hearing screening. Without access to all the
2 diagnostic audiologic evaluation results on these newborns, the DOH Newborn Hearing
3 Screening Program (NHSP) does not know what happened to 42 (22%) of these newborns. This
4 means that the NHSP cannot follow-up with the families to facilitate diagnostic testing, entry
5 into early intervention services, or just document that the newborn is not deaf or hard of hearing.

6 In addition, infants are not receiving timely evaluations as far as we know. From our reports in
7 2018, 140 of 191 infants received diagnostic audiologic evaluations. Only 109/140 (78%)
8 received an evaluation before 3 months of age. Timely and consistent reporting of diagnostic
9 audiologic evaluation results will allow the program staff to identify, contact, and provide
10 support to families of infants who need an evaluation before 3 months of age.

11 The missing diagnostic audiologic evaluation results cause great delay for entry into much
12 needed early intervention services for the infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. In 2018, 76
13 infants were diagnosed with permanent hearing loss, but only 22/76 (29%) were enrolled in early
14 intervention by 6 months of age. Timely reporting and referral to early intervention will increase
15 the percentage of deaf and hard of hearing infants receiving timely early intervention services to
16 develop oral and/or sign language communication.

17 Mandating the reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results for the newborns who do not
18 pass newborn hearing screening will help Hawaii meet the national 1-3-6 goal to help children
19 who are deaf or hard of hearing be language ready for school. In addition, receiving diagnostic
20 audiologic results for children diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing up to the age of 3 years is
21 important to alert the Newborn Hearing Screening Program to assist parents to enroll their
22 children in early intervention and for program quality assurance functions. Reporting of
23 diagnostic results to the Newborn Hearing Screening Program is exempt from Health Insurance
24 Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations under the public health program
25 provisions.

26 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
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February 17, 2020

TO: Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

FROM: Lauren Moriguchi, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 2900 – RELATING TO NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING
Hearing Date: February 19, 2020
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Room 229

Bill Description: Amends the newborn hearing screening statute to mandate reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve hearing follow-up of infants. Updates definitions and terminology.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

Good morning. I am Lauren Moriguchi, Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL is in support of S.B. 2900.

EOEL is statutorily responsible for the development of the State's early childhood system that shall ensure a spectrum of high-quality development and learning opportunities for children throughout the state, from prenatal care until the time they enter kindergarten, with priority given to underserved or at-risk children.

This bill mandates reporting of diagnostic audiologic evaluation results to improve identification and follow-up of infants who are deaf or hard of hearing. Serve-and-return interactions between adults and young children are crucial to the architecture of the brain, which has lasting impact on children's development and learning. The deprivation of the verbal or non-verbal language (through which these interactions occur) negatively impacts social-emotional competence and cognitive development, in addition to language and literacy skills. Therefore, early identification and follow-up support for families are essential during this critical stage of child development, vital to establishing a strong foundation for the young child that his or her future years will be built upon.

We defer to the Department of Health regarding the other merits of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.