

JAN 19 2022

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

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

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



1 conducting screenings; and there is no uniform data collection
2 for quality improvement.

3 In addition, the legislature finds that studies indicate
4 the need to improve vision screening in the State, especially
5 during younger ages. A 2016 study of the National Survey of
6 Children's Health shows that the State's vision screening rate
7 was 38.9 per cent for children ages zero to five years ranking
8 Hawaii low at forty-fourth out of fifty states. The State's
9 vision screening rate in 2016 was 85.2 per cent for children
10 ages six to eleven years and 83.2 per cent for youth ages twelve
11 to seventeen years, which were both close to the national
12 average.

13 Data from the newborn hearing screening program shows a
14 hearing loss rate of 4.5 per thousand infants. There is a need
15 to continue hearing screening beyond the newborn period, as
16 national data show that the hearing loss rate increases to about
17 six per one thousand children by age six, due to congenital
18 hearing loss that was not identified at birth or late onset or
19 progressive hearing loss.

20 The purpose of this Act is to increase the early
21 identification of children with hearing or vision loss by



1 establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision
2 screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection
3 and reporting.

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

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

7 §321-101 [~~Systematic hearing~~] Hearing and vision program.

8 (a) There is established a [~~systematic~~] hearing and vision
9 program for children to be conducted by the department of
10 health. The purpose of the program shall be to[~~-~~

- 11 ~~(1) Detect and identify hearing and vision deficiencies in~~
- 12 ~~school children; and~~
- 13 ~~(2) Recommend to their parents or guardians the need for~~
- 14 ~~appropriate evaluation of children who have hearing or~~
- 15 ~~vision deficiencies, or both, and follow up and track~~
- 16 ~~completed evaluations, including diagnostic and~~
- 17 ~~treatment information.]~~

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

1 ~~(2) Education of students, health and education personnel,~~
 2 ~~and the general public about preserving and caring for~~
 3 ~~hearing and vision and about preventing hearing and~~
 4 ~~vision deficiencies.~~

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

15 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
 16 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

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

18

INTRODUCED BY:  _____



S.B. NO. 2022

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.

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