

SOUND MATTERS

Audiology Newsletter of the Minnesota Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Program

2018 National Cytomegalovirus (CMV) Public Health Policy Conference

The goals of the national CMV Public Health Policy Conference are to reduce the number of babies born with congenital Cytomegalovirus (cCMV), and to consider new methods of identification and ways to improve quality of life for infants who are affected. Presenters shared the latest research on screening, diagnosis and treatment, and discussed new methods to raise awareness about CMV. Panelists agreed on the value of universal cCMV screening (screening all infants).

Arguments in support of universal screening continue to revolve around two key points. First, some affected infants who could potentially benefit from available antiviral treatment would not be identified through a targeted cCMV screening approach (targeted screening would only screen infants who do not pass newborn hearing screening). Second, knowledge of risk for delayed onset hearing loss associated with cCMV allows for better management, follow-up, and support based on that risk. Again, a targeted approach would not identify some affected infants who have this risk.

Thoughtful implementation of a universal screening approach is necessary given the volume of infants that would require follow-up. Important considerations

regarding universal cCMV screening where ongoing research and discussion is needed include:

- Identification of an acceptable method for universal cCMV screening (dried blood spot, saliva, urine)
- More thought about the impact on asymptomatic infants, their families, and the system that cares for them
- Further investigation regarding treatment with antiviral medication for those with 'isolated hearing loss only' (there is currently no consensus on this)
- More discussion about potential benefits of medication for symptomatic infants, and whether those benefits are significant enough to warrant implementing universal screening

The Minnesota Department of Health continues to be an active participant in cCMV public health policy discussions at the national level. More information is located on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) [webpage dedicated to Cytomegalovirus and Congenital CMV Infection](#), or at the [CMV Public Health Policy Conference website](#).

Did you know? Latest Issue of JEHD is Available

The latest Journal of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (JEHD) is now available at <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/jehdi/vol3/iss2/1/>. If you wish to receive new issue alerts directly and activate a personal subscription, there is a link on this page <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/jehdi/> to create your own account.

Have You Heard?

Hearing Aids Insurance Coverage for Children (Birth to 18 Years)

[Minnesota Statute 62Q.675](#) indicates that health plans must cover hearing aids for children. If the child is covered by a MNSURE plan, all plans sold on MNSURE are required to provide hearing aid coverage for children.

However, there are exceptions with other policies. If insurance is through an employer, hearing aids are covered for children with Minnesota insurance plans that are fully insured. The parent will need to know:

- Is the plan a Minnesota plan or is it issued out of another state?
- Is the plan fully insured or self-insured (most small companies are fully insured while most large companies are self-insured)

[Loaner hearing devices](#) are available for immediate use following diagnosis to give families time to determine possible insurance coverage options. [Hearing Aid Financial Resources](#) are available.

A Hearing Aid Appeals Packet is available if coverage is denied. Parents can contact the [Minnesota Department of Human Services Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division](#) at 651-431-5940 with additional questions.



Last Words from the Advisory Committee

Meeting highlights...

- EHDl family impact story was shared by Minnesota EHDl Co-coordinator, Nicole Brown. Nicole's story and four other TED-style topics can be accessed on the [Minnesota Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing website](#).
- Updated **Minnesota Guidelines for Infant Audiologic Assessment** were approved and are now available at: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/newbornscreening/providers/2019soundmatters1.pdf>

Next meeting:

February 20, 2019
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Amherst A. Wilder Foundation
451 Lexington Parkway North
St. Paul, MN 55104

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