

# 2015 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: FIRST SOUND

South Carolina's Success in Newborn Hearing Screening



## What is First Sound?

In 2001, legislation was enacted to require hearing screenings for all newborns prior to discharge from any South Carolina hospital averaging 100 deliveries or more per year. Established under this mandate, **First Sound is South Carolina's early hearing detection and intervention (EHDI) program.**

Through early identification, the program provides intervention during the critical window of a child's language development. This approach leads to greater opportunities for academic success, as well as a greater quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing children.

By maximizing a child's academic readiness, our program **provides long-term savings in special education expenses and public assistance<sup>1</sup>** from infancy.

Our program uses the 1-3-6 targets. Infants are screened by **1 month**, confirmed by **3 months** and early intervention begins by **6 months**.

## First Sound is working:

Since the initiation of our program, **1,071** infants have been identified with confirmed hearing loss and have received intervention.



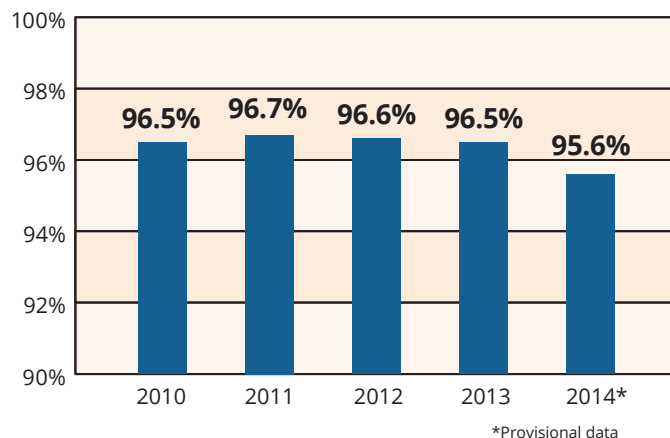
*"We are forever grateful for the First Sound program. Our daughter's hearing loss was detected at birth, diagnosed within 2 months of birth, and she received her hearing devices within 3 months of birth. She is communicating above the levels of her peers. All of this is possible, in part, due to the First Sound program."*

**Heather & Matt Anderson, parents of Bailey**  
Horry County

## First Sound is improving standards with our quality improvement initiative:

- Eight South Carolina hospitals have been selected to participate in a quality improvement program to improve infant hearing screening practices and reduce rates of infants not rescreened (i.e. "lost to follow up").
- The eight hospitals are working to:
  1. Maintain a 95% or better screening rate (American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines).
  2. Maintain a 4% or less annual referral rate for non-NICU babies (AAP benchmark to assure testing quality).
  3. Achieve 95% of all non-NICU newborn hearing screening results reported within 7 days of creating record in the First Sound data system.
  4. Achieve 30% or lower no show rates to follow up appointment with audiologist made prior to discharge for babies who did not pass the inpatient screening.
- Hospitals have identified best practices to ensure all infants are properly screened.
- Eight additional hospitals will participate in the program annually until all hospitals statewide have participated. (Pending continued Federal Health Resources and Administration (HRSA) funding).
- First Sound will continue to enhance the quality improvement program methodology based on insights from key stakeholders and best practices identified by professional groups.

## Screening success rate:



<sup>1</sup>"When deaf children are not identified early and given appropriate services, additional special education services beyond what would have otherwise been required can cost an additional \$500,000 for the local school district."

Johnson JL, Mauk GW, Takekawa KM, Simon PR, Sia CCJ, Blackwell PM. Implementing a statewide system of services for infants and toddlers with hearing disabilities. *Seminars in Hearing*. 1993;14:105-119.