

2019 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: FIRST SOUND

South Carolina's Success in Newborn Hearing Screening



First Sound Program

First Sound is South Carolina's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program mandated by legislation since 2001 for all hospitals with an annual average of 100 or more births. Currently, all 41 birthing hospitals in South Carolina (SC) actively perform hearing screenings on newborns prior to discharge. First Sound uses the national 1-3-6 targets: Screened by 1 month, confirmed by 3 months and early intervention by 6 months.

Early identification of hearing loss makes access to appropriate early intervention services during the critical window of a child's language development possible. Early intervention for deaf and hard of hearing children maximizes their potential for academic achievement and a quality of life equal to their hearing peers. It also leads to long-term savings in special education expenses and public assistance in adulthood.

Highlights

- Approximately 51,686 infants were screened for hearing loss prior to hospital discharge in SC in 2018. An additional 185 infants delivered outside of a hospital were screened for hearing loss.
- At 97.4%, the First Sound Program surpasses the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) benchmark goal of 95% of newborns screened annually.
- Since the start of the program in 2001, 1,577 infants have been identified with hearing loss.
- A Learning Community was convened as a grant project and focused on increasing parent and professional awareness of EHDI goals and improving communication with parents and providers.
- First Sound collaborated with family support organizations to organize the "2019 4th Annual Back to School Bash for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students"

Future Direction

- First Sound will continue working towards increasing the number of infants identified with hearing loss and receiving early intervention services in a timely manner through the following activities:
 - o Collaborating and connecting families with family support organizations.
 - o Conducting outreach and training activities with professionals to increase awareness of program goals and objectives
 - o Continuing quality improvement activities
 - o Collaborating with other DHEC programs

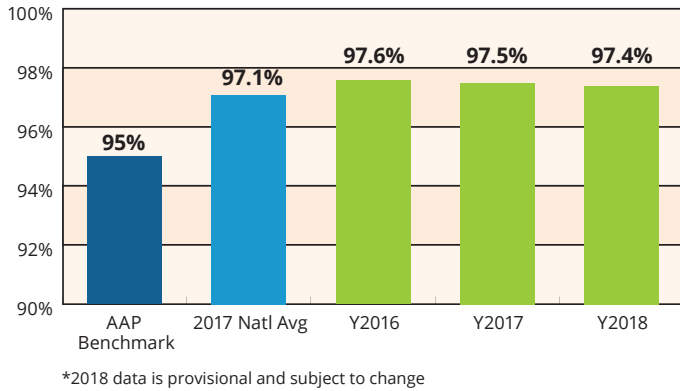


"As a mother to a now 4-year-old daughter with mild bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, I am so grateful to the newborn hearing screening program. Due to the screening, my daughter's hearing loss was identified at birth. We were able to be tested by her audiologist at 1 month of life and it was confirmed that my daughter would need bilateral hearing aids. Due to early detection, she was fitted for her hearing aids shortly after 2 months of life and started services through BabyNet. Even her pediatrician said that he had never seen a 2-month-old with hearing aids. However, the audiologist educated us on the critical need of these devices for her development of speech. She was followed by BabyNet for 3 years and has excelled. With her diagnosis being "mild" and her not being able to hear birds chirping, leaves rattling, or some letter sounds, she would have been identified much later in life had it not been for First Sound. She would have been verbal, but her speech would not have been clear, and we would probably have thought that she had a speech impediment instead of hearing loss. I am forever grateful to early detection, early diagnosis and the early start of interventions. My daughter now looks and "sounds" like any other 4-year-old. She is now excelling in a typical 4-K class and this year her and Leo the Lion (a stuffed animal that has hearing aids) taught her class about hearing loss. She is now her own advocate. I want to thank First Sound for helping my SOFIA!"

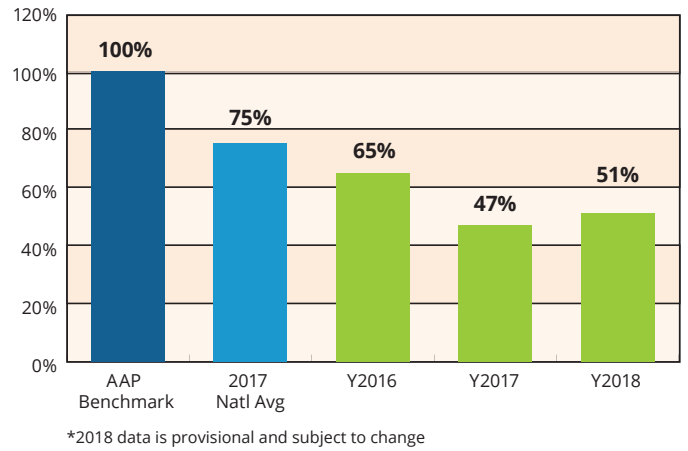
Sandra Romero, parent of Sofia
— Richland County

First Sound by the Numbers

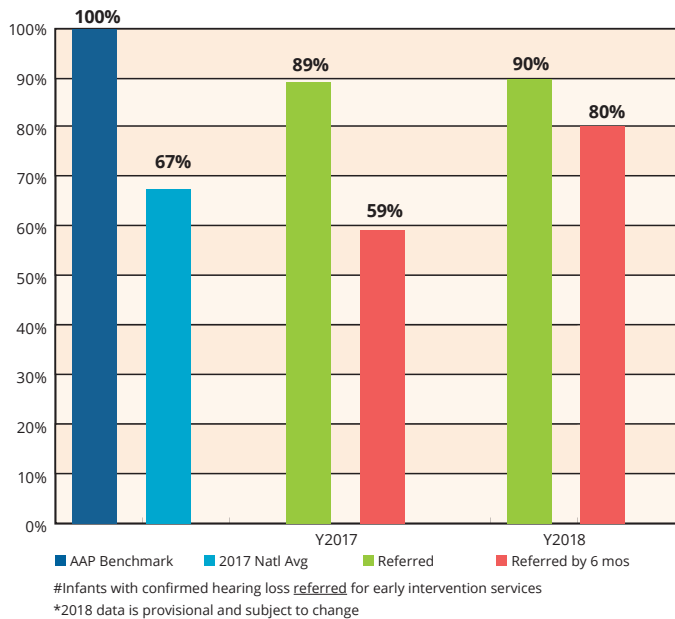
Newborn Hearing Screening Rate



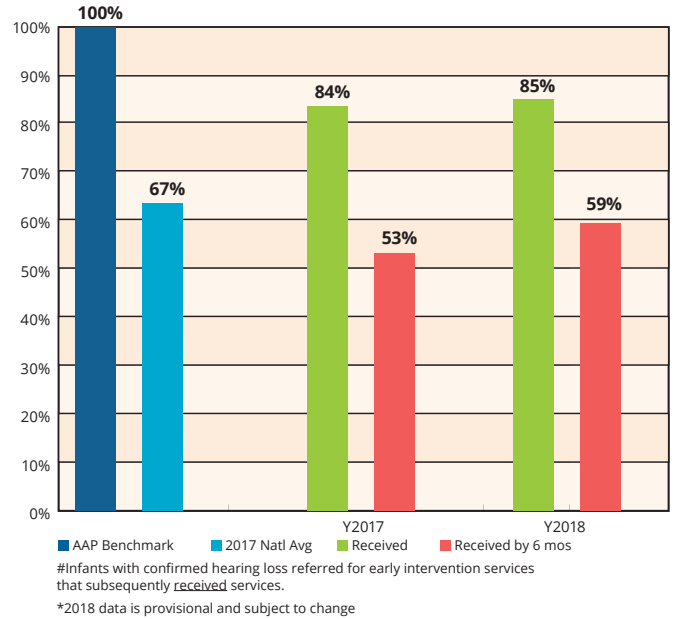
Infants with Confirmed Hearing Loss by 3 Months



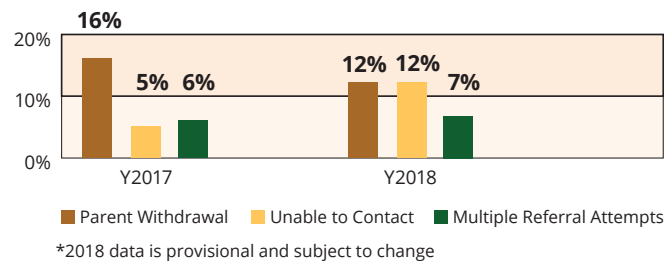
Early Intervention for Infants With Permanent Hearing Loss - Referred



Early Intervention for Infants With Permanent Hearing Loss - Received



Factors Contributing to Delayed Access to Early Intervention



Contact Information:

Tara P. Carroll, MCD, CCC/A
First Sound Program Manager/Audiologist
803-898-0708