

May Babies

The National Campaign for Hearing Health's Infant Hearing Screening Year 2000 Initiative

Background:

Every year, more than 12,000 babies leave U.S. hospitals with a hearing impairment – that's one in 300! Of these, approximately 4,000 are profoundly deaf. In fact, hearing impairment is the number one birth defect in the United States. Despite this, only one-quarter of babies are currently screened for hearing impairment at birth. However, with access to new, reliable infant hearing tests and cutting-edge technology, from digital hearing aids to cochlear implants, the outlook is beginning to change. The first step is ensuring that every infant is screened for hearing impairment at birth.

As a result, the National Campaign for Hearing Health – a multi-year national education and advocacy campaign – is launching a new program called *May Babies*. In conjunction with Better Hearing and Speech Month and just in time for the newest babies of the new millennium, *May Babies* aims to raise public awareness of the need to test all newborn hearing, starting with those children born in May 2000.

Goal:

The goal of the program is to increase the number of newborns nationwide screened for hearing impairment by 50 percent.

Resources:

The National Campaign for Hearing Health is working with business leaders, members of Congress and state governments, key health and advocacy organizations, health professionals and others to raise awareness of *May Babies* and its mission.

Evaluation:

With the assistance of the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management at Utah State University, the Campaign will conduct a base-line audit of newborn hearing screening in selected states across the nation in December, 1999, as well as research the number of newborns screened in May, 1999. Results from a follow up examination will be announced in June, 2000.

For more information:

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