



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2009 Wisconsin Act 279
[2009 Assembly Bill 488]

Newborn Hearing Screening

2009 Wisconsin Act 279 requires the physician, nurse-midwife, or certified professional midwife who attends a birth to ensure that the infant is screened for hearing loss before hospital discharge, or within 30 days of birth if the infant was not born in a hospital.

The screening may not be performed unless the parents or legal guardian are fully informed of the purposes of screening and have been given reasonable opportunity to object to the screening based on a conflict with religious tenets or practices. Screening is not required if the parents or legal guardian object on the grounds that the screen conflicts with their religious tenets and practices.

The person who attended the birth must ensure that the parents or legal guardian of the infant are advised of the screening results and, if the infant has an abnormal screening result, ensure that they are provided information on available resources for diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss. The Department of Health Services (DHS) must provide referrals to intervention programs for hearing loss.

The person who attended the birth must send the screening results, and the infant's risk factors to contract a hearing loss, to the State Laboratory of Hygiene, which must in turn send this information to DHS.

Information obtained from the parents or legal guardian may not be disclosed except for use in statistical data, or under circumstances under which patient health care records in general may be released without informed consent.

The State Lab of Hygiene must include, as part of the fee it charges for testing newborns for congenital disorders, the costs of administering the newborn hearing screening program. DHS may use those fees for the costs of administering the newborn hearing screening program.

Effective date: May 26, 2010.

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This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>.