

# Improving Access to Pediatric Audiology Services in Rural Oklahoma

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## INTRODUCTION

In August 2019, OSDH launched the Pediatric Audiology Program with one audiologist traveling to sites to lessen the burden on families having to drive 4-5 hours one way for audiology services and decreasing wait times for an appointment to < one month. In May 2022, the program expanded to three additional audiologists and accepted a fourth year AuD externship in 2024.

The program provides diagnostic services to children birth through 18 years of age, no out-of-pocket expense and all insurances accepted.

There are now 15 clinics equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic audiology equipment: 10 county health department clinics, two SoonerStart (Part C) offices, and three offsite clinics

## STAKEHOLDERS

OSDH Pediatric Audiology works with internal and external stakeholders by accepting referrals and providing outreach and education. The program is a vital resource for Oklahoma Newborn Hearing Screening and SoonerStart (Part C) programs with 69% of the caseload being 3 years of age and under. (Chart 2)

### INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Oklahoma Newborn Hearing Screening Program
- Nursing Services
- SoonerStart (Part C) Program
- Child Guidance Program

### EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Allied Health Professionals
- Physicians
- Schools
- Oklahoma School for the Deaf
- Oklahoma School for the Blind
- Universities

## DISCUSSION

From August 2019 through December 2024, the program provided 8,146 appointments, 56% occurring in rural clinics (Table 1), serving 6,104 children. Of those, 78% had normal hearing and 32% had an auditory disorder that needed further treatment. The audiologist navigated the families to appropriate providers for medical treatment and/or hearing technology when needed.

## Pediatric Audiology Locations



OKLAHOMA  
State Department  
of Health

Data Source:  
Pediatric Audiology Program, 2024

- County Health Department
- SoonerStart (Part C) Office
- Offsite Location

- 1 Clinton
- 2 Lawton
- 3 Enid
- 4 Oklahoma City
- 5 Moore

- 6 Norman
- 7 Stillwater
- 8 Ada
- 9 Bartlesville
- 10 Claremore

- 11 Tulsa
- 12 Muskogee
- 13 Muskogee (offsite)
- 14 Tahlequah
- 15 McAlester

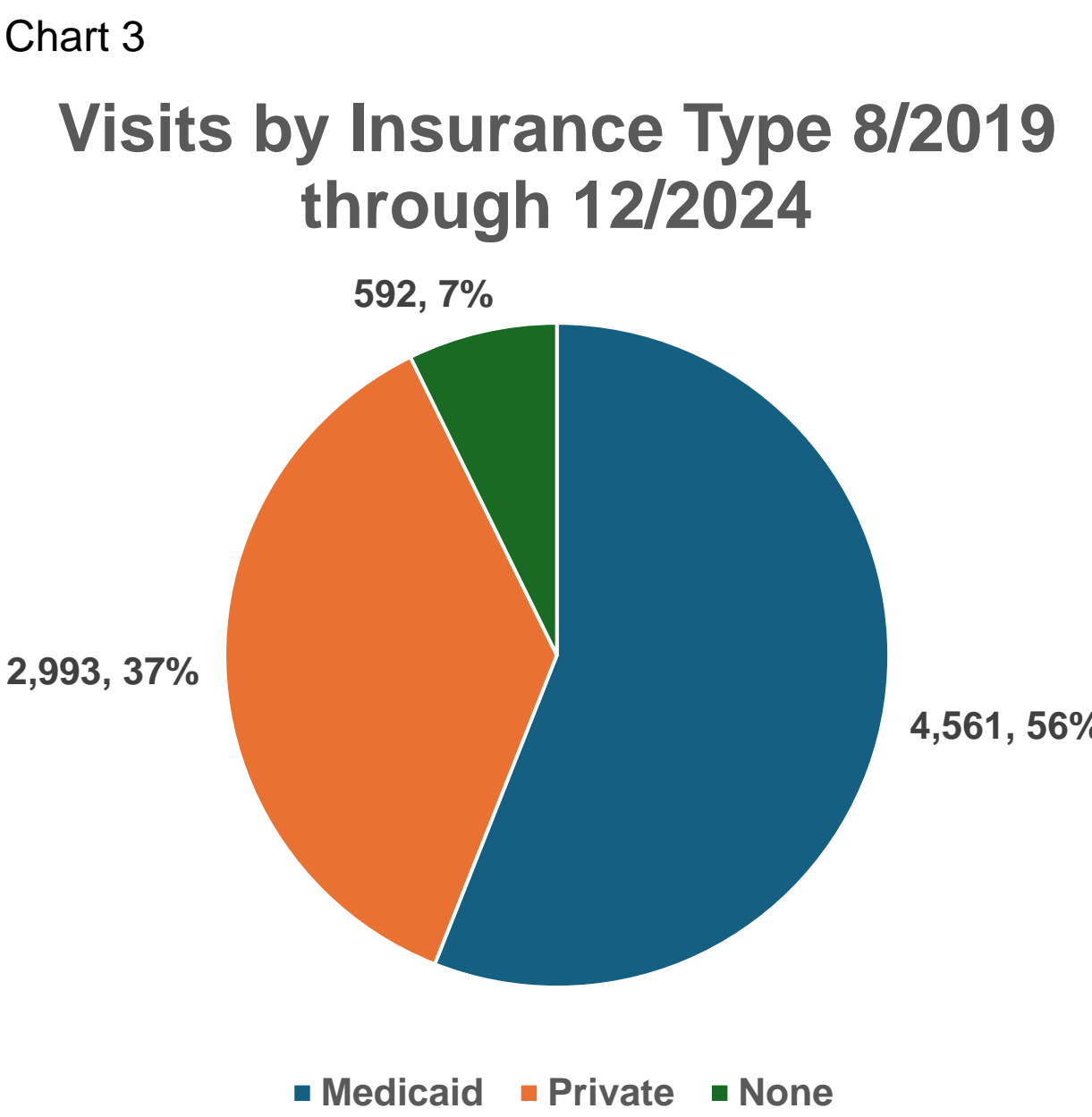
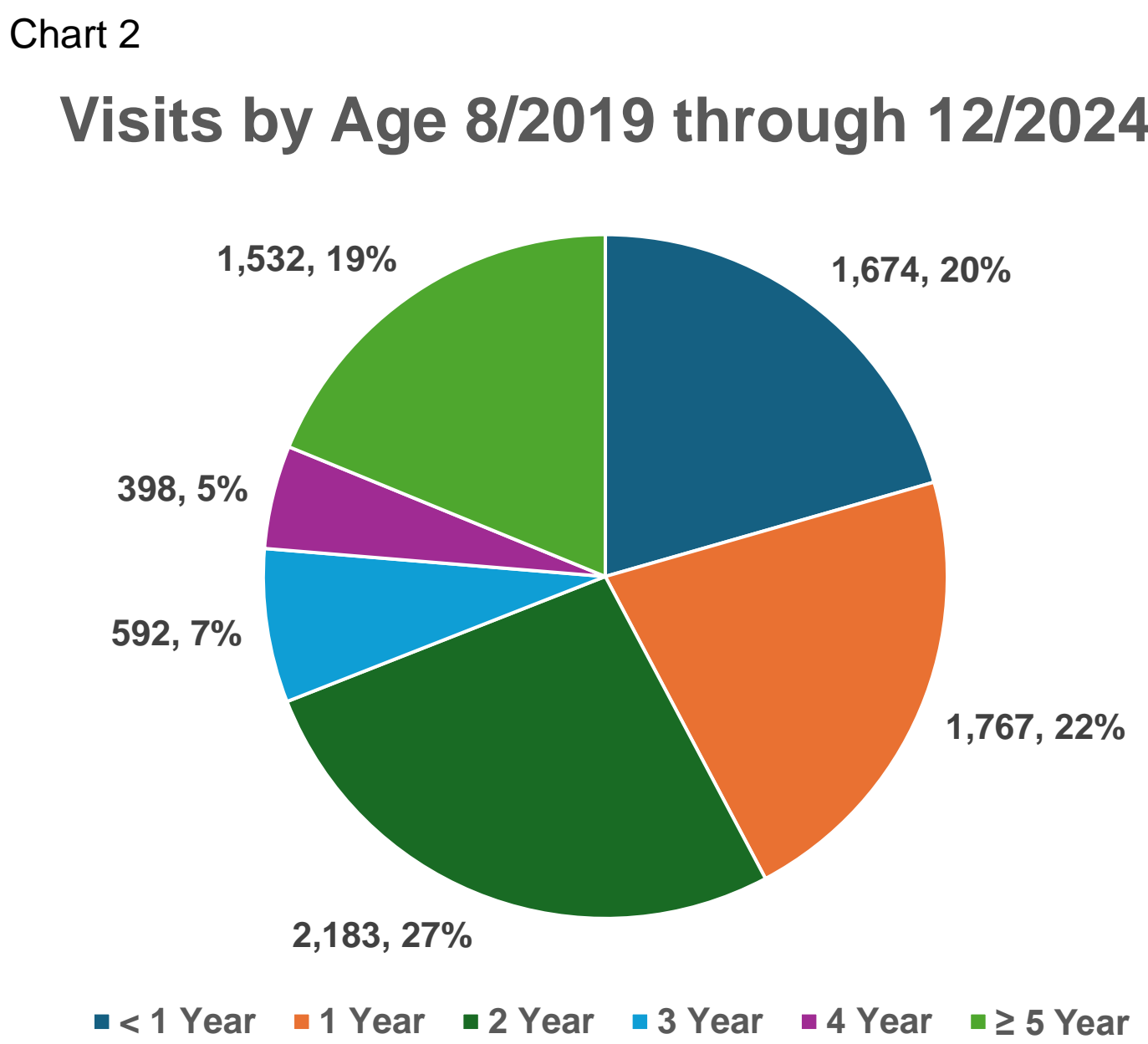
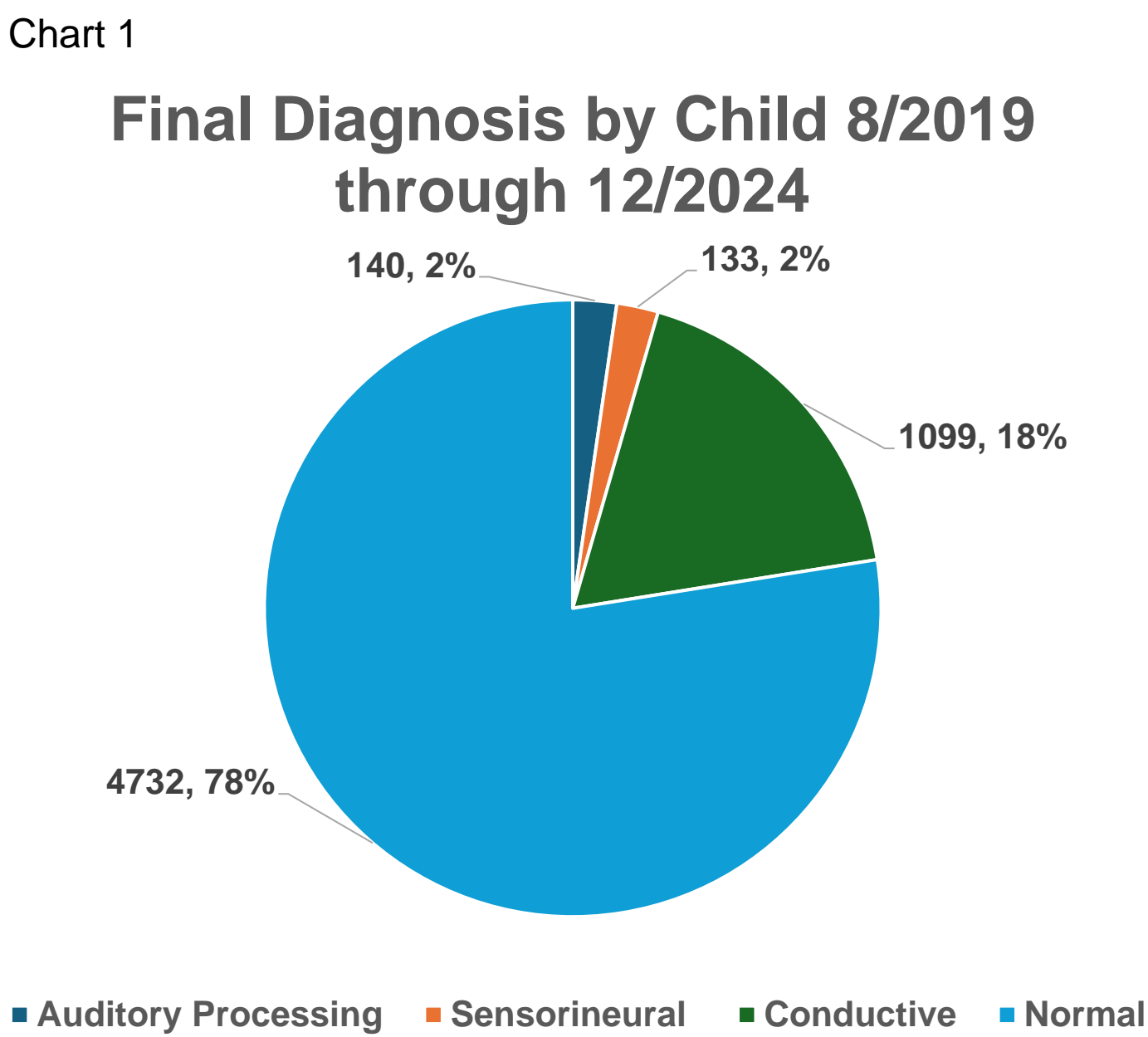


Table 1  
Number of Completed Appointments by Location

Location	Start Date	# of Appointments
Moore	Aug 2019	1,536
Norman	Nov 2019	74
McAlester	Dec 2019	1,496
Lawton	Dec 2019	1,238
Oklahoma City	Dec 2019	1,012
Tulsa	Feb 2022	930
Enid	Feb 2022	258
Muskogee	Aug 2022	560
Stillwater	Jan 2023	337
Clinton	Jan 2023	159
Bartlesville	March 2023	196
Ada	March 2023	150
Claremore	Aug 2023	141
Tahlequah	Oct 2024	19
Other Locations		40
Total		8,146

OSDH Pediatric  
Audiology Program

