

A Multipronged Approach to Ensure Access to Audiological Care in the State of Maine

EHDI 2025



Katherine Duncan, Au.D., PASC

- ★ Educational Audiologist
- ★ Audiology Consultant to the Maine EHDI Program and member of the Earliest Interactions CDC/HRSA team
- ★ Living the hockey mom dream with my son (11), daughter (7), husband, and pup (1.5)



Amy Spencer MS CCC/SLP, TOD

- ★ Early Intervention and Family Services Coordinator.
- ★ Serve on the Maine Newborn Hearing Program Board, the Maine Interagency Coordinating Council, and active member of the Earliest Interactions Maine/HRSA team.
- ★ Initiated and continuously refine the ELCO process.
- ★ Live in Southern Maine exploring both ocean and mountains with my husband and two young daughters.



Disclosures

Katherine Duncan is a paid employee of MECDHH/GBSD and Consultant to the Maine EHDI Program.

Amy Spencer is a paid employee of MECDHH/GBSD as their Early Intervention and Family Services Coordinator.



Today's Objectives:

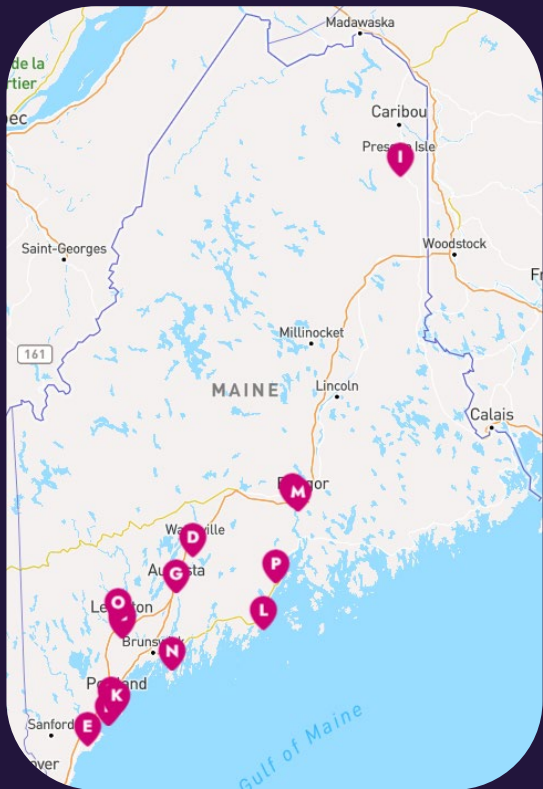
Participants will be able to list possible methods of increasing access to audiological care through non-traditional means.

Participants will be able to describe how technology can be used to improve access to care in a rural area.

Participants will be able to outline how they can apply these methods in their own state.



Challenges in Accessing Audiology Care

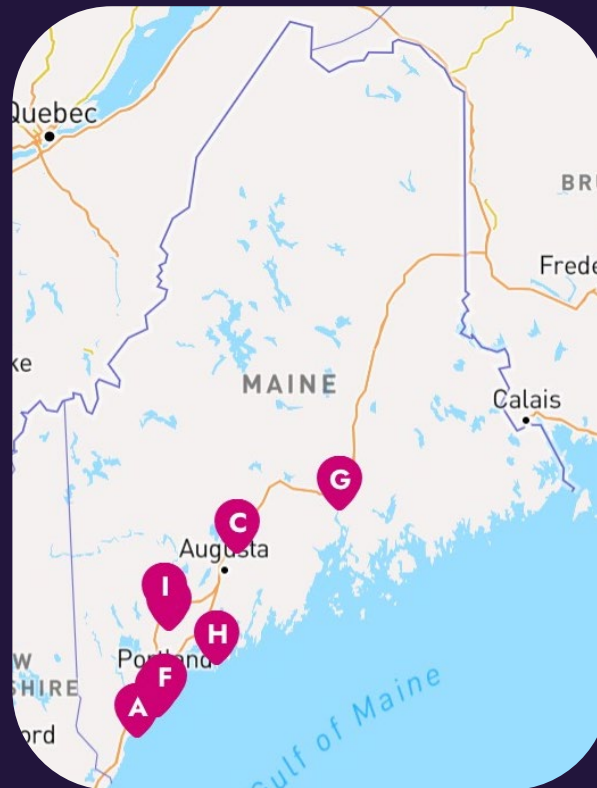


- Relatively few pediatric providers in the state
 - The clinics shown have the ability to see pediatric patients, but few “pediatric audiologists” statewide
- Most providers clustered around southern/ midcoast Maine region
 - For families in rural areas, options are significantly limited, with some families driving 2-3 hours one way for appointments



Challenges in Accessing Audiology Care

- For families in need of ABR services, the providers are even more limited
- If a child needs a sedated ABR, there is one facility in southern Maine- otherwise, the family needs to travel out of state



Projects to Address

Implemented:

- Pediatric Audiology Workgroup
- Itinerant OAE Screening/Tracking Process
- Audiology Search Tool
- Midcoast ABR Program

In Process:

- Remote ABR Project
- Midwife Screening Project



Pediatric Audiology Workgroup

- All audiologists in the state meet on a quarterly basis to discuss issues pertinent to providing pediatric care in Maine
- Opportunities for pediatric-focused CEUs are also offered

How does this help?

- Increasing capacity of existing providers in state to support pediatric population
- Projects to create more standardized systems of care, to support continuity of care statewide



Itinerant Screening/Tracking Process

- EI Providers have OAE screening equipment to support targeted OAE screenings for 03 population
- The goal is to support those families who need to see an audiologist with information from the screening as well as supports for any barriers to care
- Additionally, EI providers track those children with risk factors for a hearing difference to ensure they follow up with audiology as needed

How does this help?

- Helps to connect families with audiologists and reinforce importance of diagnostic testing



Audiology Search Tool

- An online tool is maintained with up-to-date information regarding the services provided by audiology clinics across the state

How does this help?

- Families are empowered to determine which providers are available to support their child, based on parameters such as distance, type of service, insurance status, etc.



Midcoast ABR Project

- Unused ABR equipment reallocated in partnership with local non profit, allowing them to offer diagnostic ABRs

How does this help?

- ABRs are now available in a region where services were unavailable previously
- Families in the past had to travel 45-90 minutes to a facility capable of providing ABR, which often made completing testing in one session challenging



Remote ABR Project

- Unused ABR equipment allocated to region with no ABR services (nearest facility 2.5 hour drive away)
- Partnership with nearest pediatric audiologist to complete ABR via telehealth

How will this help?

- Significantly reduces travel barrier for families
- Those children identified as D/ HH would follow up with same audiologist for ongoing services



Midwife Screening Project

- Unused OAE equipment reallocated to midwives across the state

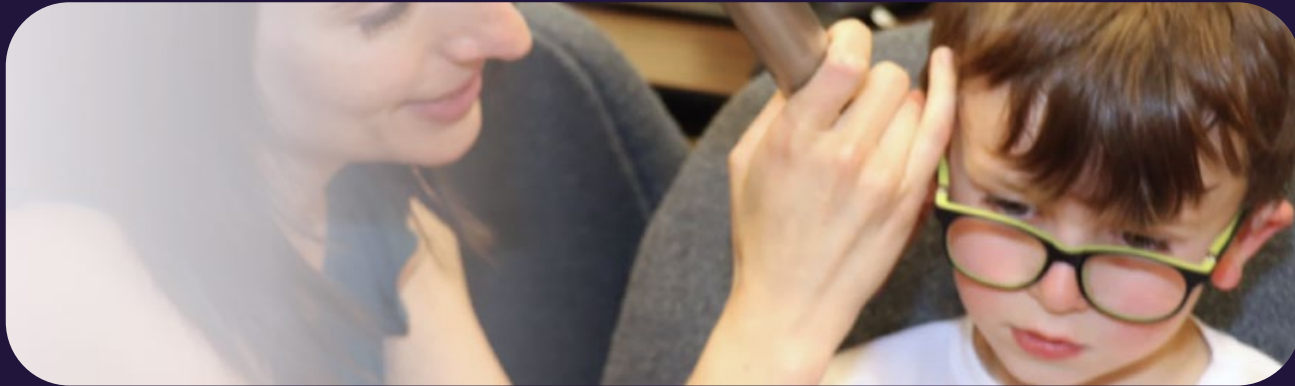
How will this help?

- Midwives to offer OAE screening at birth, targeting the population of children who are least likely to receive a screening at birth in Maine (i.e., those born at home)
- Fewer children with missed screenings, increasing likelihood of early diagnosis/ intervention for children who have a hearing difference



Tips for Implementation

- Create an audiology workgroup in your state
- Look at areas of need for your state needs assessment
- Find interested stakeholders/partners for projects
- Be patient! These projects took years to get off the ground



How to Contact Us:

Amy Spencer MS CCC/SLP, TOD, MECDHH EI Coordinator

amy.spencer@mecdhh.org

Katie Duncan, Au.D., PASC, MECDHH Educational Audiologist

katherine.duncan@mecdhh.org

