

Florida Department of Health

Bridging the Gap: Birth Centers and Audiology Equipment Loaner Program

**Florida
HEALTH**

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Presenters



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Agenda

- 2023 birth and screening statistics
- Environmental scan results
- Newborn Hearing Screening (NBHS) legislation
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) supplemental grant
- Birthing center outreach
- Loan criteria
- Implementation preparation
- Distribution of equipment
- Implementation challenges
- Preliminary data
- Next steps

2023 Birth and Screening Statistics

Births: 221,742

- Hospital Births: 216,947
- Birth Center Births: 1,552
- Home Births: 2,815

Hearing Screens: 217,457 (98.06%)

- Passed Most Recent: 213,605
- Not Passed Most Recent: 3,477
- Hearing Loss Cases: 305

Environmental Scan Results

Data analysis showed:

- Approximately 2% of newborns who did not receive hearing screens were born at birth centers and at home.
- Birth center readiness to screen varied widely.
 - Providers already screening.
 - Providers willing to screen.
 - Providers reluctant to screen.
- Multiple factors influenced readiness.
 - Midwife dual roles (homebirth vs. center births).
 - Perceived family resistance.
 - Limited responsiveness to outreach efforts, in some cases.

Legislation

Effective July 1, 2024, [section 383.145](#), Florida Statutes, requires licensed birthing centers to:

- Perform newborn hearing screens.
- Refer newborns who do not pass the hearing screen for congenital cytomegalovirus screening within 7 days after birth.
- Report hearing screen results within 7 days of completion.

CDC Supplemental Grant

CDC Supplemental Grant focus is on:

- High-risk
- Underrepresented families
- Rural communities

NBHS was awarded \$253,553 to:

- Support legislation requiring birthing centers to screen.
- Expand the existing equipment loaner program.
- Fill gaps in areas without access to automated brainstem response (ABR) equipment.

Outreach

Outreach performed November 2023 – June 2024:

- Completing initial outreach to educate about hearing screening.
- Analyzing 2023 birth data.
- Categorizing birth centers into three groups:
 - Birth centers with their own equipment.
 - Birth centers with previously loaned equipment.
 - Birth centers that needed equipment and training.
- Phased training for birth centers that needed equipment.
 - Phase 1 – larger birth rate and demonstrate readiness.
 - Phase 2 – smaller birth rate and building readiness.

Loan Criteria

The NBHS Program established loan criteria, including:

- Are licensed birth centers.
- Met birth rate threshold or, if under threshold, are:
 - In rural or underrepresented regions.
 - Reduce family travel burden.
- Commit to long-term use.
- Responsive to communication.
- Agree to complete hearing screening training.
- Comply with legislative requirements.

Implementation Preparation

In preparation for equipment distribution, NBHS Program staff:

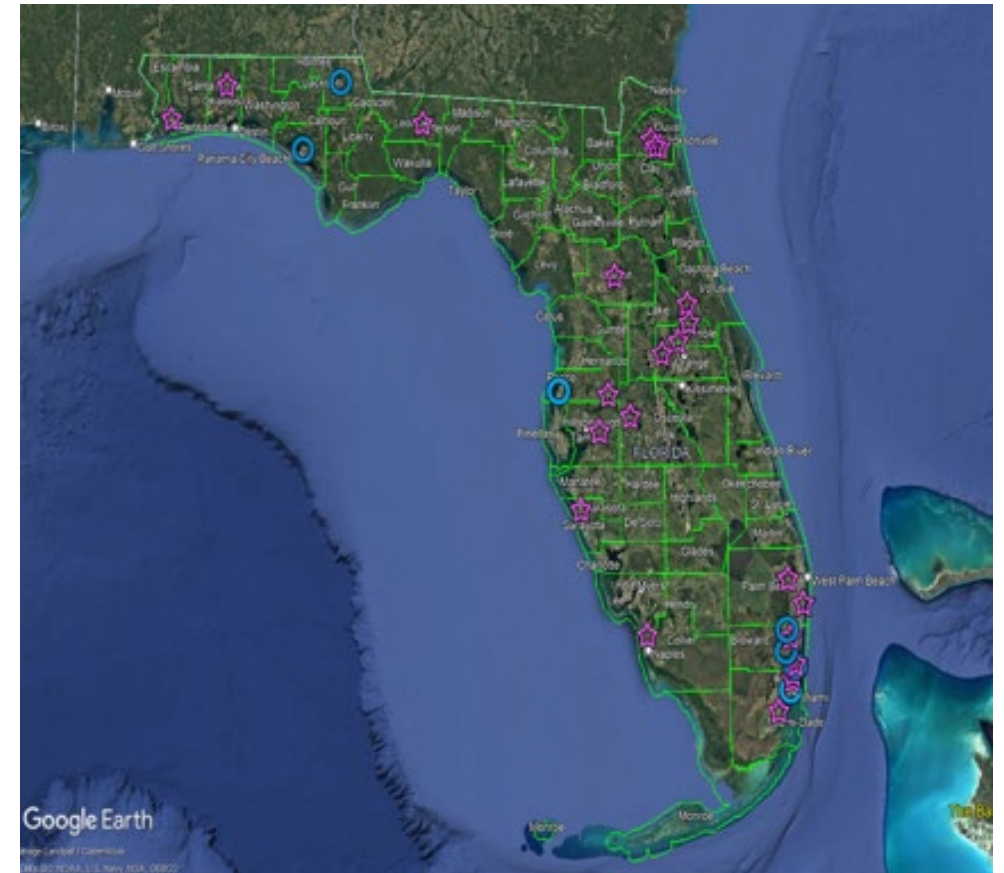
- Inventoried equipment and supplies.
 - Secured a storage unit.
 - Completed inventory using new software.
- Created a loaner agreement ,including:
 - Facility information and staff designees.
 - Equipment information and annual calibration due date.
 - Facility expectations.
- Created a “tip sheet” for birth centers.
- Created a site visit check-list.
- Set-up a training schedule.

Equipment Distribution

Equipment was distributed to:

- Birthing centers: 24
 - OAE*: 17
 - ABR: 7
- Audiology practices: 6
 - ABR: 4
 - Diagnostic ABR: 2

*Otoacoustic emission



Birth Center



Audiology/ENT

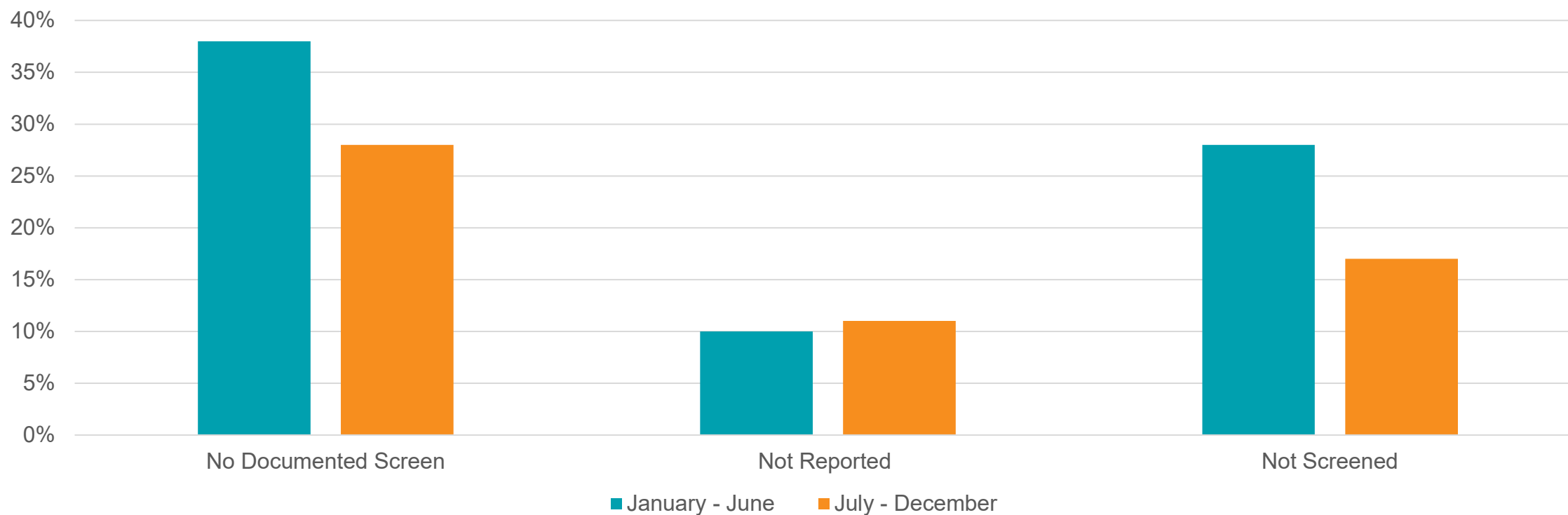
Implementation Challenges

The NBHS Program faced the following challenges during initial implementation:

- Short implementation timeline
- Inclement weather
- Manufacturer fulfillment errors
- Shipping delays
- Schedule conflicts
- Complex new inventory software
- Purchasing process
 - Storage unit rental
 - Supplies

2024 Comparison Data*

2024 Birth Centers
Screening and Reporting Performance Comparison



*Provisional

Next Steps

- Ensure loaner agreement compliance.
 - Conduct biannual check-ins.
 - Verify training requirements are met.
- Monitor reporting completeness.
 - Implement monthly data validation process.
- Manage annual equipment calibration.
- Analyze data on loaned equipment used for homebirth.

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