



# A Statewide Approach to Audiological Support

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# Learner Objectives

- ▶ Participants will be able to identify two ways in which collaboration among multiple state agencies results in effective support for children who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- ▶ Participants will be able to describe two ways to encourage the development of a statewide pediatric audiology community.
- ▶ Participants will be able to list the variety of roles an educational audiologist can fill in order to support statewide service delivery.

# Maine!

- Land area: 30,842.92 square miles
- 2019 Population Estimate: 1,344,212
- Population per square mile: 43.1
  
- Beautiful and remote!



# Maine Newborn Hearing Screening Data

- ▶ 2018 data:
  - ▶ 199 babies referred on the newborn hearing screening
  - ▶ 137 seen for follow-up testing
  - ▶ 23 diagnosed with permanent hearing loss
- ▶ 2017 data:
  - ▶ 231 babies referred on the newborn hearing screening
  - ▶ 180 seen for follow-up testing
  - ▶ 21 diagnosed with permanent hearing loss





# Maine Audiologists

- ▶ Seven Category A sites
  - ▶ Defined as facilities providing full diagnostic audiological evaluation for infants birth to 6 months
  - ▶ 17 audiologists
- ▶ Twenty-one Category B sites
  - ▶ Facilities providing audiological testing procedures for children over 6 months of age
  - ▶ Includes 7 Category A sites listed above
  - ▶ 33 audiologists (includes the 17 audiologists listed above)

# Where are the pediatric audiologists in Maine?



Category A Facilities:  
Bangor (2)  
Lewiston (2)  
Portland (2)  
Waterville (1)

Sedated ABRs offered  
in Waterville, Bangor,  
and Portland

# Where are the pediatric audiologists in Maine?



## Category B Facilities:

- Augusta (1)
- Bangor (2)
- Bath (1)
- Belfast (2)
- Biddeford (2)
- Bridgton (1)
- Kittery (1)
- Lewiston (2)
- Norway (1)
- Portland (5)
- Presque Isle (2)
- Waterville (1)

# Key State Agencies Supporting Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- ▶ Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- ▶ Child Development Services
- ▶ Maine Newborn Hearing Program



# Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- ▶ Provides a variety of programs across the state for children who are deaf and hard of hearing and their families, including:
  - ▶ Parent-infant-toddler program
  - ▶ Bilingual/Bimodal Preschool
  - ▶ K-12 Mainstream Program
  - ▶ Early Childhood and Family Services Program
  - ▶ Public School Outreach Program



# MECDHH Relationships

- ▶ MECDHH and CDS have a Memorandum of Understanding
  - ▶ MECDHH teachers of the deaf embedded in CDS sites across the state
  - ▶ MECDHH support of the Hearing Assistive Technology Program
- ▶ MECDHH holds the federal HRSA grant for the state of Maine
  - ▶ Funds positions supporting the Maine Newborn Hearing Program, including a Parent Consultant and Audiology Consultant



# Role of the MECDHH Statewide Educational Audiologist

- Direct support of MECDHH programs, staff, and students
- Providing management and coordination of Child Development Services' Hearing Assistive Technology Program
- Serving as the Audiology Consultant to the Maine Newborn Hearing Program





# MECDHH Responsibilities

- ▶ Providing direct consultation to itinerant teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing throughout the state, serving students birth to 21
  - ▶ Audiology, hearing technology, classroom acoustics
  - ▶ Building strengths among team members through training
  - ▶ Supporting TODs located throughout the state to better ensure consistency of services provided statewide, regardless of proximity to educational audiologist
- ▶ Providing consultation and evaluation to students according to IFSP/IEP determination
- ▶ Fitting and verification of remote microphone technology
- ▶ Attending IEP and 504 meetings as requested to support the development of appropriate educational plans
- ▶ Serving as a member of the Statewide Education and Family Services Coordination Team
- ▶ Serving as a member of the Community of Practice

# Child Development Services Responsibilities

- ▶ Management of the statewide Hearing Assistive Technology program for children enrolled in CDS services
  - ▶ Provision of remote microphone systems, hearing aids, and accessories as determined by IFSP/IEP teams
  - ▶ Oversight of hearing aid loaner bank program
- ▶ Development of audiology service guidelines
- ▶ Serving as a liaison between contracted audiology providers and state leadership



# Maine Newborn Hearing Program Responsibilities



- Oversight of Pediatric Audiology Workgroup
- Serving as the audiology consultant for MNHP staff, including coordinator and parent consultant
- Revision of state's risk monitoring protocol for progressive hearing loss
- Development of monitoring frequency protocol
- Revision of MNHP pediatric audiology guidelines
- Revision of hearing loss related literature given to families

# Pediatric Audiology Workgroup

- ▶ All audiologists from Category A and Category B sites, as well as educational audiologists in the state, are invited to each meeting
- ▶ Purpose of these meetings is to promote collaboration, disseminate pertinent information, and allow providers to stay informed about what is happening in the community
- ▶ To encourage attendance:
  - ▶ In-person CEU opportunities
  - ▶ AAA Journal Club
  - ▶ Liberal use of distance technology
  - ▶ Free CEUs, free food 😊



# Other Duties



- ▶ Legislative Taskforce for Kindergarten Readiness
  - ▶ L.D. 642, "An Act Regarding Kindergarten Readiness for Children Who Are Deaf And Hard of Hearing"
  - ▶ Taskforce charged with developing parent portfolio tracking language development against known language milestones, for all children and families regardless of communication modality
- ▶ Member, Maine Newborn Hearing Program Advisory Board
- ▶ Cytomegalovirus (CMV) workgroup
  - ▶ Focus on educating providers and expectant mothers on prevention of CMV
  - ▶ Also investigating possibility of targeted screening for CMV in newborns
- ▶ Supporting Annual Maine Hands and Voices Conference
  - ▶ Audiology track, CEUs



# Benefits

- ▶ System-level support
- ▶ Ease of collaboration across agencies
  - ▶ Allows support of families in determining “next steps” for receiving services
  - ▶ Supporting students as they transition from early childhood services to Kindergarten
- ▶ Able to pull from multiple perspectives to support children and families as well as providers
- ▶ Able to serve as a “content area expert” for agencies not currently employing audiologists
  - ▶ Trainings, webinars
  - ▶ Providing opinions to guide policy development

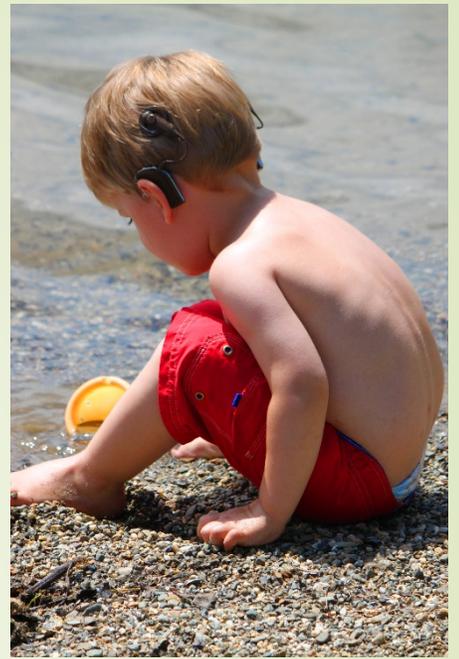


# Challenges/Considerations

- ▶ Time!
  - ▶ Limited direct services with children/families
  - ▶ Collaboration with many different personalities
  - ▶ Maintaining positive relationships
  - ▶ Geography/Distance
  - ▶ Number of providers
  - ▶ Being the “problem solver”
- 

# Next Steps/Ongoing Work

- ▶ Teleaudiology
  - ▶ Supporting families outside of southern Maine
  - ▶ Improving lost-to-follow-up data in the state
- ▶ Investigation of grant funding to support expansion of services
  - ▶ Cochlear implant programming
- ▶ Continued work developing/refining policies related to pediatric audiology
- ▶ Continuing to support growth of pediatric audiologists in the state through consultation, training, and professional development





Questions?





# References

- ▶ US Census Bureau, QuickFacts: Maine, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/ME>
- ▶ EHDI Program Data: Banger, Anne, Maine Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator, personal communication