



June 28, 2021

Chairman Patrick Browne
Pennsylvania Senate Appropriations Committee
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman Browne and Members of the Committee:

We write on behalf of the membership of the American Cochlear Implant Alliance to urge you to support SB 709, the *CMV Education and Newborn Testing Act*. We are glad that the Act not only improves awareness of congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV), but also supports screening after an infant has failed the newborn hearing screening or at the parents' request. CMV is the most common viral infection in infants, and the leading non-genetic cause of hearing loss, that infants are born with in the United States, but only 9% of pregnant women are aware of the potential impact. Passage of this bill will ensure better education and faster medical and developmental intervention for infants born with CMV.

Congenital CMV is a common cause of infant morbidity, childhood hearing loss and other significant neurodevelopmental problems. However, early identification of CMV can lead to improved outcomes in neurologic, developmental, and hearing outcomes as it is treatable if identified early, with a potential for significant savings of societal health care and educational dollars. This bill would help ensure that all children who fail the initial screening test are automatically tested for CMV allowing parents/guardians and their medical team to quickly access treatment options moving forward. In addition, it aims to provide update-to-date, medically sound information to pregnant women and others.

Thank you for your support on this critical issue and for supporting efforts of the State of Pennsylvania to support our most medically fragile citizens. Thank you for supporting SB 709.

Sincerely,

Nichole Westin
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American Cochlear Implant Alliance
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