



For Immediate Release – December 9, 2021

American Cochlear Implant Alliance Applauds Passage of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2021 in the U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C.: Last night, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 5561, the “Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2021,” on a 410-17 vote. The bill would reauthorize the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and NIH. Importantly it would require a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study analyzing how information disseminated by state EHDI programs are relied upon by parents and identify ways to address disparities in outreach to families. ACI Alliance recently reviewed the state EHDI websites and found significant variation in the critical information provided via these important electronic information sources.

ACI Alliance State Champions and Cochlear Implant Consumer Advocacy Network (CI CAN) members also reached out directly to their representatives asking them to support the reauthorization. This effort underscores the importance of the EHDI program as highlighted by the large number of State Champions and CI CAN members who responded to the action alert.

The EHDI Act supports the critical Universal Newborn Hearing Screening program and the supporting family focused early intervention programs. According to the CDC, in 2019 over 98% of infants were screened for hearing loss. The outcomes of the screen allows parents and guardians to make decisions and access medical and early intervention support at a much earlier date than had been the case in the past. Access to early intervention can help children who are deaf and hard of hearing meet age-appropriate language, social, and developmental milestones.

Work now moves to the Senate and ACI Alliance and other hearing health organizations will continue to push for improved funding for the HRSA component of the legislation. We thank Reps. Brett Guthrie (R-KY) and Doris Matsui (D-CA) who introduced this legislation that will continue to fund the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program and the family focused early intervention services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

ACI Alliance is a not-for-profit membership organization created with the purpose of eliminating barriers to cochlear implantation by sponsoring research, driving heightened awareness and advocating for improved access to cochlear implants for patients of all ages across the US.

For more information on ACI Alliance advocacy visit www.acialliance.org/page/AdvocacyInitiatives
For more information on EHDI visit www.acialliance.org/page/EarlyIntervention

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