

PRESS RELEASE

UBMC RECEIVES AWARD FOR NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING

Utah EHDI Director's Trophy awarded to UBMC's OB Department

November 3, 2011: Each year, the Utah Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Team evaluates hospital performance as it relates to newborn hearing screening. For the year 2011, **Uintah Basin Medical Center's Newborn Hearing Screening Program** has been awarded the **Utah EHDI Director's Trophy**.

This is the sixth year that the State has given the EHDI award. Uintah Basin Medical Center was chosen out of 46 hospital/birthing centers throughout the state.

For the period of January through September of 2011, UBMC had an inpatient passing rate of 99.24%, with an outpatient completion rate of 100%. This means that 99% of newborns passed their first hearing screen, and that the 1% needing further testing were all completed within one month.

UBMC's Newborn Hearing Screening Program is considered the premier hospital for newborn hearing screening because it far exceeds minimal standards as set by the Utah Advisory Committee on Newborn Hearing Screening. This award represents the best of the best in Utah newborn hearing screening.

UBMC has been participating with The National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) since 1997. UBMC has been asked to help with several software developments and works closely with NCHAM to continue to improve the screening and tracking processes.

The goal of NCHAM at Utah State University is to ensure that all infants and toddlers with hearing loss are identified as early as possible and provided with timely and appropriate audiological, educational, and medical intervention. NCHAM's research, training, and technical assistance activities contribute to this goal by working to achieve the following objectives:

- Every child born with a hearing loss is identified before 3 months of age and provided with timely and appropriate intervention by 6 months of age.
- Every family of an infant with hearing loss receives culturally-competent family support as desired.
- All newborns have a "medical home."

- State Departments of Health have effective newborn hearing screening tracking and data management systems which are linked with other relevant public health information systems.

An invisible handicap, hearing loss present at birth commonly goes undetected until delays in language development have become so acute that parents and professionals are eventually led to investigate a child's ability to hear. Thus, the average age of identification in the U.S. has been 2-1/2 years, with milder losses frequently not recognized until a child enters school. The implications of this finding are especially significant when one considers that language acquisition actually begins at birth and progresses very rapidly during the first three years of life. Deprived of critical language learning opportunities by an unidentified hearing loss, most children with hearing loss experience concomitant disruptions in social, emotional, cognitive, and academic growth.

Christy Thacker and her staff of screeners at UBMC are to be commended for the exemplary work they are doing on behalf of Utah newborns and their families.

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Uintah Basin Healthcare is a community not-for-profit healthcare system, serving the Uintah Basin since 1944. Today, Uintah Basin Healthcare is the largest and most comprehensive rural-based healthcare system in the state of Utah.

