

Newborn Hearing Screening (NBHS)

Program Certification Protocols



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

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NBHS Certification Requirements

The Texas Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program (TEHDI) certifies Newborn Hearing Screening (NBHS) programs. To become a certified NBHS Program, a facility must follow specific rules and standards set by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). DSHS establishes these standards based on [Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 47.004](#). Certification applies to hospitals and birth centers licensed under Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 241 and [244](#).

DSHS NBHS Certification shows the facility meets all standards set by the state. The following are the minimum standards for Texas NBHS programs. A certified NBHS program must:

1. Use only DSHS-[approved hearing screening equipment](#);
2. Use qualified staff (defined in #6) for newborn hearing screenings;
3. Use the TEHDI Management Information System (MIS) to keep and report newborn hearing screening data electronically to DSHS for every baby born at the facility;
4. Provide DSHS TEHDI educational material to the baby's family and all health care providers;
5. Provide follow-up information to families of babies who do not pass the hearing screening such as outpatient screening, diagnostic evaluations, and early childhood intervention services (ECI); and
6. Be managed by a qualified medical professional such as:
 - a. Physician
 - b. Audiologist
 - c. Registered nurse
 - d. Physician assistant

NBHS Program Certification Process

The following sections outline the NBHS program certification process. To become certified or renew a program's certification, the facility must have:

1. A current user profile(s) in the TEHDI MIS;
2. A DSHS-approved parental consent form to share individually identifying information;
3. A list of NBHS staff and supervisors;
4. Contact information for executive leadership and the nursery director;
5. A training log showing the dates staff completed training for both the TEHDI MIS and the hospital's specific screening training;
6. Details about the hearing screening equipment and annual validation checks showing calibrations were completed;
7. A written plan explaining the program's process for screening babies, including protocols followed if equipment stops working;
8. Verification that screening results were given to parents;
9. DSHS TEHDI-approved educational materials for families and health care providers;
10. A process for referring babies who do not pass their screenings to follow-up outpatient appointments, diagnostic evaluations with a children's hearing specialist, or early intervention services for confirmed hearing loss; and
11. Additional information as requested by DSHS.

Certification Classifications

TEHDI uses the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing 2019 ([JCIH 2019](#)) Position Statement to develop the certification metric standards. TEHDI looks at individual program performance data for each metric to decide what certification classification it should receive as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: NBHS Program Certification Classifications

Certification Classifications	Certification Cycle
Preliminary (new screening programs)	After six months of operational data is accumulated
Pending	Every six months, until decertified
Provisional	Every six months
Standard	Every six months
Distinguished	Every six months

If a program is at *Preliminary*, *Pending*, or *Provisional* classification; the highest level it can reach at the next review cycle is *Standard*. The program cannot reach *Distinguished* level until it exceeds *Standard* level classification for at least 6 months or one full review cycle.

Preliminary

TEHDI assigns brand-new NBHS programs as *Preliminary*. After the program has been screening and entering data in the TEHDI MIS for a minimum of six months, they are eligible for their first certification review. TEHDI will review the program's latest six months of performance data during the next scheduled certification cycle (see [Certification Cycles](#)).

Pending

TEHDI assigns *Pending* to programs that do not complete the required online certification survey. TEHDI does not review a *Pending* program's performance data. See the [Certification Survey](#) section.

If a program stays at *Pending* for two consecutive certification cycles, it could lose its certification. The program decertification process is located in the [Decertification](#) section.

Provisional

TEHDI assigns *Provisional* to programs that score below standard on certification metrics. The program must improve its performance before the next certification cycle to reach *Standard* level. TEHDI helps the program make these improvements. When a program earns two consecutive *Provisional* classifications, the program risks losing its certification through [decertification](#).

Standard

TEHDI assigns *Standard* to programs that score “on level” for certification metrics. A *Standard* program meets TEHDI requirements in providing newborn hearing screening services.

Distinguished

Distinguished is the highest classification a NBHS program can receive. A *Distinguished* program shows exceptional performance in providing newborn hearing screening services.

Champion

TEHDI acknowledges facilities often put more effort into their NBHS programs. DSHS wants to recognize these high performing facilities. If a facility wants *Champion* recognition for its outstanding work, they can fill out a form showing how they meet and exceed select standards set by TEHDI. TEHDI must receive this form at the time of certification. TEHDI will review the form and announce *Champion* facilities when certification classifications are assigned.

Certification

Certification Cycles

TEHDI certifies NBHS programs twice a year, in January and July. At the beginning of each cycle, TEHDI emails a survey link to the programs. It is important that TEHDI has the current email addresses for the NBHS program manager, supervisor, and executive staff who may respond.

Certification Procedure

TEHDI bases each NBHS program's certification on two things:

- 1. Survey:** The program completes an online survey about how they follow state rules and best practices; and
- 2. Data Review:** TEHDI checks the program's newborn hearing records in the TEHDI MIS. TEHDI considers the number of babies screened and if timely follow-up occurred. The program's score determines the certification level. See the [Certification Metrics](#).

The certification process includes:

Notification

TEHDI will email the program manager and supervisor at least 30 days before their certification is due. This email includes a link to an online survey. The program earns certification only after it completes the survey by the due date. See the [Certification Survey](#).

Data Analysis

After the program completes the survey, TEHDI and the MIS vendor will review the last six months of the program's TEHDI MIS newborn hearing screening records.

Classification Calculation Score

TEHDI sets the guidelines (See the [Certification Metrics](#), Table 2) used to check a program's performance and calculate their certification score.

TEHDI calculates certification classification scores:

- In percentages for each individual metric based on the program's data; and
- In metric scores for an overall average, rounded to the nearest whole number. This overall average decides the program's certification classification rating.

Bi-Monthly Assistance Meeting Webinar Attendance

Birth facilities and hearing screeners can get information, training, and support through the Bi-monthly Assistance Meeting (BAM). TEHDI will email the annual schedule to programs at the beginning of each calendar year. See [BAM Attendance](#).

TEHDI reviews a program's attendance at these meetings over the last 12 months to inform certification.

Certification Report

After each certification review, TEHDI sends an email with the results to the program supervisor. This report includes the program's:

- Overall score and certification classification;
- Facility scores for each individual metric; and
- Overall state scores for each individual metric.

Comparing facility scores to the state scores can help a program find areas where it can improve.

Website listing

After each certification review, TEHDI will post distinguished NBHS program certification statuses on the DSHS TEHDI [website](#). If a program has concerns about its assigned status or metric scores, they can email tehdi@dshs.texas.gov.

Certification Metrics

TEHDI will issue a certification report for NBHS programs using the TEHDI NBHS metrics listed below.

Table 2: TEHDI NBHS Metrics in percentages

D = Distinguished; S = Standard; and P = Provisional	D (%)	S (%)	P (%)
Metric 1 (weighted x2): All newborns have a screen prior to discharge.	98	95	<95
Metric 2 (weighted x2): Records containing parent contact information for newborns and infants who do not pass the hearing screen.	95	90	<90
Metric 3 (weighted x2): Patient records that contain pediatrician/primary care provider (PCP) contact information for babies who do not pass the birth screen.	95	90	<90
Metric 4 (weighted x1): All initial birth screen results must be uploaded into TEHDI MIS within five (5) calendar days of the date of the initial birth screen.	95	90	<90
Metric 5 (weighted x2): All newborns requiring an outpatient follow-up screening must contain an outpatient provider on the TEHDI MIS record.	95	90	<90
Metric 6 (weighted x1): All newborns requiring an audiological diagnostic evaluation must contain an audiology provider on the TEHDI MIS record.	90	85	<85
Metric 7 (weighted x1): Facility representation/attendance at Bi-monthly Assistance Meetings (BAM) held every other month.	99	98	<98
Metric 8 (weighted x1): The percentage of MIS records to DSHS vital statistic birth records.	80	50	<50

Additional Measures

The certification report includes additional information on how well the facility is performing with other important performance measures. TEHDI scores each measure, but these scores do not affect the certification classification status. They are provided so a facility can better monitor and improve their overall performance.

Measure 1: Patient records with “do not pass” results on the outpatient follow-up screen/rescreen are referred to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI).

Measure 2: The percentage of newborns who passed the initial birth screen with at least one risk factor for late onset hearing loss are entered into the TEHDI MIS record.

Measure 3: Patient records with at least one risk factor for late onset hearing loss include complete parent contact information.

Measure 4: Patient records who missed having their initial birth hearing screen include complete parent contact information.

Measure 5: Percent of newborns who received the birth screen prior to discharge.

Bi-monthly Assistance Meeting (BAM)

Attendance

DSHS typically schedules BAMs for two days with varying times to accommodate schedules. Example topics may include TEHDI MIS changes, tutorials, and tips. NBHS staff can also ask questions directly to TEHDI and the MIS vendor during BAMs.

NBHS staff must register to attend BAMs. Staff members who work at more than one facility can only register to represent one entity at the BAM. New staff are automatically registered to attend but must designate which facility they will represent. The MIS vendor will send an email notification reminder to staff registered to attend on the day of each BAM.

TEHDI documents staff who attend the BAM as part of certification. The NBHS staff will receive an official confirmation email after the BAM meeting that says, "Thanks for attending" or "Sorry you could not attend the BAM for which you registered." If a NBHS staff receives the "Sorry you could not attend" email by mistake, it is important to forward it with a written meeting summary to the MIS vendor so TEHDI can credit the facility's attendance.

Certification Survey

TEHDI will send an email with a link to an online survey to the NBHS program contacts 60 days before certification. NBHS programs must complete the survey within 30 days of receiving it.

Missed Survey and Risk of Losing Certification

TEHDI does not extend survey deadlines. If an NBHS program misses the survey deadline, TEHDI will not evaluate the program's data for the current cycle and will officially reclassify the program as *Pending* certification. A *Pending* program must wait until the next certification cycle and complete the certification survey to start the renewal process.

If a program misses the certification survey for two consecutive cycles, TEHDI will issue a formal letter called "Notice for Risk of Decertification." This means a program is at risk of losing its certification status.

Decertification Process

Decertification is when an NBHS program repeatedly does not meet certification standards. If certification standards are not met, the NBHS program risks losing TEHDI certification designation.

A decertified program cannot perform newborn hearing screens. To make sure all babies get a birth hearing screen, the decertified facility must send the babies to another certified facility to perform hearing screenings.

Initial Notice

If a program is *Pending* or *Provisional* for two consecutive cycles, TEHDI will send an initial Notice of Decertification to the NBHS program manager, program supervisor, and facility executive leadership.

Risk of Decertification Notice

If a program receives a third *Provisional* classification after two consecutive *Provisional* scores, TEHDI will send a Notice for Risk of Decertification. This notice will explain the specific data concerns the NBHS facility needs to correct. TEHDI may schedule a meeting with the program and facility leaders to discuss the concerns and decide on a path forward. The program and facility can also request a meeting.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

If a program does not resolve the identified issues before the next certification cycle, TEHDI will issue a PIP. The program must respond to the PIP within 30 calendar days. This response must explain exactly how the program will meet the requirements outlined in the PIP.

TEHDI will review the PIP response.

- If TEHDI approves the PIP, the NBHS program's status becomes *Pending*.
- TEHDI will send unapproved PIP plans to the last step and issue a Notice of Decertification.
- If the program does not respond to the PIP within the 30-day deadline, TEHDI will issue a Notice of Decertification.

- If a program does not answer the certification survey for two consecutive certification cycles, TEHDI will skip the decertification process steps and immediately issue a Notice for Risk of Decertification.

Recertification Process

A decertified NBHS program can reapply for certification by emailing tehdi@dshs.texas.gov.

TEHDI will work with the NBHS program and issue a PIP with a new plan. The program must respond by showing how it will meet the requirements.

When the program's response meets the new PIP requirements, TEHDI will approve the plan and recertify the program. During the next certification cycle, TEHDI will assign the program a *Pending* classification. TEHDI will not classify the program for a higher level until the program fully meets all certification requirements.

Technical Assistance

TEHDI and MIS vendor subject matter experts provide technical assistance (TA) to help NBHS programs improve. This is a free educational resource available to any NBHS program, regardless of certification classification. TA can include scheduled teleconference calls, onsite visits, online training, and specific recommendations to fix identified issues.

Mandatory TA

TEHDI will provide mandatory TA to *Provisional* programs. The program must schedule the mandatory TA within 30 days of getting the certification report. The TA must happen before the next certification cycle. The goal is to help the program reach a standard certification by the next review. If a *Provisional* program does not do the mandatory TA, TEHDI will issue a Risk of Decertification Notice warning the program could lose its certification.

Certification Extension Request

Who Can Apply For an Extension

An NBHS program can request to reschedule its certification review on two conditions:

- The program is experiencing issues or facing problems that could affect its certification status; and
- The program has a *Standard* or *Distinguished* certification classification. Extension requests are not available to *Pending* or *Provisional* programs.

How to Apply For an Extension

The program must:

- Report the issue(s) to TEHDI within 30 days of when it occurred;
- Explain detailed steps the facility took to fix the problem; and
- Give the date the NBHS program resolved the issue, or, if the issue continues, the date the program expects resolution.

NBHS Report Card

The NBHS Report Card is a snapshot review of the facility's last two months of TEHDI MIS records and shows how well the facility is performing on certification metrics. The MIS vendor will email the report card to the NBHS program contact each month.

NBHS programs can look at the report card to see how well they are doing. They can check whether babies who missed their hearing screening were tracked, and if follow-up screenings were scheduled and completed. Programs can also see how accurately they documented a baby's hearing loss risk factor(s) in the TEHDI MIS record.

In addition, there are measures on the report card that show how well a facility is performing. Measures are not part of certification. A program can use them to improve their program's internal processes.

Searches in MIS

The MIS vendor created eScreeners Plus (eSP) search criteria, also known as eSP filters, for the TEHDI certification metrics. The NBHS program can use these filters regularly to assess their performance.

TEHDI MIS users can use search filters to find records that need correction. Instructional videos are available on the TEHDI MIS under the Training Video Library and a PDF document is also available by emailing tehdi@dshs.texas.gov.

Appendix

Definitions

Bi-monthly Assistance Meetings (BAM): TEHDI-led educational webinars for NBHS program staff held every other month.

Certification: A free process for officially evaluating NBHS programs against specific DSHS TEHDI standards and guidelines.

Certification Classifications: Category levels assigned to NBHS programs after evaluation against DSHS TEHDI standards and guidelines (*Preliminary, Pending, Provisional, Standard, and Distinguished*).

Certification Cycle: Six-month period used for a certification review. There are two cycles a year: January to June and July to December. At the end of each cycle, TEHDI gives each NBHS program their certification classification.

Certification Metrics: Performance data used by TEHDI to evaluate NBHS programs during the certification process.

Champion: A recognition awarded to outstanding NBHS programs.

Diagnostic Evaluation: Comprehensive hearing tests to confirm hearing loss. It is performed by a hearing specialist known as an audiologist.

Distinguished: A certification classification recognizing programs with the highest level of performance in newborn hearing screening best practices.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI): A support system for young children, birth to 36 months at risk for developmental delays or disabilities. ECI supports families, to maximize the child's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development.

eSP (eScreeners Plus): A cloud-based database for the TEHDI MIS software application and all training materials.

Follow-up or Outpatient Hearing Screening: A follow-up hearing screen typically conducted in an outpatient setting. It is required if the infant missed the initial birth screen, or the initial birth screen results indicate a follow-up screen is needed.

Hearing Screening Equipment: Devices used to assess hearing.

Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH): A group of professional organizations that sets infant hearing screening and intervention program best practices and standards.

Management Information System (MIS): A computer system used by TEHDI to track and manage all data related to newborn hearing screenings.

Missed: When a baby does not receive a hearing screen.

Newborn Hearing Screening (NBHS): A screening process to check the hearing of newborns.

Parental Consent Form: A legal form parents sign to allow or to not allow their newborn's individually identifying information to be shared with DSHS TEHDI and other intervention service providers.

Parent Contact Information: Name, phone number, email, mailing address, and other required information recorded in the baby's TEHDI MIS record to communicate results and information to a newborn's parents.

Pending: A certification classification assigned to programs that did not complete the required certification survey and are at risk of decertification.

Preliminary: The initial certification classification assigned to a new newborn hearing screening program.

Primary Care Provider (PCP): The medical professional responsible for the baby's health care, either a pediatrician or family doctor.

Provisional: A certification classification assigned to programs that are below standard on certification metrics.

Recertification: The process of renewing a program's certification to maintain compliance with TEHDI standards and guidelines.

Referral: A referral occurs when a hospital or doctor sends a patient to another medical provider for extra help or special care. A facility must refer a newborn who did not pass a hearing screen to further testing or services.

Risk Factor for Late Onset Hearing Loss: A condition that increases the chances of a child developing hearing loss later in life, even if they pass the initial screening.

Standard: A certification classification assigned to programs meeting the certification metrics and TEHDI guidelines.

Technical Assistance (TA): Targeted educational assistance and support provided by TEHDI to a NBHS program. It is a collaborative and effective method for program improvement.

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS): The state agency in charge of protecting and promoting public health in Texas.

Texas Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (TEHDI): The Texas Department of State Health Services program overseeing newborn hearing screening, tracking, and services.

TEHDI Management Information System (TEHDI MIS): A tracking and surveillance system used to record newborn hearing screening results, referrals, audiological evaluations, and intervention services.

Vital Statistic Birth Record: A child's birth record certificate maintained by the state of Texas Vital Statistics Section.

General Information Page

The Texas Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (TEHDI) program oversees the newborn hearing program required for all newborns in Texas. TEHDI provides guidance and oversight on screening, tracking, and intervention. The law requires all babies born in Texas to receive a hearing screening, proper intervention, and referrals to services if suspected or diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing.



Our Goals

- Provide a system and technical assistance to licensed birth facilities and other hearing services providers.
- Host a web-based system for reporting and tracking newborn hearing information known as the Texas Early Hearing Detection and Intervention management information system (TEHDI MIS).
- Certify birth facilities and monitor certification standards for newborn hearing screening programs.
- Ensure newborns who are diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing receive follow-up and intervention services.

Our Mission

The TEHDI program is dedicated to safeguarding deaf or hard of hearing newborns and identifying young children early to receive intervention services. National standards call for a hearing screening no later than one month of age, a diagnosis no later than three months of age for infants not passing the screening, and enrollment in intervention no later than six months of age for children identified as D/HH. This is known as the 1-3-6 Plan. When left undetected, hearing loss can delay speech, language, social, and emotional development in children.

Contact Information

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Texas Early Hearing Detection and Intervention

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