

Newborn Hearing Screening Program Certification Protocols

Texas Early Hearing Detection and
Intervention Program

Last revised: 11/17/2025

Newborn Hearing Screening (NBHS) Program Certification Protocols

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A. 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](#).

Certification shows the facility is meeting all standards set by the state. The following are the minimum standards for Texas Newborn Hearing Screening programs.

A certified NBHS program must:

1. Use only Department of State Health Services [approved hearing screening equipment](#);
2. Use qualified staff 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 your facility;
4. Provide DSHS TEHDI educational material to the baby's family, all health care providers, and doctors in their care;
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; or
 - d) Physician assistant.

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B. NBHS Program Certification Process

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

1. A current user profile(s) in the TEHDI MIS;
2. A parental consent form to share individually identifying information approved by DSHS;
3. A list of newborn hearing screening staff and supervisors;
4. Contact information for executive leadership and the nursery director;
5. A training log showing the dates your staff completed training for both the TEHDI MIS and your hospital's specific screening training;
6. Details about the hearing screening equipment and annual validation checks are completed (calibration);
7. A written plan explaining your program's process for screening babies, including protocols followed if equipment stops working;
8. Verification that screening results are given to parents;
9. DSHS TEHDI-approved educational materials for families and healthcare 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. Any other information DSHS may request.

C. Certification Classifications

TEHDI uses the Joint Committee on Infant Hearing 2019 ([JCIH 2019](#)) Position Statement to develop the metric standards for certification. 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

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

Preliminary: TEHDI assigns brand-new newborn hearing screening 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.

Pending: TEHDI assigns Pending to programs that do not complete the required online certification survey. TEHDI does not review the Pending program's performance data. See [Section I](#) within this document, Certification Survey.

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

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 Provisionals, 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 knows 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.

D. Certification Cycles

TEHDI certifies newborn hearing screening 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.

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E. 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 occurs. The program's score determines the certification level. See Certification Metrics in [Section F](#).

The certification process includes:

- 1. 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 [Section I](#), Certification Survey.
- 2. Data Analysis:** After the program completes the survey, TEHDI and the MIS vendor will review the last six months of the program's newborn hearing screening records in the TEHDI MIS.
- 3. Classification Calculation Score:** TEHDI makes the guidelines (Section F. Certification Metrics, [Table 2](#)) used to check a program's performance and to calculate their certification score.

TEHDI calculates certification classification scores this way:

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

4. Bi-Monthly Assistance Meeting (BAM) Webinar Attendance:

Birth facilities and hearing screeners can get information, training, and support through the BAM. TEHDI will email the annual schedule to programs at the beginning of each year. See Section H, BAM Attendance.

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

5. 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.

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

6. Website listing: After each certification review, TEHDI will post newborn hearing screening programs' 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.

F. 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 TEHDI MIS records have complete parent contact information.	98	95	<95
Metric 2 (weighted x2): All newborns who did not pass or missed the birth screen, or who have an identified risk factor have a PCP on the TEHDI MIS record.	95	90	<90
Metric 3 (weighted x2): All newborns have a birth screen prior to discharge.	98	95	<95
Metric 4 (weighted x1): All initial birth screen results are uploaded to the TEHDI MIS within five calendar days of the date of the birth screen.	98	95	<95
Metric 5 (weighted x2): All newborns requiring outpatient follow-up screening have an outpatient provider on the TEHDI MIS record.	90	85	<85
Metric 6 (weighted x1): All outpatient follow-up screen results are uploaded to the TEHDI MIS within five calendar days of the date of the outpatient follow-up screen.	98	95	<95
Metric 7 (weighted x1): All newborns who do not pass the outpatient follow-up screen have an ECI referral on the TEHDI MIS record.	95	90	<90
Metric 8 (weighted x1): All newborns requiring audiological diagnostic evaluation have an audiology provider on the TEHDI MIS record.	95	90	<90

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D = Distinguished; S = Standard; and P = Provisional	D (%)	S (%)	P (%)
Metric 9 (weighted x1): The number of TEHDI MIS records matches the number of birth records reported to DSHS Texas Vital Statistics.	99	98	<98
Metric 10 (weighted x1): A person(s) from the facility attends the Bi-Monthly Assistance Meeting (BAM) held every other month.	80	50	<50

G. Additional Measures (Not Used for Certification Classification)

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 status. They are provided so a facility can better monitor and improve their overall performance.

Measure 1: Percentage of newborns who pass the initial birth screen with at least one risk factor for late onset hearing loss in the TEHDI MIS record.

Measure 2: Percentage of newborns with at least one risk factor for late onset hearing loss who have complete parent contact information in the TEHDI MIS record.

Measure 3: Percentage of newborns who miss the initial birth screen who have complete parent contact information in the TEHDI MIS record.

Measure 4: Percentage of newborns who pass the initial birth screen prior to discharge.

Measure 5: Percentage of newborns requiring outpatient follow-up screening who have the outpatient follow-up screen completed, and the result entered in the TEHDI MIS record before the baby is one month of age (≤ 30 days).

Measure 6: Percentage of newborns requiring audiological evaluation who have a diagnostic audiology provider name added to the TEHDI MIS record within five calendar days of the outpatient follow-up screen date for well babies or the final inpatient screen date for neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) babies.

H. Bi-monthly Assistance Meeting (BAM) Attendance

A BAM is typically scheduled for the third Wednesday and Thursday of the month at 10:00am and 4:00pm central standard time, respectively, and example topics discussed include changes, tutorials, and tips in using the TEHDI MIS. You can also ask questions directly to TEHDI and the MIS vendor during BAMs.

Facility 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. The MIS vendor

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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. You will receive an official confirmation email after the meeting that says, "Thanks for attending" or "Sorry, you could not attend the BAM for which you registered." If you receive the "Sorry you could not attend" email by mistake, it is important you forward it with a written meeting summary to the MIS vendor so they can credit your attendance.

I. Certification Survey

TEHDI will send an email with a link to an online survey to the facility 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.

J. Decertification Process

Decertification is when an NBHS program repeatedly does not meet certification standards. They risk losing their certification designation.

A decertified program cannot perform newborn hearing screens. To make sure all babies get a birth screen and not stop care, the decertified facility must send the babies to another certified facility to do 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 provisional scores, TEHDI will send a Risk of Decertification Notice. This notice will explain specific data concerns to correct. TEHDI may schedule a meeting with the program and facility leaders to discuss the concerns and decide on a path forward.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP): If a program does not resolve the identified issues before the next certification cycle, TEHDI will issue a Performance Improvement Plan (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.

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TEHDI will review the PIP response. If TEHDI approves the PIP, TEHDI will change the NBHS program's status to 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 certification cycles in a row, TEHDI will skip the decertification process steps and immediately issue a Notice for Risk of Decertification.

K. 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 meets all full certification requirements.

L. 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 screening program, regardless of certification classification. TA can include scheduled teleconference calls, onsite visits, online trainings, 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 it could lose its certification.

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M. Certification Extension Request

Who Can Apply

A program can request to reschedule its certification review on two (2) 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

The program must:

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

N. 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 see if they tracked babies who missed their hearing screening and if they scheduled and completed a follow-up hearing screen. 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.

O. eSP Searches

The MIS vendor created 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

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P. 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 (2) cycles a year: January to June and July to December. At the end of each cycle, TEHDI gives the 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.

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 the 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.

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Parental Consent Form: A legal form parents sign to allow or to not allow their newborn's individually identifying information to be shared with the state department 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 status assigned to a brand-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 birth facility or healthcare provider refers to a patient who needs specialized services or more support to another healthcare provider, medical specialist or intervention provider. 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 newborn hearing screening 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.