

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## **An Act To Enhance the Newborn Hearing Program**

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §8824, first ¶**, as enacted by PL 1999, c. 647, §2, is amended to read:

The department is authorized to implement a tracking system that provides the information necessary to effectively plan ~~and~~, establish ~~and evaluate~~ a comprehensive system of developmentally appropriate services for newborn ~~children and infants~~ and children up to 3 years of age who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and to ensure that all families are given information regarding the availability of hearing screening for their infants. The services must be designed to reduce the likelihood of associated disabling conditions for these children. The tracking system must be integrated with any national database or similar system developed by the Federal Government.

**Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §8824, sub-§1**, as enacted by PL 1999, c. 647, §2, is amended to read:

**1. Mandatory reporting.** Once the tracking system is operating, all hospitals licensed in the State and other providers of services that have established hearing screening or diagnostic procedures for newborn ~~children and infants~~ and children up to 3 years of age shall report to the department all data on hearing screening, evaluation and diagnoses of ~~newborns and newborn infants~~ and children up to 3 years of age. Reports that are required under this subsection must be submitted at least monthly.

### **SUMMARY**

This bill authorizes the Department of Health and Human Services to collect data necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of services provided to newborns and children up to 3 years of age, including all screening, evaluation and diagnoses made for such children with, or at risk of, hearing loss. The bill also makes uniform the references to newborn infants and children up to 3 years of age.