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**REHABILITATION SERVICES**



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CRS receives Public Health grant to assist with infant hearing tests**

Hearing loss is a common birth abnormality for newborns.

So common, in fact, that legislation requires that every baby be tested for hearing loss as part of a universal newborn hearing screening program.

In Alabama, 5 percent of babies do not pass that initial screening in hospitals, said Amy Strickland, Alabama Department of Public Health newborn hearing screening coordinator.

"Approximately 3,200 to 3,500 babies a year fail the initial assessment," Strickland said.

Those babies are then sent to sites such as Children's Rehabilitation Service ( CRS ) for a follow-up hearing assessment.

To aid in that assessment, CRS recently received a \$116,200 grant from Public Health to update equipment it uses to test infants' hearing.

CRS used the grant money to purchase seven automated brainstem response (ABR) units for the seven CRS audiologists to use in their offices around the state.

The new equipment allows CRS to comply with 2007 Joint Committee on Infant Hearing's Position Statement that recommends the ABR be used for re-screening of infants with hearing loss, said Alice Sette, Au.D, statewide program specialist for audiology.

The units provide a more comprehensive hearing assessment than the otoacoustic emissions test (OAE), which CRS previously used.

Sette said the program is glad to have the updated equipment.

"We're grateful that they were willing to give us the grant and that they partner with us to provide services for Alabama's youngest residents," she said.