

West Virginia Code

Chapter 16, Article 22A. Testing of Newborn Infants for Hearing Impairments.

§16-22A-1. Testing required.

The physician or midwife in attendance at, or present immediately after, a live birth shall perform, or cause to be performed, a test for hearing loss in the infant unless the infant's parents refuse under subsection (c), section three of this article to have the testing performed. For any infant delivered at a nonlicensed facility, including home births, the physician or other health care provider shall inform the parents of the need to obtain testing within the first month of life. The director of the division of health shall prescribe the test or tests to be administered in accordance with this article.

§16-22A-2. Rule making authorized.

The director of the division of health shall propose legislative rules for promulgation in accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code to: (1) Establish a reasonable fee schedule for tests administered pursuant to this article, which shall be used to cover program costs not otherwise covered by federal grant funds specifically secured for this purpose; (2) establish a cost-effective testing protocol based upon available technology and national standards; (3) establish reporting and referral requirements; and (4) establish a date for implementation of the testing protocol, which shall not be later than July 1, 1999.

§16-22A-3. Fees for testing; payment of same.

(a) Testing required under this article shall be a covered benefit reimbursable by all health insurers except for health insurers that offer only supplemental coverage policies or policies which cover only specified diseases. All policies issued pursuant to articles fifteen, sixteen, twenty-four and twenty-five-a of chapter thirty-three of this code shall provide coverage for the testing required under this article.

(b) The Department of Health and Human Resources shall pay for testing required under this article when the newborn infant is eligible for medical assistance under the provisions of section twelve, article five, chapter nine of this code.

(c) In the absence of a third-party payor, the parents of a newborn infant shall be informed of the testing availability and its costs and they may refuse to have the testing performed. Charges for the testing required under this article shall be paid by the hospital or other health care facility where the infant's birth occurred: Provided, That nothing contained in this section may be construed to preclude the hospital or other health care facility from billing the infant's parents directly.

§16-22A-4. Hearing impairment testing advisory committee established.

(a) There is hereby established a West Virginia hearing difficulties testing advisory committee which shall advise the Director of the Division of Health regarding the protocol, validity, monitoring and cost of testing procedures required under this article. This committee is to meet four times per year for the initial two years and on the call of the director thereafter. The director shall serve as the chair and shall appoint 12 members, one representing each of the following groups:

- (1) A representative of the health insurance industry;
- (2) An otolaryngologist or otologist;
- (3) An audiologist with experience in evaluating infants;
- (4) A neonatologist;

- (5) A pediatrician;
- (6) A hospital administrator;
- (7) A speech or language pathologist;
- (8) A teacher or administrative representative from the West Virginia school of the deaf;
- (9) A parent of a deaf or hard of hearing child;
- (10) A representative from the office of early intervention services within the Department of Health and Human Resources;
- (11) A representative from the state Department of Education; and
- (12) A representative from the West Virginia commission for the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

(b) Members of this advisory committee shall serve without compensation. A majority of members constitutes a quorum for the transaction of all business. Members shall serve for two-year terms and may not serve for more than two consecutive terms.