



COBB & DOUGLAS PUBLIC HEALTH

For Immediate Release

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Public Health secures grant to improve children's hearing

MARIETTA, GA, Oct 6, 2011 – Thanks to a \$76,000 grant, Cobb & Douglas Public Health recently purchased hearing screening equipment for its on-site clinics, as well as several pediatric offices within the two-county health district.

The grant was received from the State Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program, Georgia Division of Public Health. The equipment that was purchased will be used to retest area newborns who fail their initial hearing screening.

Every newborn delivered in a Georgia hospital has been screened for hearing loss prior to discharge since 1999. Babies who fail their initial screening need a second screening, which takes five to ten minutes. These screenings are painless and may be obtained through local hospitals, primary health care providers, and Public Health.

According to Laurie Ross, RN, Director of Birth to Five Programs with Cobb & Douglas Public Health, many babies may need a repeat hearing test. Infants not passing their initial and repeat screenings receive appropriate diagnostic evaluation before three months of age. "While it doesn't necessarily mean the baby has a hearing loss, it is important that each newborn is properly screened to rule out any concerns," she said. When appropriate, they are referred for intervention services by six months of age.

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GRANT IMPROVES HEARING

“Because children learn to communicate by imitating the sounds they hear, the best time for children with hearing loss to receive help is before they're six months old,” says Lisa Crossman, District Director of Clinical & Prevention Services with Cobb Public Health. According to Crossman, children who have hearing loss that is undetected and untreated can miss much of the speech and language around them, which can result in delayed speech/language development, social problems and academic difficulties.

Fortunately, there are very few hearing losses that cannot be helped with modern technology. “Thanks to programs like this, babies with hearing loss can receive early diagnoses and the equipment and special education services they need.”

For more information about the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program or other Public Health services and programs, please visit our website at www.CobbandDouglasPublicHealth.org.

About Cobb & Douglas Public Health

Cobb & Douglas Public Health serves children, adolescents, and adults of Cobb and Douglas Counties in metropolitan Atlanta with personal health services, a pharmacy, prevention and health promotion programs, epidemiological investigations and health assessment, environmental health inspections and investigations, and emergency preparedness planning and response for natural and man-made disasters including bioterrorism. For information, visit www.CobbAndDouglasPublicHealth.org.