



Modernizing Communication  
for Critical Newborn Health:

# The Virginia Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Parent Portal

Launched in November 2024

**DIGITAL EXPERIENCE:**

Agency/Program Solutions Category

**NOMINATION SUBMITTED BY:**

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## Executive Summary

The Virginia Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (VA EHDI) program screens infants to identify congenital hearing loss in children and ensure enrollment in intervention services. The goal is to identify infants who fail their initial hearing screen before hospital discharge and provide information and referral to families regarding newborn hearing screening, follow-up testing, and early intervention services.

VA EHDI launched the Virginia EHDI (MyEHDI) Parent Portal in November 2024. This secure, mobile-friendly web application revolutionizes how families access critical newborn health information. Instead of waiting for a mailed report, families now have immediate access to hearing screening results and essential guidance from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) around receiving follow-up services.

This user-friendly system ensures prompt receipt of vital information and reduces the time between screening and notification, facilitating faster diagnosis and connection to intervention services. This is crucial for meeting the 1-3-6 guidelines (screen by 1 month, diagnose by 3 months, intervene by 6 months).

Early results are impressive; **90%** of users surveyed said they could easily access the portal and records on mobile devices, and **80%** rated portal access as "Excellent."

## Project Description

### Idea

*Make it easier and faster for parents to view hearing screening results*

Previously, VA EHDI relied on traditional mail to deliver newborn hearing screening results. This method frequently causes delays due to postal variability, weather, holidays, and staffing. For example, results entered on a Friday might not reach parents for up to a week, delaying necessary follow-up. Mail delays can potentially compromise the narrow window for effective early intervention. Recommended Early Hearing Detection and Intervention benchmarks include screening for hearing loss before 1 month of age, diagnostic evaluation before 3 months, and enrollment in early intervention before 6 months, known as the 1-3-6 benchmarks.

In addition to wanting results quickly, modern parents have come to expect digital access to all medical information. The new MyEHDI Parent Portal provides better, quicker services to parents and providers while supporting fast and accurate follow-up services for infants.

## The 1-3-6 Rule for Your Baby's Hearing Health

If your baby did not pass the newborn hearing screening at the hospital or birthing center, or if your baby has not been screened, **here is some important information you need to know.**

**Before 1 Month Old**

Have your baby screened by a pediatric audiologist or hearing screener. When a baby fails the test, a second screening is recommended. The hospital staff or your pediatrician can help you locate the best place to go for this second screening.

**Before 3 Months Old**

If your baby fails their second screening, immediately schedule a hearing evaluation for diagnosis with a pediatric audiologist before your baby is 3 months old.

**Before 6 Months Old**

If your baby is diagnosed with a hearing loss begin early intervention services before your baby is 6 months old. Your pediatric audiologist or pediatrician can help you locate your local early intervention office.

**Pass with Risk**

Your baby may develop late onset hearing loss, we recommend a complete evaluation by a pediatric audiologist between 12-24 month of age. If you have concerns, please see a pediatric audiologist as soon as possible.

**Find a pediatric audiologist—[www.ehdipals.org](http://www.ehdipals.org)**

## Milestones in Your Baby's Hearing and Speech Development

Don't Wait: Language Begins at Birth!

**Birth to 3 Months Old**

- ▶ Blinks or jumps when there is a sudden, loud noise
- ▶ Quiets or smiles when spoken to
- ▶ Makes sounds like "ahh" or "ahh"

**6 to 9 Months Old**

- ▶ Turns head toward sounds
- ▶ Understands "no-no" or "bye-bye"
- ▶ Makes babbling sounds ("baba," "mama," "gaga")

**3 to 6 Months Old**

- ▶ Looks for sound with eyes
- ▶ Recognizes parent's voice
- ▶ Uses many sounds, squeals and chuckles

**9 to 12 Months Old**

- ▶ Repeats simple words and sounds
- ▶ Correctly uses "mama" or "dada"
- ▶ Responds to singing or music
- ▶ Points to favorite toys and objects when asked

**For more information:**  
Call 1-866-493-1090  
or TTY users dial 7-1-1 for Virginia Relay  
[VDHLiveWell.com/hearing](http://VDHLiveWell.com/hearing)

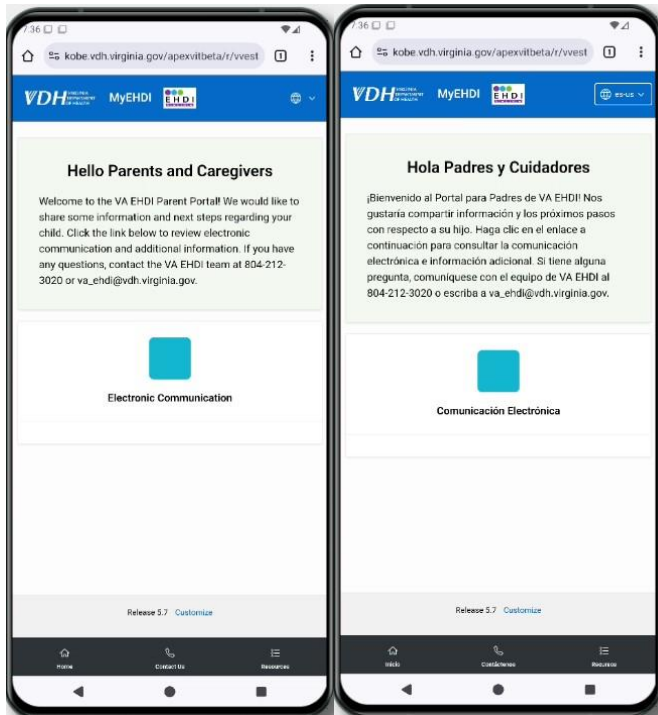
Virginia  
Early Hearing  
Detection and Intervention

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## Implementation

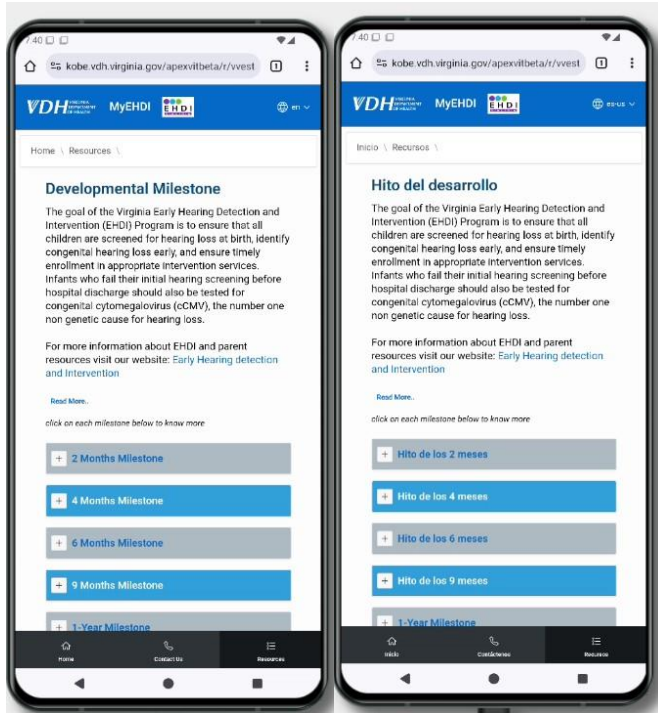
*Create a new portal for sharing immediate, secure, accessible information*

VA EHDl collaborated with the Office of Information Management to launch the MyEHDl Parent Portal on November 20, 2024. The new portal empowers parents with real-time, secure access to their child's screening results anytime, anywhere via mobile devices. This user-friendly system ensures prompt receipt of vital information, enabling families to take swift action on recommended follow-up care and support services. This new digital solution improves the timeliness of sharing test results and reduces the operational and postal costs of mailed reports.



Screenshot of both the English and Spanish version of the portal welcome screen.

The new portal also shares key milestones and recommendations for parents, offering a single source for viewing screening results, accessing guidelines and linking to additional resources.



Screenshot of both the English and Spanish developmental milestones available in the portal.

## Security

The MyEHDI Parent Portal was designed with data protection and user privacy as top priorities and incorporates multiple layers of security to safeguard sensitive newborn health information.

Key security protocols include:

- **SMS-Based Authentication:** Users receive a one-time code via SMS (powered by Twilio) to verify identity during each login, ensuring secure access.
- **Encrypted Data Transmission:** All data is protected through HTTPS/SSL encryption to prevent interception or tampering.
- **Secure Hosting Environment:** The portal is hosted on state-managed infrastructure that complies with Virginia Information Technology Agency standards, including firewalls, intrusion detection, and regular security scans.
- **Session Timeout and Inactivity Controls:** Automatic logouts after inactivity help prevent unauthorized access on shared devices.
- **Audit Trails:** System activity logs support security monitoring and incident response.

These measures ensure compliance with HIPAA and state cybersecurity standards, giving families peace of mind when accessing their child's health information.

To access their child's record, the parent must:

- Access the MyEHDI parent portal and enter the child's first name, date of birth, and mother's last name.
- Select their correct phone number from a list of three partially redacted mobile numbers (only the correct number will receive a code).
- Receive a one-time SMS verification code via Twilio. A resend option is available, and access is limited to 5 invalid attempts for security.
- Enter the verification code to authenticate and access the child's record.
- After successful login, parents can view and download a PDF of their child's screening results, which can be easily shared with healthcare providers during their visit.

## Impact

*Early results show promising impacts and benefits*

The portal launched five months ago, and the early results show a positive impact for parents and patients.

- **Improved efficiency and simplicity:** The portal reduces the time between screening and notification, facilitating faster diagnosis and connection to intervention services. This is crucial for meeting 1-3-6 guidelines (screen by 1 month, diagnose by 3 months, intervene by 6 months) and managing conditions like congenital Cytomegalovirus (cCMV). Before the launch of the MyEHDI Parent

Portal, it typically took a week or more for families to receive their child's newborn hearing screening results via USPS mail. With MyEHDI, the process is now fully digital and secure. When a child's hearing screening results are available, a text message is sent to the registered parent's mobile number containing a secure URL to the portal.

- **Empowered families:** Parents and families now have immediate information and control over their child's health information during a critical time. Mobile access also allows easy viewing and sharing of results with healthcare providers.
- **Streamlined stakeholder communication:** The portal supports the clinical community by providing faster electronic notification for primary care physicians and other stakeholders. While the MyEHDI Parent Portal is designed for families, the Virginia Infant Screening and Infant Tracking System (VISITS) serves as the centralized, secure platform for healthcare providers and administrators. VISITS allows authorized Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) users to enter, view, and track newborn hearing screening results, diagnostic evaluations, and referral outcomes for children born in Virginia.

When a child completes their hearing screening, the results are shared simultaneously through both platforms: parents receive immediate access via MyEHD and providers access the same data through VISITS.

This approach ensures alignment and transparency between families and clinical stakeholders. The VA EHDI central office team can monitor activity on both platforms, verifying when parents and providers access records. This visibility allows the team to follow up with either party, as needed, helping to prevent missed follow-ups and ensuring timely coordination of care.

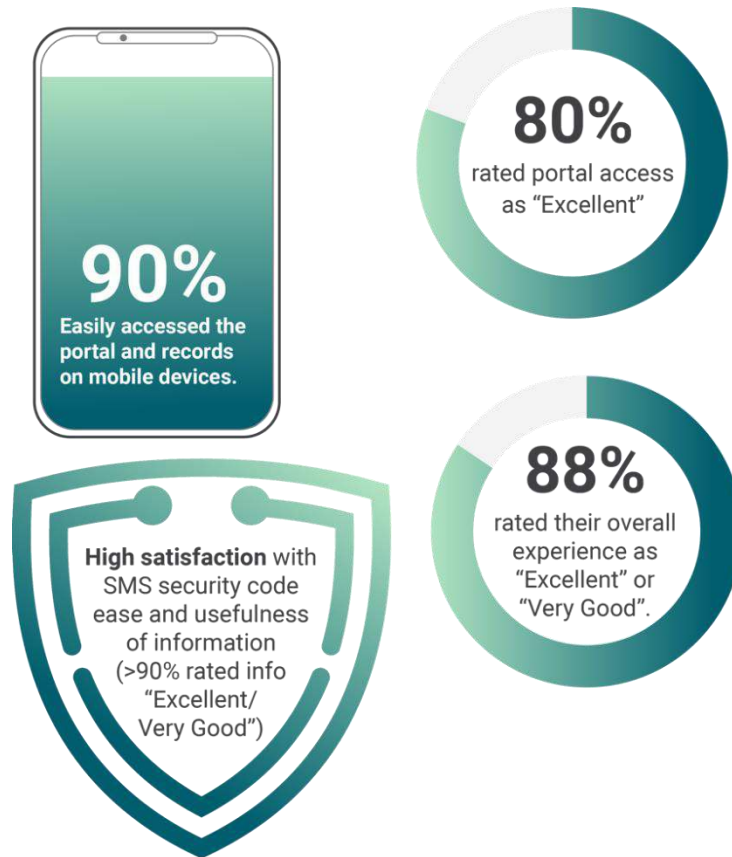
- **Enhanced equity and accessibility:** The portal interface and all critical PDF communications are fully available in Spanish, removing language barriers for Virginia's diverse population.
- **Efficiency and cost savings:** The portal eliminates over \$10,000 in annual mailing costs. These funds can now be redirected to vital program activities and family support. The portal also frees up operational time previously spent managing the manual mail processes. This allows staff to focus on direct family engagement and provider outreach.
- **Sustainability and modernization:** The portal reduces paper consumption and carbon footprint, showcasing VDH's commitment to environmental responsibility. Through this portal, VDH is offering citizens digital services and access that constituents now expect to receive.

### *Program survey and planned enhancements*

In April 2025, five months after program launch, the Office of Family Health Services EHDI Program conducted a feedback survey on the MyEHDI Parent Portal.

The survey was created on the VDH REDCAP survey tool and distributed to parents who used the portal in the prior 5 months.

The Parent Portal survey highlights the portal's effectiveness:



Future enhancements include a real-time chat feature for direct support and expanded resources like educational videos and developmental milestone trackers.

### **Conclusion**

The MyEHDI Parent Portal marks a significant advancement for Virginia's public health infrastructure. By replacing outdated mail methods with a modern, efficient, and user-centric platform, VA EHDI delivers measurable improvements in timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and accessibility. Most importantly, it ensures Virginia's families receive critical hearing health information faster, empowering parents and facilitating essential early intervention for better long-term developmental outcomes.