

## VIHSP 2005 Update

A number of initial set-up requirements and tasks are close to completion:

- Parent information documents have been drafted. They are currently being reviewed by parents at various VIHSP hospital sites as well as by parents of children with a hearing loss. A very positive response has been received so far. Consent procedures and forms are also being developed.
- The VIHSP logo is under development, and a final design will be selected this month. This will be used in the range of VIHSP written materials that are being developed.
- VIHSP protocols are being discussed by the Screening and Diagnostic working groups. These groups include representatives from hospitals, Australian Hearing, audiologists, medical and consumers (parents) amongst others. A series of flow-charts describing the potential patient journeys through VIHSP are being developed.
- A survey has been sent to all audiology centres servicing infants in Victoria regarding facilities available, and volumes of children they seen. This survey will inform the process of establishing links between and VIHSP and diagnostic audiology centres. If any services have not received this survey please contact Alex Jordan at the number listed below.

## Equipment and Information Systems

Quotes have been received from the distributors of five AABR machines, and practical assessments of these machines have been completed by VIHSP and VicNIC staff, as well as staff from other programs. The results of the quotes and assessments have been weighted alongside cost to produce a rating or score for each piece of equipment. The final selection will be made once the service agreements and documentation have been properly reviewed.

## On-Site

The VIHSP implementation team will be meeting over the next fortnight with medical and nursing liaisons from each VIHSP screening hospital, in order to further plan the logistics of implementing pre-discharge hearing screening at each site.

A series of information sessions for staff at each of these hospitals is also being planned.

## VIHSP Positions

Some of the key VIHSP positions have now been advertised. Applications for Area Co-ordinators closed Nov 19, and interviews will be held in early December. Applications for the Program Director close on the November 29, and for Hearing Screeners on December 3.

For further information, see [www.rch.org.au](http://www.rch.org.au), and follow the "Careers" link. Responses so far have been very promising!

## Presentations and Media

Dr Zeffie Poulakis (VIHSP Implementation team) recently presented at the AGM of *Deaf Children Australia*. Fellow speakers included two parents of children with hearing impairment. Zeffie spoke about the importance of early detection of congenital hearing impairment, and described the pre-discharge hearing screening that will be offered through VIHSP from early 2005. Zeffie will also be speaking at the Maternal & Child Health coordinators' meeting later this month.

Short articles have been submitted to Newsletters at each VIHSP screening hospital, as well as the DHS publication for Maternal and Child Health Nurses and early years workers 'FACTS'.

The VIHSP website ([www.vihsp.org.au](http://www.vihsp.org.au)) is now live. At this stage we have published a brief introduction to VIHSP. The remainder of the site (including final logo and web design) is under construction.

## Prevalence

Following Issue 1 2004, we received a query about prevalence of bilateral moderate or greater (>40dB HL) congenital hearing loss. This is about 1.1/1000 births, of which about 90% is detectable through UNHS. If we include children with congenital mild or unilateral losses who receive aids by age 4-5 years, this rises to 2/1000 births.

This newsletter is produced by the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program Implementation Team for the various professional groups involved in infant hearing screening in Victoria. These include Maternal & Child Health nurses, audiologists, paediatricians, midwifery and neonatal care staff, early intervention staff and key government staff