

# Audiology

## SERVICES IN INPATIENT AND RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS

**Audiologists are trained health care professionals** that specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of hearing, balance, and other related disorders. Inpatient and residential settings employ audiologists to meet the needs of patients, residents, and staff.



### DID YOU KNOW ?

Newborn hearing screening is the standard of care in hospitals nationwide. **About 98% of babies born in the United States have their hearing screened before 1 month of age.**



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### WHO:

**Audiologists provide services to people of all ages**, from newborns to older adults, depending on the type of facility.

### WHAT:

Audiologists are experts in existing and new technologies as well as intervention strategies. They counsel patients and family members/caregivers on their options to address hearing and balance concerns. Within inpatient and residential settings, audiologists help people in ways that include the following:

- **Conducting newborn hearing screenings.** Birthing hospitals provide newborn hearing screenings to every baby before they are discharged. Babies that do not pass their hearing screening should be referred to an audiologist for a comprehensive evaluation. Children who are deaf and hard of hearing should be identified by 3 months of age at the latest.
- **Administering hearing tests.** Hearing tests may be needed in the emergency room for patients who have experienced head trauma, are diagnosed with certain infections, or have experienced a sudden hearing loss. People receiving medications that are known to be harmful to the inner ear may have routine hearing testing to monitor any effects on their hearing.
- **Providing aural rehabilitation counseling.** *Aural rehabilitation* involves a variety of services to support people with hearing loss. Within inpatient and long-term-care facilities, this may include providing strategies to help people communicate better as well as providing maintenance services for hearing aids and assistive hearing technologies.
- **Conducting vestibular testing.** This involves administering a series of tests to assess how a person's balance system works. Vestibular testing may be needed for patients who report dizziness or instability.
- **Performing neurophysiologic intraoperative monitoring.** Some audiologists have special training to help surgeons minimize or avoid injury to neural structures that may be at risk during surgical procedures.
- **Educating families and other professionals about hearing loss.** This education includes how hearing relates to language and communication, strategies to help people communicate effectively, and information on various audiology services.

### WHERE:

Audiologists work in newborn nurseries, neonatal intensive care units, operating rooms, audiology departments/suites, and patient rooms (bedside) within the hospital. They also work in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

### HOW:

Every state—and the District of Columbia—has established an Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program to provide newborn hearing screenings. Other audiology services within inpatient settings are usually ordered by a physician. In nursing homes or assisted living facilities, the audiologist collaborates with other professionals to determine what services are needed.

### WHY:

Hearing, balance, and other related disorders are complex conditions that, if left unaddressed, can impact physical and mental health, socialization, education, and employment. Audiologists have specialized training to diagnose hearing and balance issues, as well as offer treatment plans.