Newborn Hearing Screening in the Pacific Islands:

GOOD NEWS –

and

Not just for Babies!

CDS Fall Assembly

December 5, 2013
Current Projects

- American Samoa
  - HRSA – Implement newborn hearing screening
  - CDC – Design data/tracking system

- Republic of the Marshall Islands
  - HRSA – Implement newborn hearing screening
  - CDC – Design data/tracking system
Hearing Health Care

- Identification
- Audiological diagnostic services
- Medical and surgical care
- Intervention services
Hearing Health Care

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Because, this area has . . .

- No ENT specialist
- No audiologist
- No speech-language pathologists
- No early intervention program
- No system for providing amplification
- Not a single cochlear implant
JCIH Recommendations

- Screened by one month of age
- Evaluated by three months of age
- If a hearing loss is present, amplification fitted within one month of diagnosis
- Early intervention by six months of age
Social Justice

Using the funding available for newborn hearing screening to improve access to hearing health care for all children and adults with hearing problems and early intervention services for all children with special needs.
Screening by 3 Months

- Easiest to implement
- Purchase equipment
- Train local personnel
- Monitor results
- Total process takes minutes
Diagnosis by 6 Months

- Challenging, but possible
- Build diagnostic facility
- Obtain expensive equipment
- Contract for audiologists
- Evaluations take hours to finish
Jouj im Jab Keroro!
Bwe Jerbal in Roñjake Kō Rej
Kōmman

Quiet please!
Hearing Test in Progress
Intervention by 6 Months

- Greatest challenge!
- No Part C, no Head Start
- No parent support groups
- Takes skilled personnel
- Takes months and years!
Take Home Message

- Good news: available federal resources are being used to expand hearing health care for everyone!
- Bad news: the needs far exceed the available resources.

The goal of sustainability remains elusive!