19 August 2016

All ears for Hearing Awareness Week 21 – 28 August

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service’s Paediatric Audiology department provides vital hearing testing for hundreds of newborn babies and children who are at risk of hearing loss or hearing impairment.

Paediatric Audiologist Tania Sargent says the small team at Nambour General Hospital which includes two specialist paediatric Audiologists and an allied health assistant is the only hospital based public service of its kind between Caboolture and Townsville.

“Nambour General Hospital provides Audiology services for babies from the Sunshine Coast to the Bundaberg, Wide Bay area, and extending as far West as Charleville,” she said.

“All babies are screened for hearing loss in the first few days following birth. Babies who do not pass their newborn hearing screen test are referred to Nambour Hospital Audiology for a complex electrophysiological assessment of their hearing”.

Early detection and diagnosis of hearing loss is vital in babies to improve speech and language development for children at risk of speech and language delays.

As part of Hearing Awareness Week 21-28 August 2016, the Sunshine Coast Paediatric Audiology team wants to encourage families to discuss any concerns they have about their child’s hearing with a GP or community health nurse.

“Many families know very little about hearing loss, or that it can be comprehensively and reliably tested in an infant as young as one to two weeks of age.”

“Our audiology team tests the hearing of hundreds of infants under 12 months of age each year, of these, only five to ten babies go on to be managed for permanent hearing loss,” Ms Sargent said. Some are diagnosed as young as two to four -4 weeks of age.

Hearing Awareness Week aims to eliminate the stigma surrounding hearing loss, and to encourage people to seek help as soon as possible.

As part of Hearing Awareness Week 2016 an interview opportunity will be available with Paediatric Audiologist Tania Sargent as well as a photo opportunity with a baby undertaking a hearing assessment.

Referrals for a hearing assessment are made through the Queensland government’s Healthy Hearing program. For more information visit: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/healthyhearing/.

A photo and interview opportunity will be available with Paediatric Audiologist Tania Sargent as well as a mother and baby who will undergo a hearing assessment.

Where: Main reception, Nambour General Hospital.
When: 10:30am Tuesday, 23 August.

ENDS

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