



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association-BC Chapter

101-9300 Nowell Street, Chilliwack, BC

Email: info@chha-bc.org

Website: www.chha-bc.org

May 8, 2014

To:

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

BC Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists

Hearing Instrument Practitioners Society of B.C.

College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of B.C.

PREAMBLE:

Research has now established that hearing loss, if untreated, has profound negative consequences for the individual who experiences it, in every aspect of their life. The recent public forum, Hearing Aid Sales and Services: What Consumers Need, further underscored such findings from the consumer perspective.

Effective treatment of hearing loss at any stage of the life span of the individual includes the use of hearing aids and implanted hearing devices, a variety of assistive communication devices, and habilitation/rehabilitation strategies. Access to appropriate devices, and training in coping strategies are essential for hard of hearing and deafened people. In British Columbia, major problems exist in the ability of many citizens to acquire and effectively use hearing devices.

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association-BC Chapter and its Branches sees that many changes are needed in order to allow all British Columbians with hearing loss to participate fully in everyday life in society. Therefore, we make the following recommendations.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

GOVERNMENT:

1. Recommended that hearing aids for children be funded, ongoing through their educational span and until into the workforce.
2. Recommend that a funding program be re-established to provide hearing aids and assistive listening devices, to increase youth and adult employment prospects in the labour force.
3. Recommended that a formula be established for a subsidy to support the needs of hearing aid wearers throughout their life span, in British Columbia. To facilitate this, it is recommended that an independent researcher be contracted to conduct an in-depth examination of the subsidy formulas in all provinces and territories, and their effectiveness; consult with the various parties and produce a report and recommendations.
4. Recommended that the government create and implement improved policies and regulations to improve hearing accessibility in society. Examples include noise control, acoustics in public places, classrooms, (eg. architectural plans take into consideration the need for mobility access, but no attention is paid to acoustical/hearing accessibility).

PROFESSIONALS:

5. Recommended that audiologists/hearing instrument providers provide more transparency in the invoicing for hearing aids. Recommended that this be provided in print to the client, to itemize cost of device, fitting, instruction on device use, support if fitting is not satisfactory, and return visit costs. Options should be provided such as specified bundled services, or pay-for-service structure.
6. Recommended that audiologists/hearing instrument providers promote the need to learn coping strategies for learning to live with hearing loss and hearing aid use, recommend sources for such help, and work with the consumer group towards this end.
7. Recommended that audiologists/hearing instrument providers promote the use of assistive devices, and inclusion of T-coils in hearing aids.



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ORGANIZERS OF PUBLIC EVENTS:

8. Recommended that hosts of public events be encouraged to pay for provision of group assistive listening devices and Computer Assisted Realtime Captioning at meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

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President,

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association-BC Chapter

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