

Failure to invest in early communication health costs the federal government down the road

Speech-Language and Audiology Canada asks for leadership and action

Ottawa, ON (May 7, 2014) — Every single dollar invested in childhood health and development saves up to nine dollars in future health, social and justice services. Despite this incredible 800% return on investment, the importance of funding programs aimed at the early identification and intervention of communication disorders continues to be overlooked.

More than 40 delegates from Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC) are on Parliament Hill today, advocating for communication health and asking the federal government to take action.

“We recognize that health care and education fall under provincial jurisdiction; however, a failure to invest in early identification and intervention programs will ultimately cost the federal government down the road. One in six people in our country is living with a speech, language or hearing disorder ... that’s a significant portion of our population,” says Judy Meintzer, SAC President.

“We’ve seen the federal government step in and take action when it comes to issues like mental health and bullying,” Meintzer continues. “We’d like to see a similar movement in support of communication health.”

The ability to communicate effectively with others is the very foundation of a child's social, emotional and educational development. Early problems with speech, language or hearing can result in high-risk behaviours, depression, poor resiliency and isolation later in life. The statistics are staggering:

- In Canada, boys with language impairment have **higher rates of arrests and convictions** than boys who do not.
- 47% of Canadians between the ages of 15 and 64 who have a hearing limitation report being **unemployed**.
- A Canadian study found that young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years old with a history of language impairment had one of the **highest rates of psychiatric disorders**.

And the list goes on.

“Communication is absolutely vital — it’s instrumental to us as human beings,” says Meintzer. “Right now we have a patchwork of services and programs across Canada. We have some children who have access to the services they need and a great deal of children who do not. This needs to change and we want the federal government to lead the way.”

SAC’s advocacy day on Parliament Hill coincides with Speech and Hearing Month, the association’s annual public awareness campaign (www.maymonth.ca), and the “Month of Action” for the



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International Communication Project 2014 (www.communication2014.com), a global initiative that calls for worldwide recognition of communication as a basic human right.

*We are **Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC)**, a member-driven organization that supports, promotes and elevates the professions of our members. We are the only national organization passionately supporting and representing speech-language pathologists, audiologists and supportive personnel inclusively. Visit SAC at www.sac-oac.ca to learn more.*

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