

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PLAN

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2021

- National study on speech-language pathology services for children and adolescents,
- Having a voice in the federal government's development of national standards for long-term care,
- Increased profile with governments for speech language pathologists (S-LPs), audiologists and communication health assistants.

NATIONAL STUDY ON SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

As identified in SAC's 2019 Federal Election campaign, SAC will advocate for a national study to better understand – and ultimately improve – the delivery of speech-language pathology services for children and adolescents. This study would be the first step in the development of a national approach to speech-language pathology services for children and adolescents. A national approach will help address current gaps in publicly funded services and improve the educational, social, emotional and financial prospects for children with speech, language, literacy and communication challenges in Canada.

Outcomes

The following are expected outcomes from the process leading to and following the national study:

- Increased focus on the importance of speech-language pathology services for pre-school and school-aged children,
- Decision makers have evidence that enables them to better understand the role of S-LPs and communication health assistants, and
- Members and associates have concrete tools and evidence to support their efforts for recognition within school systems.

Tools

Through the process, SAC will develop the following tools:

- Evidence-informed fact sheets on the benefits of speech-language pathology services in schools, including best practices and social media resources.
- A position paper on speech-language pathology caseload and workload issues in schools.
- A resource for S-LPs and students about working in an education model. This web-based resource will include information about speech-language pathology service delivery models, multi-tiered approaches to instruction and universal design for learning (UDL).

- An official statement on evidence-based practice.
- An infographic on the importance of speech-language pathology services in schools.
- A resource on speech, language, communication and literacy difficulties. This web resource will include information as well as PowerPoint slides about oral language, articulation, narratives, literacy, phonological awareness, developmental language disorder and UDL.

Long-Term Care

In the 2020 Throne Speech, the federal government committed to working with provinces and territories to develop new, national standards for long-term care. SAC members have also raised concerns regarding the lack of speech-language pathology and audiology services in long-term care.

In order to better understand the concerns of speech-language pathology members, SAC formed a Speech-Language Pathology Services in Long-Term Care Working Group in 2020 but it did not meet from March to November 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. An Audiology Services in Long-term Care Working group will also be established.

Outcomes

- SAC is part of the process that leads to the development of national standards for long-term care;
- The role of SAC's members is recognized in the national standards on long-term care;
- Speech-language pathology and audiology services are more prevalent in long-term care.

Tools

- SAC will prepare an advocacy proposal, fact sheet and position statement on the important role of S-LPs, audiologists and communication health assistants in long-term care settings;

Raising the Profile of SAC Members and Associates

From the management of swallowing disorders to matters related to hearing health, there is a lack of visibility and understanding of the role of speech-language pathologists, audiologists and communication health assistants in healthcare and education.

SAC will raise the awareness of government stakeholders of the need for the speech-language pathology and audiology services in a variety of practice settings. Furthermore, other specific issues (virtual care, transparent masks, etc.) will continue to be worked on as they will also enable greater visibility for our professions. SAC will take every opportunity to raise the profile of the work done by SAC members and associates.

This is not a short-term objective but rather a long-term commitment for SAC. A number of activities (reflected in the “tools” section) will support reaching the long-term objectives.

Outcomes

- Better informed government stakeholders on the value of the role of SAC’s members and associates;
- Increasingly informed decision-making processes by government organizations (federal, provincial and regional/municipal as well as school boards) related to SAC’s members and associates.

Tools

To enable members and associates to be increasingly visible and for the value of the professions to be recognized, SAC will continue to develop additional tools:

- A pre-budget submission that aligns with the members’ interests;
- A position paper on the use of virtual care by S-LPs and audiologists;
- Presentation on palliative care (if/when required);
- A new position paper on speech-language pathology management of dysphagia across the lifespan;
- A submission for the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Assessment on Autism Spectrum Disorder;

SAC will also continue to participate in a number of other groups (Hearing Health Alliance of Canada, Canadian Coalition on Adult Hearing Health, Canadian Infant Hearing Task Force, Federal Healthcare Partnership) as well as undertake other projects to raise our profile (Speech and Hearing Month, International Communication Project, etc.). Participation will be done on a strategic basis recognizing limited resources and concurrent priorities.

Timeline

Priority / Activity 2021	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
National Study – Speech-Language Pathology Services for Children & Adolescents				
• Fact sheets	✓			
• Position paper on caseload and workload issues in schools	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Meetings with key government stakeholders	✓	✓		
• Web-based resources	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Official statement on evidence-based practice				✓
• Infographic about the role of S-LPs in schools	✓	✓		
Long-Term Care				
• Fact sheet on role S-LPs, audiologists and communication health assistants in long-term care	✓			
• Meetings with key government stakeholders	✓	✓		
• Position statement on role of S-LPs, audiologists and communication health assistants in long-term care	✓	✓		
Raising the Profile of the Professions				
• Pre-budget submission			✓	
• Position paper on the use of virtual care by S-LPs and audiologists	✓	✓	✓	
• Position paper on speech-language pathology management of dysphagia across the lifespan	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Assessment on Autism Spectrum Disorder submission	✓			
• Meetings with key government stakeholders	✓	✓	✓	✓