

Speech-Language and Audiology Canada

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PLAN

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2022

- National approach to speech-language pathology services for children,
- Having a voice in development of national standards for long-term care,
- National approach to audiology services across the lifespan,
- Increased profile with governments and stakeholders for speech language pathologists (S-LPs), audiologists and communication health assistants.

National Approach to Speech-Language Pathology Services for Children

SAC will continue to advocate for a national approach to speech-language pathology services for children to improve the educational, social, emotional and health outcomes for children with speech, language and literacy challenges in Canada. In 2022, SAC asks that the federal government to incorporate speech-language pathology services into the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare System to ensure that all children have access to the support they need during these critical early years of development. This system should include speech-language pathology services specifically designed to meet the needs of Indigenous children.

Outcomes

The following are expected outcomes:

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

Tools

Through the process, SAC will develop the following tools:

- Evidence-based fact sheets on the benefits of speech-language pathology services for children in early learning and childcare as well as 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).
- A position paper on literacy development and disorders.
- 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 2021, the Health Standards Organization (HSO) began consultations about a new National Long-Term Care Services standard that will provide long-term care (LTC) homes across Canada with evidence-informed practices to allow for safe, reliable, and high-quality care for residents. In 2022, SAC will continue to advocate for inclusion of speech-language pathology and audiology services in LTC settings.

Outcomes

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

Tools

SAC will continue to participate in the HSO consultation process. In addition, SAC will highlight and support the important role of S-LPs, audiologists and communication health assistants in LTC settings by developing:

- An audiology services in LTC settings advocacy proposal;
- Fact sheets and other resources; and,
- A position paper on the role of S-LPs in LTC.

National Approach to Audiology Services Across the Lifespan

In 2021, the World Health Organization released the first ever World Report in Hearing. In 2022, the Lancet Commission on Hearing Loss is expected to be released. Both documents highlight the urgent need for governments to address hearing loss across the lifespan. SAC will continue to advocate for a national approach to hearing care to ensure all people in Canada have access to hearing care regardless of location and economic status. In 2022, SAC asks that the federal government provide funding to support the development of a national universal hearing care strategy. SAC will also ask that the federal government to

incorporate audiology services into the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare System to ensure that all children have access to the support they need during these critical early years of development. This system should include audiology services specifically designed to meet the needs of Indigenous children.

Outcomes

The following are expected outcomes:

- Increased focus on the importance of ear and hearing care for all,
- Decision-makers have evidence that enables them to understand the role of audiologists and the importance of ear and hearing care across the lifespan, and
- Members and associates have concrete tools and evidence to support their efforts in their local jurisdictions.

Tools

SAC will prepare a one-pager about the World Report on Hearing to make the material accessible for government officials and other stakeholders in the Canadian context.

Raising the Profile of SAC Members and Associates

From the management of swallowing and feeding 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 (for example, equity, diversity and inclusion) 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.
- Increased profile of the scope of practice of SAC's members and associated with insurance stakeholders.

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 and promote additional tools as part of ongoing advocacy in key practice areas:

- A pre-budget submission that aligns with the members' interests;
- A new position paper on speech-language pathology evaluation and intervention for swallowing and feeding disorders across the lifespan;
- A revised position paper on virtual care;
- Revised position statements on autism;
- A new position statement on congenital cytomegalovirus (cCMV) screening;
- A new position statement on speech-language pathology and audiology services for long-COVID;
- A presentation to the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA);
- A position statement on over the counter hearing aids; and
- A presentation on palliative care (if/when required).

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 & Hearing Month, International Communication Project). Participation will be on a strategic basis recognizing limited resources and concurrent priorities. In 2022, SAC will focus on insurance industry advocacy, in collaboration with the Extended Healthcare Professions Coalition and the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association, to support our members and associates working in private practice. SAC will also engage with the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and Employment and Social Development Canada regarding health human resources for the professions.

Timeline

Priority / Activity 2022	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
National Approach – Speech-Language Pathology Services for Children				
• Fact sheets	✓			
• Position paper on caseload and workload issues in schools	✓			
• Meetings with key government stakeholders	✓	✓		
• Web-based resources	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Position paper on literacy development and disorders	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long-Term Care (LTC)				
• Fact sheets on role S-LPs, audiologists and communication health assistants in LTC	✓			
• Meetings with key government stakeholders	✓	✓		
• Position paper on the role of S-LPs in LTC	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Audiology services in LTC advocacy proposal	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Approach - Audiology Services Across the Lifespan				
• Fact sheets on importance of ear and hearing care for all		✓	✓	
• Meetings with key government stakeholders	✓	✓		✓

Priority / Activity 2022	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4
Raising the Profile of the Professions				
• Pre-budget submission			✓	
• Position statement on cCMV screening;	✓			
• Position paper on virtual care	✓			
• Position statement on over the counter hearing aids			✓	
• Position paper on speech-language pathology evaluation and intervention for swallowing and feeding disorders across the lifespan	✓			
• Revised position statements on autism				✓
• Meetings with key government stakeholders	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Position statement on long-COVID	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association Presentation	✓	✓		

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Priority – National approach – Speech-language pathology services for children

Has SAC developed the tools required for this objective?

- Fact sheets;
- Position papers; and
- Resources for S-LPs and students about working in an education model.

Is the government looking at developing a national approach? Has it been funded?

- Have there been discussions with government officials regarding the funding of the plan?

- Has SAC been encouraged to submit a funding application?
- Has the application (if submitted) been successful?

Is there growing interest and visibility for the role of S-LPs in early learning and childcare and schools?

- The role of S-LPs in schools is being mentioned (yes/no) in various government settings;
- Has SAC been asked to discuss the role of S-LPs in early learning and childcare and schools?

Priority – LTC

Has SAC developed the tools required for this objective?

- Audiology advocacy proposal;
- Fact sheets;
- Position paper.

Is SAC included in the HSO's discussions leading to a national standard on LTC?

Is the role of S-LPs, audiologists and communication health assistants acknowledged in various government forums such as:

- Parliamentary committees tasked with reviewing this issue;
- Government-organized consultations.

Priority – National approach – Audiology services across the lifespan

Has SAC developed the tools required for this objective?

- One-pager;

Is the government looking at developing a national approach? Has it been funded?

- Have there been discussions with government officials regarding the funding of the plan?
- Has SAC been encouraged to submit a funding application
- Has the application (if submitted) been successful?

Is there growing interest and visibility for the role of audiologists?

- The role of audiologists is being mentioned (yes/no) in various government settings;
- Has SAC been asked to discuss the role of audiologists in ear and hearing care across the lifespan?

Priority – Visibility

Has SAC been proactive in intervening in government-organized relevant forums (consultations, meetings, parliamentary meetings) to advocate on behalf of the role of S-LPs, audiologists and communication health assistants?

- Has SAC presented in stakeholder meetings?
- Has SAC been denied the ability to present in meetings?

Is the role of S-LPs, audiologists and communication health assistants mentioned in relevant government publications? Is SAC working towards that objective?

General

In any government relations strategy, there should be a general review of relevance. The question of “what’s in it for me” should be asked – in this case both for SAC and its members and associates. Here are some relevant key performance indicators:

What’s in it for me – SAC:

- Is SAC increasingly visible?
- Are members and associates viewing SAC as being more effective with its government relations strategy?
- Are members and associates supportive of SAC’s government relations’ efforts?

What’s in it for me – members and associates:

- Is SAC making a significant effort to represent me?
- Are SAC’s efforts benefitting me?