

Communication Health Assistants: Titles and Credentials

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

- To outline the titles and abbreviations of a title that can be used by communication health assistants, who supports audiology, hearing instrument dispensing and /or speech-language pathology
- To outline the permissible areas of support
- To outline the format for indicating membership(s) and credentials issued by an agency, association or program other than the College.

SCOPE

- All registrants of the College who work with Communication Health Assistants
- All Communication Health Assistants, who provide clinical hearing instrument dispensing, audiology and/or speech-language pathology

DEFINITIONS:

B.C. Early Hearing Program (BCEHP):

The BC Early Hearing Program (BCEHP) is the province-wide screening program to check hearing for babies born in BC. The program provides integrated services from hearing screening to hearing testing as well as early language support following identification of hearing loss. It is operated by the Provincial Health Services in conjunction with the province's regional health authorities

Communicative Disorders Assistant: is a specific title granted to those CHAs who have graduated from a program identified by the Communicative Disorders Assistant Association of Canada (CDAAC). The approved training programs ensure that the Communicative Disorders Assistant is qualified to work in the areas of speech, language, augmentative communication and hearing with individuals of any age.

Communication Health Assistant (CHA) refers to all non-registrants employed by a registrant or a registrant's employer to support the registrant's practice of audiology, hearing instrument dispensing and/or speech-language pathology. They were formerly referred to as support personnel.

Early Hearing Program Screeners:

Early Hearing Program Screeners are Communication Health Assistants who are specifically trained by the B.C. Early Hearing Program to provide newborn hearing screening. CHAs with broad speech and hearing training and education may also be trained by the BCEHP as an Early Hearing Program Screener. Conversely, there are some EHP screeners who are only qualified to perform EHP screenings. Therefore some EHP screeners may have other occupational titles that they may use (e.g. Audiometric Technician) Clinical oversight is by a registered audiologist.

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Industrial Audiometric Technicians (IATs):

IATs have specific training for the WorkSafe BC hearing conservation program. They are not regulated health professionals who have autonomous practice and they are not supposed to perform any restricted activities. They receive training in both the theory and hands-on skills required to conduct hearing tests on noise-exposed workers in industry, counsel workers on the results of their hearing tests, advise workers about hearing protection and administer hearing conservation programs in industry. They must be authorized by WorkSafe BC to work as an IAT in British Columbia.

Occupational or Job Title:

Is a specific job title provided by an employer including but not limited to: speech assistant, speech and hearing assistant, hearing assistant, early hearing program screeners, hearing technician, audiometric technician or communicative disorders assistant.

School Hearing Screeners:

School hearing screeners are CHAs who are specifically trained to provide individual or mass hearing screening in the schools. Their training and competency is overseen by a registered audiologist or speech-language pathologist, as applicable. They may or may not have training in other aspects of speech and hearing services.

POLICY

Use of Titles:

In accordance with Part 12 of the CSHHPBC bylaws, non-registrants who are qualified to work with audiologists, speech-language pathologists and hearing instrument practitioners are referred to as: Communication Health Assistants (CHAs)

Registrants must ensure that their qualified CHAs utilize an occupational title commensurate with their training, education and experience. Those occupational titles listed in the definitions include but are not limited to: : Audiometric Technician, Speech-Language Pathology Assistant, Speech and Hearing Assistant, Hearing Assistant, Communicative Disorders Assistant and Early Hearing Program Screeners. Other occupational titles such as Education Assistant, Behavioural Interventionist or Rehabilitation Assistant are not self-explanatory titles in regards to speech and hearing services. Registrants must ensure that clients/families understand which profession and services their staff are qualified in and are supporting, while under the registrant's supervision. Some CHAs may have more than one title and registrants must be clear on which title is being used for which services. For example, Hearing Screeners,

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who only support the profession of Audiology or Speech-Language Pathology while performing school screenings, must make that clear to clients/families. In other instances, a CHA may have more than one role (e.g. Early Hearing Program Screener and Audiometric Technician). It is acceptable to indicate to clients when a CHA has multiple qualifications and roles.

Communication Health Assistant Students:

Registrants may accept and supervise students from formal CHA programs including those entitled “Communicative Disorders Assistant program” and “Speech and Language Assistant program”. During any student practicum placements, prior to graduation, registrants must ensure that their students must use “student” after their title. For example,

Name, Speech Assistant, (Student)

Additional Credentials:

Agency and Association Membership and Registration

Memberships issued by an agency, professional association or program other than the College, may be noted below the CHA’s name and occupational title. For example:

Name, Education/degree, Occupational Title (e.g. Communicative Disorders Assistant),
Associate Member of SAC
Registered with CDAAC

Areas of Practice Support:

In clinical contexts, especially with clients, families and other health professionals, registrants must ensure that their CHA staff clearly state for which profession(s) they are providing services. For example, my name is John Doe and I am here to assist you with your hearing aid. For issues regarding documentation and consent refer to the CSHHPBC standard of practice on Documentation and Record Management (PRCS-P-01) and the clinical practice guideline entitled Documentation and Record Management (CPG-04).

CSHHPBC Related Documents:

~~CPG-04~~ Documentation and Record Management ([CPG-04](#))

~~PRCS-P-01~~ Documentation and Record Management ([SOP-PRAC-01](#))

~~PRCS-P-04~~ Use of Communication Health Assistants ([SOP-PRAC-04](#))

References:

BC Early Hearing Program www.phsa.ca/our-services/program-services/bc-early-hearing-program

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Communicative Disorders Assistants in Canada www.cdaac.ca

Guidelines for Communication Health Assistants (2016) Speech-Language & Audiology Canada:
retrieved from www.sac-oac.ca

Hearing Loss Prevention: WorkSafe BC www.worksafebc.com