



NOTICE TO THE PROFESSIONS

Changes to Practice Certificate H (Communication & Swallowing Assessment & Management for Tracheostomy) for RSLPs

British Columbia's Ministry of Health mandates that there are certain practices for Registered Audiologists (RAUDs), Hearing Instrument Practitioners (RHIPs), and Speech-Language Pathologists (RSLPs) which can be performed only if the registrant holds a Certified Practice (CP) certificate. The Ministry of Health has determined that these practices are not entry level and can pose significant risk to the public if they are not performed safely and competently. Each certified practice program of study is designed to reflect the body of knowledge required for safe and competent practice and is not limited to the performance of a specific procedure or task.

Each certificate's program of study is reviewed by the College's Quality Assurance & Professional Practice (QAPP) and Certified Practice Advisory Committees (the "Committees") every 5 years, or sooner if the need arises.

Certificates H, formerly called ***"Talking Tracheostomy Tubes or Speaking Valves – Swallowing and/or Voice Restoration"***, was recently reviewed and on recommendation of the Committees, the Board of the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia (the "College") approved an updated and revised Certificate H including a new title -- ***"Communication & Swallowing Assessment & Management for Tracheostomy"***.

The original intent of Certificate H was "communication and swallowing assessment and management for those with tracheostomies (with or without ventilator dependency) and for those with talking tracheostomy tubes and speaking valves" as described in the College Bylaws. Unfortunately, the previous title of Certificate H did not reflect this overall intent.

Based on registrant feedback, the need to increase the focus on tracheostomy competencies (including those involving ventilator dependencies) and to decrease the focus and objectives required for speaking valves and talking tracheostomy tubes, was identified. This is consistent with national and international guidelines and practices for speech-language pathologists working with tracheostomy patients who may or may not have ventilator-dependency and who may or may not use talking tracheostomy tubes or speaking valves. Registrants may choose to apply for the entire certificate, or they may opt to not practice in the area of talking tracheostomy tubes and speaking valves.

In addition, the new Certificate H Program of Study makes a distinction between paediatrics and adults. Applicants may apply for paediatrics, adults, or both. It is important to note that supervision must be by a current Certificate H holder and they should be familiar with and competent with the population they are supervising. For example, a Certificate H holder who has no experience with adults but extensive experience with paediatrics is qualified to supervise applicants who are applying for paediatric care only. It is acceptable to have more than one supervisor. Certificate H holders may upgrade to both



populations at any time they have completed the required objectives, without any additional cost to them.

Registrants who are currently working on the former program of study for Certificate H may continue that program of study or they may opt to change to the updated and revised program of study which has broader objectives and practical requirements. After June 1, 2016, prospective CP applicants for Certificate H must start on and complete the new program of study. In all instances, RSLPs have 3 years to complete their program of study regardless of which program of study they are following.

For the period of June 1, 2016 until December 31, 2016, registrants who were trained at a Canadian university and feel they have the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for Certificate H, may apply for a review of their individual credentials and qualifications to determine if they are **substantially equivalent**.

The new program of study for Certificate H also includes a learning resource appendix which may be useful for supervisors and applicants looking for applicable books, manuals, and articles pertaining to this area of practice.

For further information, please contact Mardi Lowe, Director, Quality Assurance & Professional Practice at qualityassurance@cshbc.ca.

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