



Seniors in Canada need improved access to speech-language pathology and audiology services.

THE ISSUE

Canada needs to improve its approach to seniors care. Our current healthcare system is ill-equipped to address the needs of seniors, the fastest growing segment of our population. SAC continues to call on the federal government to prioritize seniors' health by recognizing the importance of publicly funded speech-language pathology and audiology services in the community and in long-term care.

THE BACKGROUND

There is a high incidence of communication, hearing, balance and swallowing disorders (dysphagia) among the elderly. With aging also comes a higher prevalence of stroke and degenerative conditions such as Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists provide evidence-based services to address the functional, emotional and social consequences of many chronic health conditions related to aging. Speech-language pathology and audiology services for seniors are currently limited and the need will only increase as our country's aging population continues to grow.

Swallowing difficulties affect 1 in 5 seniors living in the community and 1 in 2 long-term care residents.

**Individuals with hearing loss are
2 to 5 times
more likely to develop dementia.**

Communication difficulties affect more than 30% of stroke survivors, up to 90% of people living with Parkinson's disease and almost all people with dementia.

THE ASK

That the federal government support the inclusion of speech-language pathology and audiology in services for seniors living in the community and in long-term care.

It's time for Canada to modernize its entire approach to seniors' health care to ensure that seniors across Canada have access to the essential programs and services they need. While providing health care is primarily the responsibility of the provinces and territories, the federal government shares responsibility for funding the system. Speech-Language & Audiology Canada is therefore calling on the federal government to take a leadership role in ensuring that seniors have access to timely and affordable speech-language pathology and audiology services.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR LOCAL CANDIDATES:

I am concerned about seniors in Canada...

- 1** If elected to form government, what action would your party take to ensure that seniors have access to high quality speech-language pathology and audiology services?
- 2** Do you support the inclusion of speech-language pathology and audiology services in national standards for long-term care?

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Share our [SAC graphics](#) on social media.
- Share the information on this page with your patients, clients, friends and family.
- Speak to your local candidates and their representatives about this issue.
- Print off copies of this page and display them at your school or place of work.