



Use of Communication Health Assistants

STANDARD

Definition of Communication Health Assistants (CHA)

For the purposes of the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC (CSHHPBC), support personnel are referred to as Communication Health Assistants (CHA). These are paid health care providers who may augment and support the work of registrants, who are registered as audiologists, hearing instrument practitioners or speech-language pathologists. CHAs may have a variety of job titles in various workplaces (e.g., educational assistants, speech and hearing assistants, audiometric technicians). The term CHA does not include family members, caregivers or volunteers.

Registrant Responsibilities

Bylaws pertaining to CHAs are available in the CSHHPBC bylaws entitled “Part 12: Delegation”. All aspects of practice pertaining to CHAs are contained in the CSHHPBC standards of practice, policies and guidelines.

Registrants of CSHHPBC may utilize CHAs to augment and complement their professional services to clients. The intent is to ensure that any service provided by CHAs is provided in a safe, efficient and effective manner that poses no undue risk to clients and is seen to be of benefit to the client. This includes all professional services and is not limited to the provision of services involving restricted activities.

The overall responsibility for the provision of clinical services rests with the registrant, including but not limited to: assessment, diagnosis, determination of client status, care planning, client counselling and the evaluation of client progress.

Registrants are accountable for the work of CHAs and must provide adequate direction, supervision and support in accordance with the CSHHPBC clinical decision support tools. It is not intended that CHAs should practice autonomously nor under the direction of a non-CSHHPBC registrant while providing speech and hearing services. Registrants are responsible for knowing the requirements regarding documentation and consent as they pertain to CHAs. It is imperative that the registrant understands and assesses the CHAs’ level of competence for each activity or service that they are delegating.

Registrants are responsible for ensuring that clients and families: are aware of the CHA’s role in their care, are agreeable to the CHA providing services (i.e. consent) and are able to contact the registrant if necessary regarding the CHA care. The registrant may ask the CHA to explain his or her scope, title, role and services to be provided to the client and family.

Registrants must ensure that, where applicable, CHAs are included in liability insurance coverage as indicated in the CSHHPBC bylaws.

Registrants should notify CSHHPBC of any inappropriate use of CHAs.



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Communication Health Assistant Responsibilities

CHAs are responsible, under the registrant's supervision, for understanding their role, scope and function in their provision of services. CHAs must be familiar with and adhere to CSHHPBC standards of practice and clinical decision support tools that pertain to their provision of services. They must report any client issues to their supervisor and discontinue any service where the client is potentially at risk. CHAs must be aware of the principles of inter-professional collaborative practice (SOP-PROF-01) and accurately represent their role to other team members and clients. CHAs should clarify any expectations that they are unclear of and discuss with the responsible registrant any issues regarding competency for services that they are expected to deliver. Registrants must ensure that CHAs understand the requirements for practice competence and delegation of services from registrants. (SOP-PRAC-07).

NOTE: The word client is used in this document to represent all: patients, clients, students and residents who may be receiving speech and hearing services.

SCOPE

All Active CSHHPBC registrants, who utilize communication health assistants, in the provision of speech and hearing services.

NOTE: Conditional active registrants and students must not supervise communication health assistants.

RELATED CSHHPBC DOCUMENTS

Definitions and Application of Supervision by Registrants (POL-QA-06)
Delegation to Communication Health Assistants (SOP-PRAC-07)
Documentation and Record Management (CPG-04)
Documentation and Record Management (SOP-PRAC-01)
Inter-professional Collaborative Practice (SOP-PROF-01)

REFERENCES

Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC) Speech-Language Assistant Guidelines 2016
Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC) Audiology Assistant Guidelines 2016