

Regional Agreement For the Delivery of Assistive Listening Technology to School Aged Children and Youth



Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
School Districts
Provincial Resource Program - Auditory
Outreach

Background

The obligations of each ministry involved in the delivery of assistive listening technology to children and youth are specified in the *Inter-Ministerial Protocol for the Provision of Audiological Support Service* (the Protocol), one of the protocols in the *Inter-Ministerial Protocol for the Provision of Support Services to Schools (2010)*. Through the Protocol, the Ministries of Healthy Living and Sports, Health Services, Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Education are making a commitment to providing assistive listening technology to students with peripheral hearing loss in order to give them better auditory access to their educational programs. The Ministry of Health Services provides funding and delegates authority to Regional Health Authorities for audiological services for children under 19 years old. The Ministry of Education provides funding and delegates authority to Boards of Education and the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach for the provision of education services and assistive technology required by students with peripheral hearing loss.

Regional Agreements

In the Protocol, regional health authorities and boards of education are tasked with developing a regional process for “the sharing of information and coordination of audiology services that is collaboratively developed and effective, and includes an *agreement with respect to assistive listening equipment* (page 2).”

Regional Agreement Between Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Board of Education (as outlined in Schedule 1) and Provincial Resource Program – Auditory Outreach

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the school districts within its region hereby agree to accept the following regarding provision of assistive listening equipment through the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach for school aged children and youth with peripheral hearing loss and who attend public schools and Group 1 & Group 2 independent schools. Participating independent schools will follow the same procedures as the public schools within this health region. The purpose of the program is to provide equipment from an existing stock of equipment, with the goal of improving student’s access to educational programs.

A. Consultation

Consultation between staff in audiology clinics, school/district staff and Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach staff is critical to student success. It is expected that the Public Health manager or designate responsible for the regional audiology program and the school district administrator responsible for student services will establish and maintain a communication process to address current and emerging operational matters regarding assistive listening technology in schools. The Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach, as a tertiary service provider to school age children and youth, is available for consultation to both Public Health clinics and schools/districts regarding the needs of this population.

B. Dispute Resolution

In any cooperative endeavour involving multiple ministries, regional health authorities, and local boards of education, issues will inevitably arise. In addressing any issues, the principle of expeditiously resolving them

at the lowest (i.e. most local) level possible will be respected. The process for resolving issues between ministries/agencies will, in order, involve:

1. Public Health audiology clinic staff, local school/district staff and Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach staff,
2. The Public Health manager responsible for audiology services, the school/district administrator responsible for student services and the manager of the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach manager,
3. The Public Health Director responsible for audiology services, the Superintendent of the local School District and the Superintendent of the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach host district.

Rarely will issues need to be raised beyond the third level mentioned above, but, where this occurs, the concern will be forwarded to the appropriate Ministries for resolution.

C. Responsibilities

The delivery of assistive listening technology services to students with peripheral hearing loss requires a coordinated inter-ministerial approach. The direct delivery of educational services and resources required for those services, as specified in the *School Act*, is the responsibility of the local boards of education funded by the Ministry of Education.

Delivery standards for the regional health authorities and the local boards of education under agreement(s) with the Ministry of Education are provided in the Protocol, in the section entitled “Obligations of Each Ministry.”

The various responsibilities outlined below are further detailed, as follows:

1. The Public Health audiology clinic will:
 - a. Conduct an assessment and evaluation of a student’s hearing and
 - b. Make recommendations for amplification or other personal assistive devices and
 - c. Provide a copy of audiological information to the designated representative of the board of education, with parental consent to alert them of hearing loss and possible implications for participation in the educational program and
 - d. Consult with school/district staff regarding the need/benefit of assistive listening technology (personal FM) and
 - e. Where there is mutual agreement that personal FM should be used by the student, the audiologist will determine the most appropriate FM system for the student from a list of equipment available through the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach.
2. The Public Health audiologist will initiate the equipment request following discussion with the Hearing Resource Teacher (HRT) regarding FM channel and forward the necessary documentation to the administrator responsible for student services in the school district.
3. The administrator responsible for student services will complete and sign the Request for Support, acknowledging financial liability for loss or damage of equipment and send the completed form, with supporting documentation, as well as a signed Parent’s Consent form, to the Provincial Resource Program. Note: Vancouver School District has authorized the health unit audiology supervisor to sign on its behalf, and forward to the PRP with a copy to the district.
4. The Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach will, on receipt of the completed request form, send the equipment to the Health Unit and notify the Health Unit when the equipment has been shipped.

5. Upon receipt of the equipment at the Health Unit, the Health Unit will verify the equipment on the child's hearing aid to ensure that the electroacoustic response is appropriate.
6. The Health Unit will arrange for delivery of the equipment to the child/youth's school and will arrange for training and/or provide written material for individuals working with the student to ensure they are aware of the individual needs of the child/youth. In the event the Health Unit is unable to provide training and/or written material on the use of FM equipment due to time constraints, this responsibility will be assumed by the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach.
7. When the child/youth has been fitted with assistive technology (FM system), a designated individual in the school district will: *(Please Note: School district designated individual is usually the Hearing Resource Teacher)*
 - a. Ensure the administrator of the school is aware the child/youth is in receipt of assistive listening technology (FM system),
 - b. Inform the classroom teachers(s) and other staff about how the assistive listening technology (FM system) works and potential problems that might occur, and
 - c. Ensure security measures are in place to protect the equipment.
8. The school administrator will identify an individual responsible for on-going maintenance and equipment checks.
9. Within two months, the designated individual in the school district will assess the benefit of the equipment of the child/youth.
10. Where it is determined by the designated individual in the school district that equipment may be in need of repair the equipment is brought to the clinic. The clinic ships equipment to the Provincial Resource Program- auditory outreach for repair or replacement. Note: Rural areas may elect to ship equipment directly to the provincial Resource Program and to store equipment at year - end in the district. This decision is reached collaboratively between the parties. Neither clinics, nor school/district staff, will engage in equipment repairs, as it may void equipment warranties.
11. At the end of the school year, the equipment will be stored in the health unit. Equipment requiring repair, as well as units no longer required by students, will be shipped to the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach for either repair or to be reissued. This may occur at times other than the end of the school year.

D. Information Sharing

Information sharing between boards of education, public health authorities and the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach will be in accordance with the *School Act* and *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* legislation. To facilitate information sharing, Public Health clinics will, at the student's first visit to the clinic, seek parent/guardian signed consent to share audiological assessment and evaluation information with both the school/district and the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach.

E. Agreement Review

This agreement will be automatically reviewed every three years through a process initiated by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. Parties to this agreement may request a review at any time. Availability of resources or breakdown in processes are examples of areas that may trigger a need for review

School District #38, Richmond
School District #39, Vancouver
School District #44, North Vancouver
School District #45, West Vancouver
School District #46, Sunshine Coast
School District #47, Powell River
School District #48, Howe Sound

Procedural Responsibilities

for Delivering Assistive Listening Technology to School Aged Children and Youth

Vancouver Coastal
Health Region

Health Unit		School District		PRP- Auditory Outreach	
	Forms/ Communication		Forms/ Communication		Forms/ Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Carry out assessment and diagnostic services ➤ Get parental approval for audiogram release and report to the school district and PRP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Health Authority Information Form Release 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PRP provides Permission to Share Form
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collaboration between health unit audiologist and school district personnel regarding classroom environment and support available in school, which may influence the decision regarding the most appropriate assistive listening equipment required to maximize learning. ➤ Determine appropriate channel, including default channel if required. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Determine most appropriate FM from PRP list of available equipment ➤ Inform family and provide PRP Permission to Share information form for parent signature 	PRP Permission to Share form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Share information with audiologist or technician regarding school and classroom environments, identifying problem areas (e.g. gym—reverberation, possible interference) ➤ Identify competencies needed to support equipment ➤ Specify who will provide any required in-service. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide list of available equipment to all health units, school districts and group 1 and group 2 independent schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Loan Bank Equipment List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Indicate FM being requested and sign the request form, signaling responsibility for appropriate equipment selection for the student ➤ Send FM request form, along with audiological information and Permission to Share form to school district for school district administrator signature (except Vancouver Clinic) 	➤ FM Request form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Complete Permission to Share form if not completed at Health Unit ➤ Complete and Sign FM request form agreeing to accept financial liability for lost/damaged equipment (district administrator) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide FM request for support form via Website ➤ Provide Permission to Share form via Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Request for Support Form ➤ Parent Permission to Share form
<p>Vancouver health unit only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Forward signed forms along with audiological information to PRP ➤ Send copy of FM request form to school district ➤ Place copy of signed FM request form in the child's health unit file 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Forward signed forms along with audiological information to PRP ➤ Send copy of FM request form to health unit and e-mail when sent to PRP ➤ Update student's confidential file 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Receive complete Request for Support package ➤ Communicate with health unit audiologist if equipment is not available or clarification required ➤ Discuss options with audiologist and HRT responsible for the student in the district, if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Repair form

Health Unit		School District		PRP- Auditory Outreach	
	Forms/ Communication		Forms/ Communication		Forms/ Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Receive equipment, e-mail confirmation of receipt of shipment to PRP and School District, and complete listening validation ➤ Record in child's file 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Send equipment to health unit along with equipment service report or packing slip. E-mail health unit and SD about shipment, or if delays anticipated 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Complete FM/HA equipment verification in accordance with best practice, i.e. electroacoustic FM match with child's personal hearing aid ➤ Record in child's file with appropriate documentation 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Arrange for equipment to be sent to student's HRT and provide training and/or written material for the use of the equipment and troubleshooting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Record when equipment leaves the clinic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pick up equipment at the health unit or receive equipment at a designated location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keep note of serial numbered equipment on loan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ On request, provide printout of district equipment currently on loan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide training and/or written material to school staff if health unit unable to provide.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Equipment validation needs to be conducted by personnel trained to do listening checks. 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure school principal is aware of the equipment and that security measures are in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ District protocol for equipment security 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide ongoing maintenance and equipment checks (e.g. regular listening check, purchase of batteries for the FM and cords as required – School District responsibility to purchase items.) ➤ Validate and document the benefit to student (e.g. functional listening evaluation, teacher questionnaires, etc.) and seek audiologist's advice if problems, concerns arise. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Return malfunctioning equipment to PRP or health unit for repair or replacement. ➤ Use Request for Repair form or Equipment Return form provided by PRP. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Return malfunctioning equipment to PRP or health unit for repair or replacement. ➤ Use Request for Repair form or Equipment Return Form provided by PRP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Notify PRP and clinic by email equipment was sent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Receive malfunctioning equipment and process repair. ➤ Courier repaired or replaced equipment on following working day to health unit audiologist or school district as requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Request to Repair form ➤ Equipment Return form

Year End Inventory Management

Health Unit	School District	PRP- Auditory Outreach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Store at health unit (districts #38, 39, 44, 45) ➤ Send malfunctioning equipment to PRP for repair or replacement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct listening check of equipment at end of year. ➤ Store in district (districts # 46,47,48) ➤ Send malfunctioning equipment to PRP for repair or replacement. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide Equipment Repair ➤ Provide Equipment Exchange form ➤ Provide Accessories form
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct summer maintenance work. ➤ Ship repaired equipment or replacements to either the health unit or school district, as requested, prior to school startup.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Receive repaired equipment from PRP ➤ Receive replaced equipment from PRP if matching required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Receive repaired equipment from PRP (districts #46,47,48) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Remove equipment from inventory that is not functioning optimally and/or has an unusually high rate of repair.

