

June 28, 2015

Attn: Private Insurance Providers in Canada

Re: Coverage for services provided by a Communicative Disorders Assistant under the direction of a Speech-Language Pathologist or Audiologist

Recently it has been shared with us that some clients' claims for services provided by a Communicative Disorders Assistant (CDA) have not been reimbursed due to their status as a non-regulated professional. The purpose of this letter is to clarify the role of a CDA in supporting the services provided by Speech-Language Pathologists (S-LPs) and Audiologists to support you in judging clients' claims.

CDAs are a class of support personnel used by S-LPs and Audiologist to support their implementation of intervention plans. CDAs are trained at the post-graduate level (possess a university degree or college diploma in a related field prior to admission) at one of four colleges in Ontario and are employed across Canada in various settings. CDAs receive training to provide services under the direction of both S-LPs and Audiologists for clients of any age, level of severity, or diagnosis at the discretion of the supervising practitioner.

Services may be provided under the title of Communicative Disorders Assistant based on their training and education, or under a different support personnel title assigned by their employer. These various titles may include but are not limited to:

- Support(ive) Personnel
- Communication Health Assistant
- Speech-Language Pathology Assistant
- Audiology Assistant
- Speech and Hearing Assistant
- Communication Disorders Technician
- Audiometric Technician
- Communication Disorders Assistant

Clinical services are always provided under the direction and supervision of an S-LP or Audiologist. These services may be provided in the capacity of an employee or independent contractor. Treatment goals, objectives, and discharge are decided by the supervising S-LP or Audiologist. The schedule and expectations of direct and indirect supervision are established by the supervising practitioner and the CDA. How frequently direct supervision occurs is at the professional discretion and judgment of the S-LP or Audiologist and as recommended by their regulatory college and/or professional association depending on which province they practice in.

The following colleges and associations have developed practice guidelines and scope statements on the use of CDAs and other support personnel by S-LPs and Audiologists including specific tasks that may and may not be assigned:

- National:
 - Communicative Disorders Assistant Association of Canada
 - Speech-Language & Audiology Canada

- Provincial:
 - British Columbia Association of Speech/Language Pathologists & Audiologists
 - College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia
 - Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists
 - Saskatchewan Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists
 - College of Audiologists & Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
 - Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists

The practice of S-LPs and Audiologists utilizing CDAs to support the implementation of intervention plans is similar to the relationships between Physiotherapists and Physiotherapy Assistants, Dentists and Dental Hygienists, and Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants.

Although CDAAC is available to answer any questions specific to CDAs, we encourage you to consult with the supervising S-LP or Audiologist when judging clients' claims.

Regards,
CDAAC Executive Committee