

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

RE: AUDIOLOGY (HEARING) SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council receive the attached report for information.

REPORT

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 1994 September 28, received the attached report advising on the status of Audiology services in the Health Department.

The Committee therefore places the report before Council for information.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Redman
Chair

Councillor D. Johnston
Vice Chair

:COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIRECTOR ADMIN. & COMM. SERVICES
- MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER

TO: COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 21, 1994
FROM: MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER
SUBJECT: AUDIOLOGY (HEARING) SERVICES
PURPOSE: TO ADVISE ON THE STATUS OF AUDIOLOGY SERVICES IN THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Community Issues and Social Planning Committee receive the following document for information.
2. That the Community Issues and Social Planning Committee advise City Council of the Changes to the Audiology Program

BACKGROUND

In 1976, the Audiology Program of the Burnaby Health Department was established. The funding for the original hearing booth was obtained from the Burnaby Branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses. The Provincial Ministry of Health, Audiology Branch, funded the staff: an Audiologist, an Audiometric Technician and clerical support. These were cost-shared within the City on a 70/30 basis.

The main clientele seen during the first ten years of operation were adults, predominantly seniors. The clinic was very popular, resulting in a long waiting list for services.

Children were also seen and indeed given priority. The numbers were such that the Audiology Program could accommodate them; however, the waiting lists for adults to receive service grew (200-300 or a 10-12 month wait). Consequently, adult clinics were started on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

Over time, more private practice audiologists and hearing aid dealers have moved into Burnaby. This community now has six, with others close by in New Westminster and Vancouver. These private clinics accept Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and Workers Compensation Board (WCB) clients. Present policies through Ministry of Social Services (MSS) state that adults receiving funding for amplification through MSS are required to receive service through their local government clinic. We therefore, are required to provide service for new referrals and continuing service for the clients which are in this selected group.

At one time, it was less expensive to purchase a hearing aid through the Health Department. This is no longer the case. The public also has a greater choice of hearing aids and assistive listening devices available to them in private clinics, and can also receive service more quickly from the private sector. Consequently, our waitlist for adults has decreased and is stable at about 100-150.

However, the waitlist for children is escalating. This is due to more effective screening in schools, efficient referrals from day care staff, nurses, and speech-language pathologists, popularity with physicians, and increased awareness and better education in identification of newborns at risk for hearing loss.

The number of children on the waitlist (April 1994) is as follows:

63	high priority infants
22	preschoolers
188	elementary school-aged children
<u>154</u>	secondary school-aged children
427	children in total

These children are now waiting 8-10 months to be seen.

This situation is duplicated in many areas of the Province. We are certainly not alone in managing a long waitlist, and in handling a disgruntled public.

In 1993/94, a Review of Hearing Services in British Columbia was conducted and the report has recently been released. In this report, a "partnership between the public and private sectors" is recommended. This would allow our Health Department Clinic to focus programs and service on children and targeted adult populations, while the private sector would focus on service to the other adult populations.

At present, one Provincial health unit in the Central Fraser Valley, and the Capital Regional District (Victoria) have ceased to see new adult clients.

PROPOSED ACTION

On September 1, 1994, we will discontinue our services to adults following this process.

1. We will stop accepting new referrals for adults.

2. We will continue to provide service to all clients/adults that we have seen in the past. When an adult requires new amplification, we would, at that time, then refer them to the private sector.
3. New referrals and ongoing service for adult MSS clients would continue.
4. We will contact private practice audiologists and hearing aid dealers and consultants in the area to explain our situation and our plan of action.
5. We will write a letter to all adults presently on our waitlist. This letter would:
 - a) explain our circumstances
 - b) tell all clients currently on our waitlist that they may initially have their hearing assessed at the Health Department, but if they require amplification, they will have to go to the private sector.
 - c) enclose a list of private practice audiologists and hearing aid dealers and consultants in the Burnaby area.
 - d) enclose some consumer "tips" on the purchase of hearing aids and on choosing a private clinic.
6. Letters of explanation will be written to Burnaby physicians offering them alternatives for their patients. An explanation will also be put in the physician newsletter.

PROPOSED NEW SERVICE

The above activities will allow us to concentrate on the children.

Burnaby is very fortunate to have three public hearing test booths:

- One is in the Health Department (West) Building.
- One is at South Slope Elementary School, due to the presence of the Provincial School for the Deaf (Jericho) Elementary school aged children.
- One is now at Burnaby South Secondary School. This is most recent and the City has been very helpful in loaning funds to get this installed. The school is providing the space rent-free. Enhancements in the laboratory area are being planned. This will make the suite suitable and usable for our purpose.

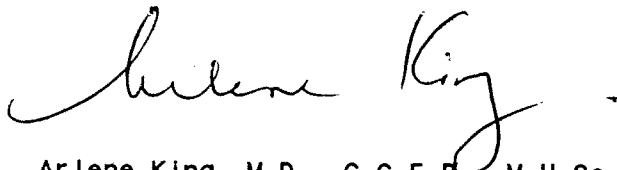
It is our intention to transfer the staff that normally work our evening clinics over to the Burnaby South location where children can be readily seen.

CONCLUSION:

Due to the increased number of children who are waiting for audiological assessment, as of September 1, 1994, Burnaby Health Department Speech and Hearing Centre will no longer provide audiological service to new adult clients.

Clients who currently have hearing aids through this program will continue to receive ongoing technical services as needed. When these clients require new amplification, they will be referred to the private sector.

This change will allow the Audiology Program to be more responsive to the children of Burnaby and to better meet their hearing health care needs.



Arlene King, M.D., C.C.F.P., M.H.Sc., F.R.C.P.(C)
Medical Health Officer

AK/cl

cc: City Manager
Director Administrative & Community Services



6161 Deer Lake Avenue, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 4A3
Health Department, Speech and Hearing

Telephone: (604) 294-7707
Fax: (604) 660-7051
TDD: (604) 294-7519

Dear Dr.

As you may be aware, there is currently a long waitlist for both adults and children to receive audiology services through our program. This has become a frustrating situation for all.

Children are, and have always been, the priority in our clinic. In order to better focus our program on the needs of children, we will not be accepting new adult (aged 20 years and older) referrals.

This means we will continue accepting referrals and providing a full range of audiologic services, including complete audiologic assessment, hearing aid fittings, educational follow-up, counselling, and technical services for children aged 0-19 years.

New adult referrals currently on our waitlist will be offered the option of staying on the waitlist for a hearing assessment, or pursuing testing through the private sector. Should they choose to be seen through this Centre, they will be given a full hearing assessment. Should amplification be required, the client will then be referred to the private sector.

Adults who have received hearing aids through us in the past will continue to receive our services. Once they require new amplification, they will then be referred to the private sector.

There are currently five hearing aid dealers and consultants in Burnaby. Two of these are private practice audiologists. The cost of hearing aids purchased privately is comparable to the cost of hearing aids purchased through us. Thus, your adult clients should be very adequately served.

We hope that this change will allow us to be more responsive to your needs and the needs of the children of Burnaby and their families.

If you have any questions regarding our services, please do not hesitate to contact Pat Grotkowski, Senior Audiologist, at 294-7707.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arlene King".

Arlene King, M.D., C.C.F.P., M.H.Sc., F.R.C.P.(C)
Medical Health Officer



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Dear

Re: Audiology Services

As you are aware, you are currently on our waitlist for Audiology services. In fact, we have many adults like yourself waiting for our service. We have an even longer waitlist for children. Due to the long waitlist for adults and children, we have had to make a difficult decision.

Children are, and have always been, the priority in our clinic. In order to focus on this population, we will no longer accept new adult referrals. This change is effective September 1, 1994.

As your name is already on our waitlist for a hearing assessment, should you wish to be seen at this Centre, we will still provide this service for you. Should you require hearing aids, you will then need to contact an alternative provider of this service in the community.

If you have been seen previously and have purchased hearing aids through this Centre, we will continue to provide service to you. However, once new amplification is required, you will then be referred to the private sector.

Enclosed is information on hearing services available through the private sector in the Burnaby area. Other providers of this service in the Lower Mainland area can be found in the telephone book yellow pages under "Speech and Hearing Therapy", "Audiologist", and under "Hearing Aids". Some additional consumer information is also enclosed.

Please contact the Burnaby Health Department at 294-7707 to advise us if you wish to remain on our waitlist for testing. Should you have further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Pat Grotkowski, Senior Audiologist, at 294-7707.

Again, we regret the necessity to make this decision, and apologize for any inconvenience.

Yours very truly,

Arlene King, M.D., C.C.F.P., M.H.Sc., F.R.C.P.(C)
Medical Health Officer

CONSUMER ADVICE FOR BUYING A HEARING AID

If you suspect a hearing loss:

1. See your physician.
2. Your physician may advise you to have your hearing tested and consider a hearing aid. This service can be provided by Audiologists or Hearing Aid Consultants.
3. When seen by an Audiologist or Hearing Aid Consultant, your hearing will be tested to determine if you will benefit from a hearing aid. You will be charged a fee for the testing. Ask the cost of a hearing test at the time you make the appointment.
4. It is your right to seek a second opinion.
5. It is provincial law to receive a 30-day trial period. If you return your hearing aid, find out how much of the cost is refundable (ask this ahead of time!). Earmolds and batteries are usually not refundable.
6. When purchasing a hearing aid, make sure you know all costs involved and exactly what those costs cover.
7. Ask to try out different models of hearing aids if you are not completely satisfied or sure of your trial with an aid.
8. Ask for a T-switch on your aid (or be sure you understand its' uses before omitting it) and opportunity to try it with an induction (or other) loop. Ask about an audio input jack.
9. You should feel comfortable with the professional you have chosen. If not, keep shopping around.
10. The purchase of a hearing aid(s) is an important decision, both emotionally and financially. You need to ask questions and understand the answers. As you become more active and knowledgeable in your hearing health care, the happier you will be with the result.

BOARD OF HEARING AID DEALERS AND CONSULTANTS
LICENCED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA (BURNABY AREA)

Mr. Todd Ashton
Belstone Better Hearing Centre
#410-5050 Kingsway
Phone # 432-1196 Reg # 0067

Mr. William Park
Park Hearing Clinic
304-4900 Kingsway
Phone # 451-1183 Reg # 0068

Ms. Lori Cunningham
Burnaby Hearing Centre
605-4980 Kingsway
Phone: 432-6696 Reg # 0101

Mr. Ravin Yadav
Hitech Hearing Aid Clinic
4927 Kingsway
Phone: 431-0662 Reg # 0041

Mr. David Lloyd
Fuller & Lloyd Associates
c/o Sears Canada, Inc.
4750 Kingsway
Phone: 434-2070 Reg # 0040

