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Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology unveiled

Guidelines will outline best practices to protect health of patients and workers

OTTAWA (March 25, 2010) – Today, the Canadian Interorganizational Group for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology unveiled new infection prevention and control guidelines. These guidelines are designed to provide audiologists and speech-language pathologists with succinct and practical infection prevention and control information that is applicable across clinical practice settings.

“Given the ways in which infections, disease, and viruses are unintentionally spread amongst the general population, and particularly in clinical settings, it is important that our members do their part to ensure that patients don’t leave their appointment with something that they didn’t come in with,” said Linda Walsh, President of the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA). “These guidelines provide audiologists and speech-language pathologists with succinct and practical infection prevention and control information to do this.”

The guidelines were designed with the principle that health care associated infections can be minimized or prevented by using proper infection prevention and control strategies. To be most effective, prevention measures must be taken in all environments, even if specific risks vary. To that end, in addition to emphasis on routine precautions and risk reduction strategies, the guidelines outline risk assessment methods for practitioners to establish the appropriate actions for particular circumstances. With these, the guidelines can be used in any number of clinical practice settings.

“It is very important that these guidelines are applicable across clinical practice settings,” says Anne Assaly, Chair of the Canadian Alliance of Regulators of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CAR). “Our professionals operate in such a range of environments – including ambulatory and community clinics; schools; long-term care facilities; private homes; and hospitals – so specific needs vary. This flexibility ensures that all speech-language pathologists and audiologists will be able to build infection prevention and control solutions that fit theirs and their patients’ unique needs.”

These guidelines were prepared by *the Canadian Interorganizational Group for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology*, which is comprised of the Canadian Academy of Audiologists and CASLPA (representing the professional associations) and CAR. Their mandate is to coordinate the work of regulatory bodies, professional associations and universities on projects/activities of mutual benefit and interest for the betterment of the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology and to collaborate on the development of practice standards and guidelines.

“Infection prevention and control works best when all members of the health care system actively work to keep risks low,” says Carri Johnson, President of the Canadian Academy of Audiology. “These guidelines help our members do their part.”

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The Canadian Interorganizational Group for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology will be holding a media teleconference on this matter at 2:00PM EDT. Dial-in # is (647) 427-7450 or (888) 231-8191, conference ID is 63348103

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