

I am an audiologist serving the NWT and western Nunavut. I work out of Yellowknife, NWT. I have worked here for nearly 14 years. Since August 2021 I have been working alone. We have been unable to fill our vacant position. The wait times for a routine adult assessment currently sit around 3.5 years and a routine pediatric assessment is over 2 years.

Children and Adults are going without basic audiological care because we are woefully understaffed. I am overworked and burnt out. I cannot provide appropriate audiological care under these circumstances.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission made 94 calls to action in 2015, many with regards to health and education. By providing more timely access to appropriate audiological care, we could help to break down barriers that continue to exist to disadvantage First Nation and Inuit children in accessing health and education. With our long wait lists we are putting up barriers, not breaking them down.

The long wait list that exists in the NWT is a significant barrier to appropriate audiological care for First Nation and Inuit children within our borders. The lack of timely audiological care means that potentially many children have untreated hearing loss that is affecting her speech and language development, their social development, their academic development. The cost of this is immeasurable.

We need more audiologists in Canada. Children need timely access to audiology services. Adults need more timely access to services to preserve their quality of life and prevent cognitive decline. The solution to these problems is more audiologists to meet the needs of NWT residents and western Nunavummiut.

Thank you

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