

Name: End of Life Care	Page: 1 of 1	Policy/Procedure: 12.9
Effective Date: February 2025	Revised:	

Policy

Audiologists, Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Communication Disorder Technicians (CDTs) may be consulted to address communication needs during end-of life-care. These staff play a critical role in supporting autonomy, dignity and quality of life by addressing communication, swallowing, hearing, and cognitive-communication challenges. These interventions are guided by a patient and family centred approach, ensuring care is respectful, inclusive, and aligned with Accreditation Canada's standards on end-of-life care.

In accordance with best practices, services provided will consider the physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual needs of patients, families, and caregivers. HSNS professionals will work collaboratively with interprofessional teams to provide timely and responsive care, ensuring that individuals receive equitable access to appropriate support.

Procedure

- Referrals will be treated as time-sensitive and prioritized based on client needs.
- Initial contact with the referral source, family, caregivers and/or other health care provider will occur within 24 hours when feasible.
- A needs assessment will be conducted, considering the client's medical status, communication and swallowing concerns (e.g., eating at risk, AAC needs, hearing, balance, or listening devices), and environmental context (e.g., palliative care, home, hospice).
- CDTs will provide support as directed by an Audiologist or SLP.
- All assessments, interventions, and recommendations will be documented in the client's health record in accordance with regulatory and HSNS standards.
- HSNS staff involved in end-of-life care may require emotional support, access to a quiet reflection space, or other wellness resources. Staff are encouraged to discuss their individual needs with their manager.

Reference Documents

- **Accreditation Canada Standards:** Palliative and End-of-Life Care
- **Position Statement (SAC, 2016):** The Role of Speech-Language Pathologists, Audiologists, and Communication Health Assistants in End-of-Life Care
- **Speech-Language and Audiology Canada Resources:**
 - The Role of an Audiologist in End-of-Life Care
 - The Role of a Speech-Language Pathologist in End-of-Life Care