



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
Association des malentendants canadiens

Cochlear Implant Advocacy in Canada

Using a National Report Card
to Influence Public Coverage Policy

Presented by Bowen Tang

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

October 2025

About Me



- Lived experience as a bilateral cochlear implant recipient
- Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Former President of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People
- Currently leading a development group comprising of patients and professionals to create a national CI report card



About CHHA Spend2Save Initiative



Founded in 2024 with support from CIICA

Includes national industry leaders, educators, researchers, manufacturers, and people with hearing loss

Facilitated by the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA), along with stakeholder partners and sponsors

Goal is to address issues related to adult cochlear implant access, barriers and inequalities in Canada

Virtual launch event was held on February 25th, 2025 – International Cochlear Implant Day

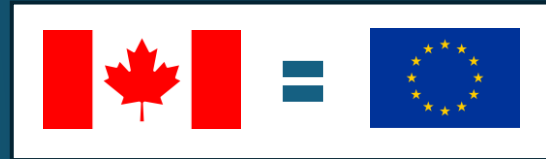
Funders and Sponsors



Stakeholder Partners



Canada is Like the European Union: A Collection of Autonomous Jurisdictions



Canada is one country, but we operate like the European Union, with TEN different provinces & THREE Territories

Each has autonomy to make their own decisions on healthcare and what to fund, how to fund & who to fund.

Different provinces/territories have very different levels of coverage.



Inspired by the 2024 Report Card from the Canadian Infant Hearing Task Force



➤ Our report card will focus on government support for adults

➤ Will shine a light on the barriers faced by adults who are:

- 1) in need of implantation, and
- 2) 2) existing implant recipients

➤ Adults have much less support, & are subjected to far greater inequalities between provinces

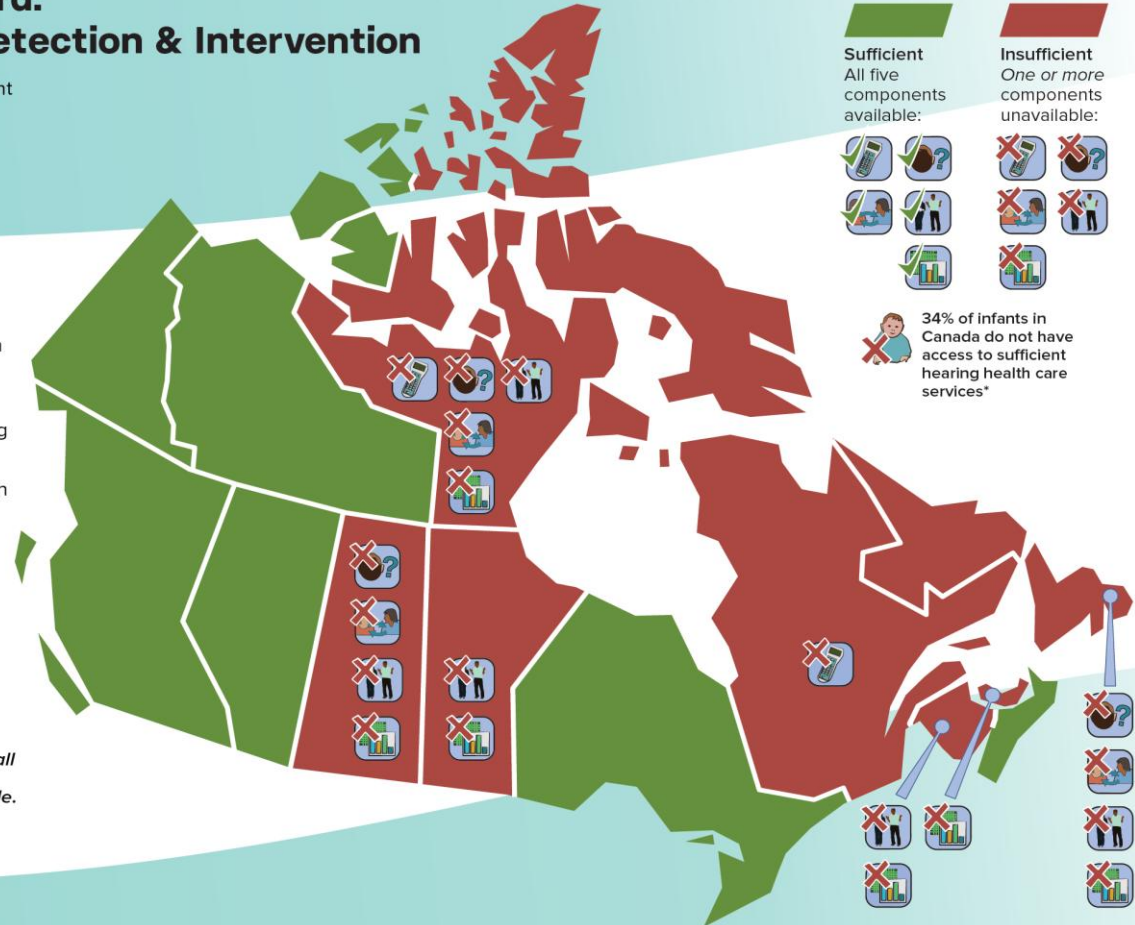
2024 Report Card: Early Hearing Detection & Intervention

Developed by the Canadian Infant Hearing Task Force (CIHTF)
(www.infanthearingcanada.ca)
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Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) programs aim to proactively address infant hearing health and include:

-  universal hearing screening of all newborns
-  identification of babies with permanent hearing loss
-  support services for technology & language development
-  family support
-  monitoring and evaluation of the program

Grades were assigned based on all five of the components being available province or territory-wide.



Developed by:



Endorsed by:



Canada's Overall Grade: **Insufficient**

*Based on 2022/23 Statistics Canada live birth rates for insufficient provinces and territories

Our Work & Advocacy Strategy



- Develop a national report card that assigns a “grade” to each province for the current state of adult cochlear implant care
- Use standardized and inclusive metrics to measure and evaluate coverage, based on publicly-reported objective data & survey responses
- Highlight specific areas of government support across all provinces, contrasting high-scoring provinces with those where improvement is needed
- Report card will be designed to educate & attract attention from CI community, media and government politicians

Strategically Selected Metrics

	Metrics	Reason for Selection
✓	Wait times for surgery	Easily measured determinant of long-term hearing outcomes
✓	Post-operative rehabilitative care	Critical to successful implantation and overall hearing health
✓	Geographical inequalities	Uncovers & shines a light on underserved locations across a large country
✓	Financial support for maintenance & upgrades	Inclusive of past implant recipients still facing overwhelming burden for hearing
✓	Multi-disciplinary support	Inclusive of the many healthcare professionals outside of audiology and surgical care that play a role in a holistic care model (e.g., social worker, SLP)

Key Objectives of Report Card



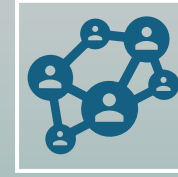
Attract political attention & policy action
(Ministry of Health, governing party legislators, opposition health critic & legislators)



Increase likelihood of **attracting media** interest (the type that politicians pay attention to)



Motivate more champions and advocates to emerge and be identified



Educate the public on the plight of those without support and the need for more public support



Establish a familiarity and baseline for future report cards

Timeline for Report Card



Sep/Oct
2025

Conduct surveys of
patients & health
professionals

Jan
2026

Finalize
report card

Nov
2025

Design the
framework
of the report
card

Feb 25,
2026

Launch report card
on International
Cochlear Implant
Day

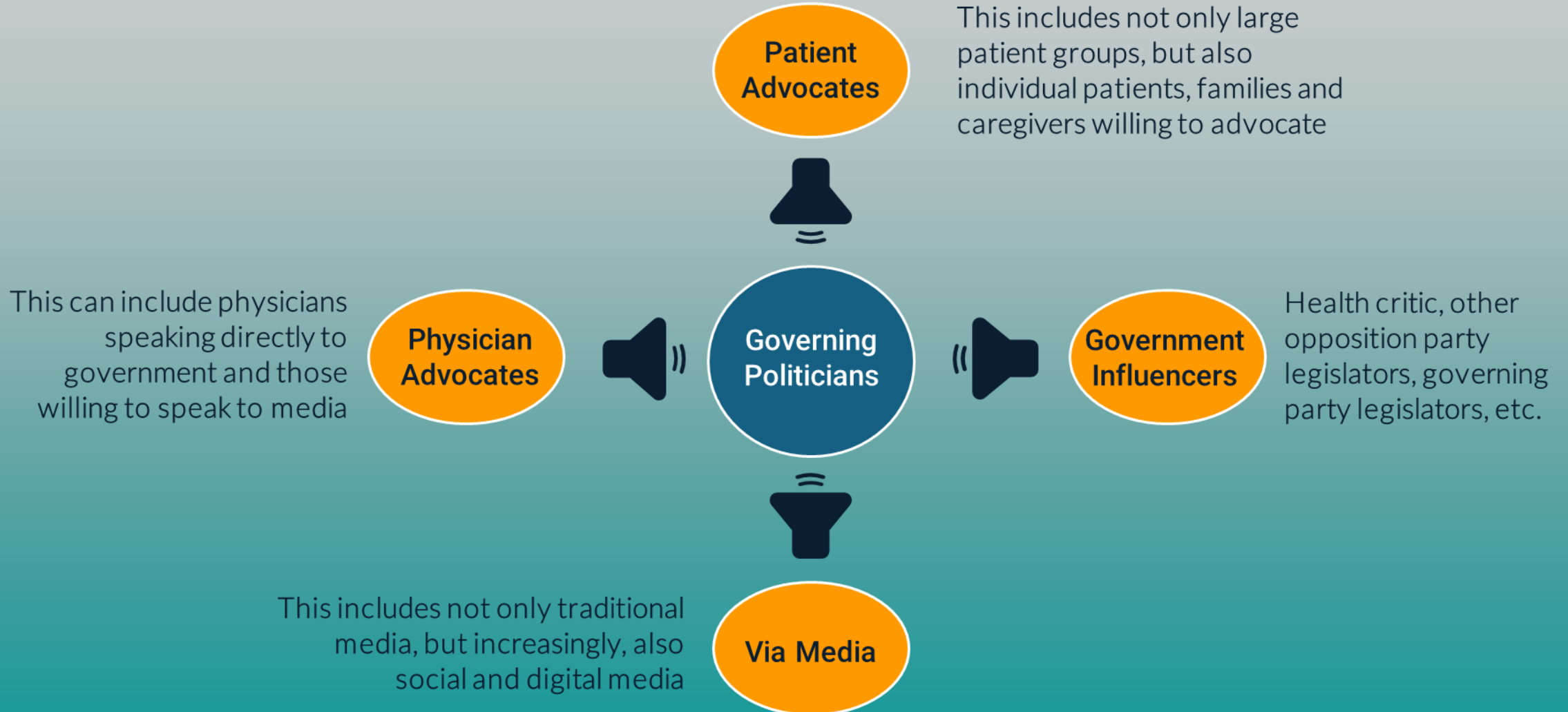
Sequencing the Elements of Action



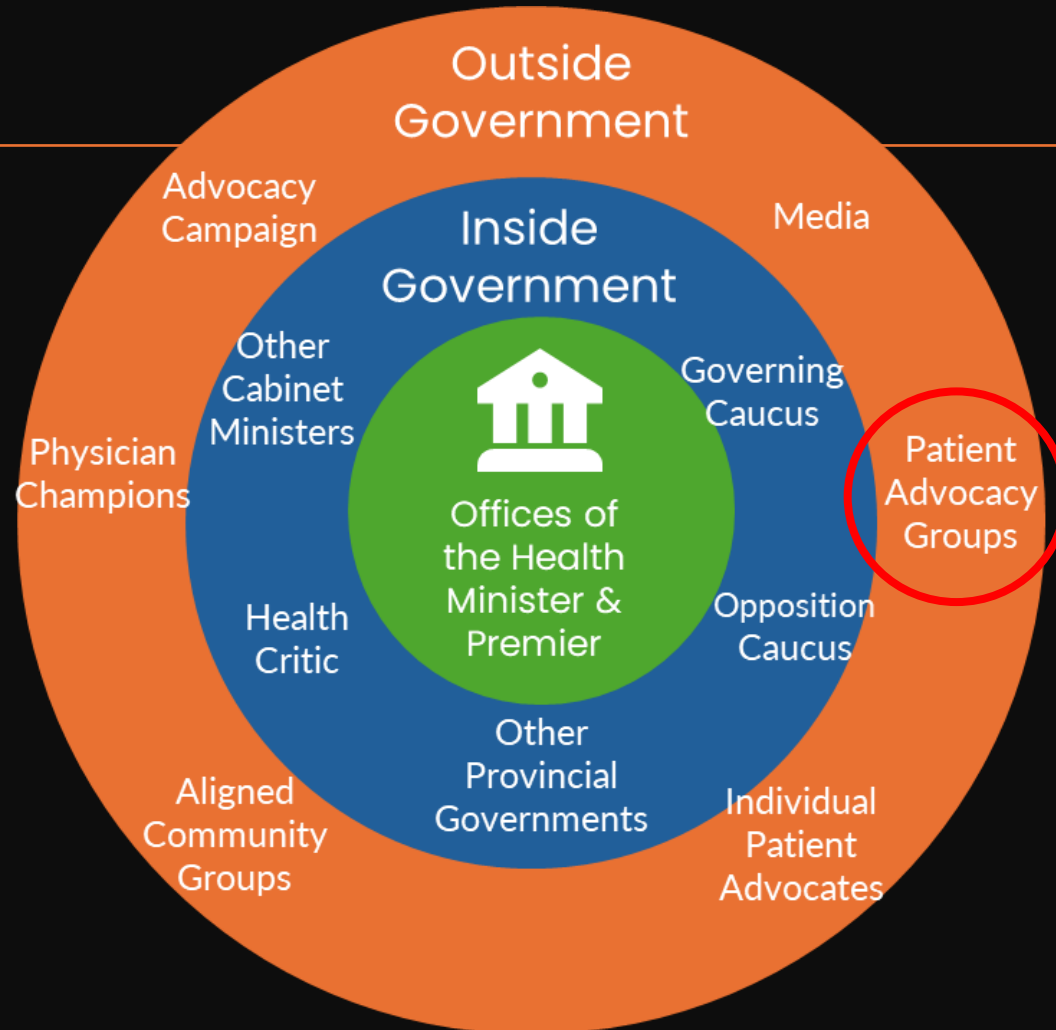
Communication Channels for Recruiting Advocates, Educating Stakeholders & Reaching Decision Makers



Harnessing Champions to Advocate to Decision Makers via Surround Sound



Influencing Government for Policy Action Via Many Targeted Audiences



There are various “Local Audiences” in target provinces that we need to advocate **THROUGH** in order to convince the actual decision makers in government

Our issues need to matter to those who matter to the decision makers