



Position Paper

October 2016

Hearing Instrument Specialists H.I.S.

Association of Hearing Instrument Practitioners of Ontario (AHIP)

Statement of Purpose

This document provides a general description of Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) in Ontario, highlighting the range of hearing healthcare services they provide. It includes their scope of practice, qualifications and ethical standards as AHIP members.

This document is intended as a resource for Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.), healthcare professionals, government agencies, health insurers, educators, consumers and the general public.

Scope of Practice

Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) of Ontario are AHIP-certified hearing healthcare professionals in the practice of testing hearing, selection, fitting, counseling and dispensing hearing aids and associated devices, and the removal of cerumen from the external ear canal where a member's practice includes it.

As AHIP members, Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) are ethically bound to provide services that are consistent with the scope of their competence, education and experience.

1. Testing Hearing

The management of hearing loss often begins with an otoscopic exam, case history and a hearing assessment to identify the presence or absence of a problem that may warrant further consultation. Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) are trained to refer individuals to a physician for further investigation if any recognized Ontario Medical Association OMA – Red Flags exist.

Hearing assessments conducted by Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) assess the type and degree of hearing loss. Hearing assessments are provided in accordance with the AHIP Standards of Practice Policy (March 2015).

2. Hearing Aid and Assistive Devices Selection

Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) recommend/select hearing instruments and assistive devices in full consultation with the patient/client taking into account their case history, complete hearing assessment and their physical and lifestyle requirements.

3. Dispensing and Counselling

Hearing aids are dispensed by a Hearing Instrument Specialist (H.I.S.) pursuant to a prescription from either an Ontario physician or audiologist in accordance with section #31 of the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 S.O. 1991, c19*.

Verification and validation procedures are conducted as an essential component of a successful hearing aid fitting.

Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) provide: earmold impressions as necessary, programming, instruction and counselling for the proper use and care of hearing aids and assistive listening devices.

They offer ongoing follow-up counseling to support and encourage the continued use of the hearing aids and/or assistive listening devices. Hearing instrument dispensing services must be provided in accordance with the AHIP Standard of Practice Policy of AHIP (March 2015).

- Note: Testing hearing, selection and dispensing of hearing aids and associated devices are not controlled acts under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 S.O. 1991, c19*.

Qualifications

Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) in Ontario must successfully complete a provincially recognized, Hearing Instrument Specialist (H.I.S.) program and a one thousand (1,000) hour Hearing Instrument Specialist (H.I.S.) Internship Program, and pass an International Licensing Examination (ILE).

The practice of cerumen removal requires advanced accreditation which meets the required educational principles outlined in the AHIP Cerumen Removal Policy (December 2014).

Recognized by Government & Industry

Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) are recognized authorizers with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Assistive Devices Program.

Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) are also recognized by all other Government agencies including: the Ontario's Workplace & Insurance Board (WSIB), Veteran Affairs Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) work with insurance companies to facilitate access to and proper administration of private and/or company hearing aid benefit plans.

Ethical Standards

As AHIP members, Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) in Ontario have an obligation to act in the best interest of the patient /client , to uphold the dignity and honour of the profession and to practice in accordance with the ethical principles set out in the AHIP Code of Professional Conduct (Schedule 1 of AHIP's By-Laws). The code sets standards of professional integrity and practice including legal requirements and conduct with patients/clients, colleagues, other health care professionals and the general public.

Professional Association

AHIP represents and guides Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.) in their practice in the best interest of the hard of hearing of Ontario. AHIP responsibly administers entry to practice, standards of practice and consumer complaint management. Hearing Instruments Specialists (H.I.S.) must be practicing members of AHIP in good standing in order to maintain authorizer status with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Assistive Devices Program.

To obtain more information about Hearing Instrument Specialists (H.I.S.), please call 1-888-745-2447 or go to our website www.helpmehear.ca

