

July 10th 2017

## **ANNOUNCEMENT: New 'Alternative Hearing Assistance Supplement'**

**Good news** for Deaf or hard of hearing people who are receiving Persons with Disabilities (PWD) or Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers to Employment (PPMB) benefits or receive Income Assistance and live in a special care facility!

This spring the BC Government (the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation - MSDSI) introduced a new **\$100 monthly** 'Alternative Hearing Assistance' supplement. This is available to eligible people with permanent profound hearing loss in both ears.

This supplement was implemented following a human rights complaint supported by lawyers at the BC Public Interest and Advocacy Centre (BC PIAC).

**If you receive PWD or PPMB benefits, have a permanent profound hearing loss in both ears, and cannot benefit from a hearing instrument (such as a hearing aid) to understand speech, you can apply!**

### **Here are the steps to take:**

- 1) Go to the Income Assistance (PWD) office to request the 'Alternative Hearing Assistance Supplement' form.
- 2) Book an appointment with an Audiologist at an Island Health Clinic or a private hearing clinic.
- 3) If you need an interpreter, ask the clinic to request an Interpreter by contacting IDHHC.
- 4) The Audiologist will give you a hearing test, and complete the form to show that you cannot benefit from a hearing aid (or other hearing instrument) to understand speech.
- 5) Fax or mail the completed form back to MSDSI Health Assistance Branch (info on form).
- 6) Wait for MSDSI decision.

### **More information and how IDHHC can help:**

- 1) Contact Leslee ([leslee@idhhc.ca](mailto:leslee@idhhc.ca)) in Victoria, or Alex ([alex@idhhc.ca](mailto:alex@idhhc.ca)) in Nanaimo if you need support or more information.
- 2) IDHHC has confirmed that the following **Island Health Clinics** will provide this one-time-only **free** hearing assessment for adults on PWD or PPMB:
  - a) Island Health Clinic at 1665 Grant St in Nanaimo: 250-755-6269 or [nanaimohearing@viha.ca](mailto:nanaimohearing@viha.ca)
  - b) Island Health Clinic at #104 – 501 4<sup>th</sup> St. in Courtenay: 250-331-8526 or [courtenayhearing@viha.ca](mailto:courtenayhearing@viha.ca)
  - c) Victoria Health Unit Hearing Clinic at 1947 Cook Street in Victoria: 250-388-2250 or [Hearing\\_Clinic@viha.ca](mailto:Hearing_Clinic@viha.ca)
  - d) West Shore Health Unit Hearing Clinic at 345 Wale Road in Victoria: 250-519-3490 or [Hearing\\_Clinic@viha.ca](mailto:Hearing_Clinic@viha.ca)
- 3) You can also take your form to a private hearing clinic if you've received hearing aids or services from them, or if you live far away from Victoria, Nanaimo or Courtenay. Please know that private clinics may charge for their services.
- 4) IDHHC has confirmed that **MIS will cover the interpreting costs for these hearing tests at Island Health Clinics only**. When you contact the Island Health Clinic to make your appointment, please ask them to contact IDHHC to book an interpreter. (Leah at IDHHC at 250-592-8144 or email [interpreting@idhhc.ca](mailto:interpreting@idhhc.ca)).
- 5) Bring your ID and Personal Health Number (care card) to your appointment.

**Please note:** if Income Assistance has purchased a hearing aid for you in past 36 months, you may not be eligible for this supplement, but if you have a permanent profound hearing loss in both ears, you can still apply. The final decision about who receives this supplement is made by MSDSI.