

## **2001 PALS: UNMET NEEDS FOR DISABILITY-SPECIFIC AIDS, DEVICES AND SERVICES TO ASSIST WITH COMMUNICATION**

Individuals with a seeing, hearing, speech, or learning disability may experience barriers that prevent or impede communication with others in their community and thus impede or prevent them from participating fully in the activities that they choose to do.

### **Do Children with Disabilities have Unmet Needs for Aids, Devices or Services that Impede their Ability to Fully Participate in their Everyday Activities that Require Some Form of Communication?**

Yes, many do and it depends on the type of disability.

- There were 46,045 Ontario children aged five to 14 years whose parent or guardian said that they think his/her child has a learning disability or that a teacher, doctor, or other health professional has said that his/her child has a learning disability. 36% of those children needed an aid, equipment, or service related to their learning disability that they did not have to support them in school and in their other everyday activities.
- There were 9,355 Ontario children aged five to 14 years whose parent or guardian reported that his/her child had a hearing disability. Among those children, 17% needed an aid, device, or service specific for their hearing disability that they did not have to support them in participating in school activities and in their other everyday activities.
- There were 30,700 Ontario children aged five to 14 years whose parent or guardian reported that his/her child had difficulty speaking or making himself/herself understood. 9% of these children needed an aid, device, or service specific to their communicating difficulties that they did not have to support them in fully participating in their school activities and in their other everyday activities.
- There were 5,600 Ontario children aged five to 14 years whose parent or guardian reported that his/her child had a seeing disability. 7% of these children needed an aid, device, or service specific to their seeing disability that they did not have to support them in participating in their school activities and in other everyday activities.

### **Are there Ontario Adults with a Hearing Disability who Report Unmet Needs for Aids, Devices or Services Specific to their Hearing Disability?**

Yes, there are significant numbers within the two hearing disability populations — those that currently wear a hearing aid but still experience some difficulty in hearing (142,375) and those who do not currently wear a hearing aid (293,390).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted here that there are 30,420 Ontario adults who report wearing a hearing aid but who also report that, with their hearing aid, they no longer experience any limitation in their ability to hear. The majority of these adults (93%) are aged 60 years and older. These 30,420 individuals are not included in PALS as having a hearing disability.

Among the 142,375 Ontario adults who report having some limitation even when wearing their hearing aid,

- 63% report that they have no other needs for aids, devices or services related to their hearing disability.
- 36,900 (26%) of these Ontario adults report that they use an aid or device or service related to their hearing disability in addition to their hearing aid and all of their “hearing” needs are met; and
- 11% Ontario adults (16,200) who use a hearing aid but need other aids, devices, or services specific to their hearing disability to support them in their everyday activities.

Among the 293,390 Ontario adults who report having some limitation in their ability to hear and who do not currently wear a hearing aid,

- 69% or 203,010 say they do not use nor do they need any aid, device, or service specific to their hearing disability to support them in their everyday activities;
- 10% (29,515 persons) report that they do use an aid (other than a hearing aid), device, or service specific to their hearing disability and that their “hearing” needs are totally met; and
- 21% Ontario adults (60,870) who need a hearing aid or other aids, devices, or services specific to their hearing disability to support them in their everyday activities.

### **Are there Ontario Adults with a Seeing Disability who Report Unmet Needs for Aids, Devices or Services Specific to their Seeing Disability?**

Yes, there are significant numbers within the two seeing disability populations — those that currently wear glasses or contact lenses but still experience some difficulty in seeing (191,625) and those who do not currently wear glasses or contact lenses (34,895).<sup>2</sup>

Among the 191,625 Ontario adults who report having some limitation even when wearing their glasses or contact lenses,

- 60% report that they have no other needs for aids, devices or services related to their seeing disability;
- 53,835 (28% (53,835) of these Ontario adults report that they use an aid or device or service related to their seeing disability in addition to their glasses or contact lenses and all of their “seeing” needs are met; and
- 12% Ontario adults (23,030) who use glasses or contact lenses but need other aids, devices, or services specific to their seeing disability to support them in their everyday activities.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted here that there are 1,036,975 Ontario adults who report wearing glasses or contact lenses but who also report that, with their glasses or contact lenses, they no longer experience any limitation in their ability to see. These 30,420 individuals are not included in PALS as having a seeing disability.

Among the 34,895 Ontario adults who report having some limitation in their ability to see and who do not currently wear glasses or contact lenses,

- 53% or 18,580 say they do not use nor do they need any aid, device, or service specific to their seeing disability to support them in their everyday activities;
- 21% (7,200 persons) report that they do use an aid (other than glasses or contact lenses), device, or service specific to their seeing disability and that their “seeing” needs are totally met; and
- 26% Ontario adults (9,115) who need glasses or contact lenses, or other aids, devices, or services specific to their seeing disability to support them in their everyday activities.

### **Are there Ontario Adults who have Difficulty Speaking or Making Themselves Understood who Report Unmet Needs for Aids, Devices or Services Specific to their Speech Disability?**

Only a few. Of the 152,405 Ontario adults who report difficulty speaking or difficulty in making themselves understood, 84% reported that they neither use nor needed aids, devices, or services specific to their speech disability to support them in their everyday activities. For the majority of the remaining 24,385 Ontario adults with a speech disability, their need for aids, devices, or services specific to their speech disability had been met. The number of adults who had unmet needs was small and not releasable from Statistics Canada.

### **Are there Ontario Adults with a Learning Disability who Report Unmet Needs for Aids, Devices or Services Specific to their Learning Disability?**

Yes. There are 197,355 Ontario adults who report having a condition that makes it difficult in general to learn or a teacher, doctor or other health professional has said that they have a learning disability. 82% or 162,325 Ontario adults report that they do not need an aid, device, or service specific to their learning disability or learning difficulty to support them in their everyday activities. An additional 8% or 14,920 individuals report that they do use an aid, device, or service specific to their learning disability or difficulty and that they do not need any other support specific to their learning disability or difficulty to assist them with their everyday activities.