

Remote Cochlear Implant Program Awarded by Health Quality BC

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Core Team Members

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Background

In December 2020, in collaboration with the Virtual Care Services team at Island Health, the Adult Cochlear Program at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver launched the Remote Cochlear Implant Program, enabling implant recipients to undergo mapping (programming) of their device through a virtual platform. Most patients either no longer need to leave their home community for follow-up visits, or have a closer health care centre for their appointments, although the option is always open to travel to St. Paul's.

The adult cochlear implant program at St. Paul's serves more than 970 people in the province with cochlear implants, an electronic device inserted into the cochlea, the organ of hearing, which helps to restore hearing. Approximately 180 of those patients live on Vancouver Island; half or more of whom are 65 years of age or older. Appointments occur four weeks after surgery, then at periodic intervals for the first year, and then annually for life.

Patients are connected to their audiologist via a dedicated desktop video conferencing system. Using remote access technology, the audiologist is able to take control of the programming software on the hospital laptop, enabling the patient's sound processor settings to be optimized. Care providers have called the service seamless and the technology easy to use. Patient feedback has been very good as well.

Program Success and Recognition from Health Quality BC

Since the start of the service at the end of 2020, there have been over 120 remote mapping appointments supported in the virtual care room at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. Clinics are held twice a month, and the program workflow allows for the audiologists to see three patients per remote clinic, as opposed to two at the in-person clinic in Vancouver.

In March of 2023, the Remote Cochlear Implant program was recognized with an award from Health Quality BC for services that support patients living with illness or disability. The Virtual Care Services team at Island Health is proud to be a partner in delivering this valuable and unique service.



Photo: Cochlear implant recipient Alan Holt waits in a Victoria hospital for St. Paul's Cochlear Implant audiologists to start his first remote mapping session. Photo: Lauren Noel, Island Health

For more information about the Remote Cochlear Implant Program, please visit the links below:

- [The BC Adult Cochlear Implant Program](#)
- [Health Quality BC Award Winners - St. Paul's Remote Cochlear Implant Program](#)
- [Island Health News - Remote cochlear implant clinic a virtual godsend for BC patients](#)