

# WAITING TO HEAR

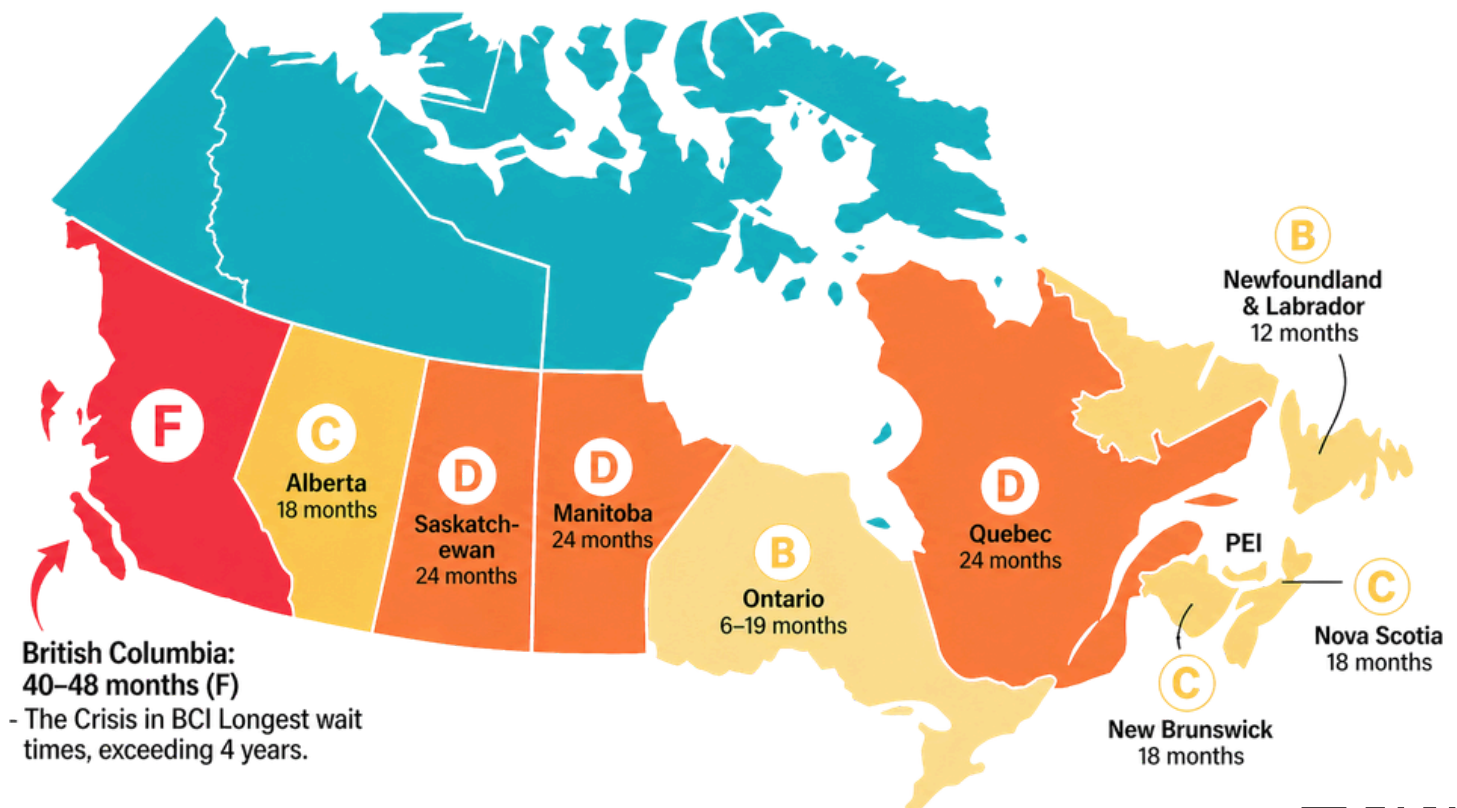
Hear More, Live More: Canada's 2026 Adult Cochlear Implant Report Card

## Context Summary

More than 191,000 Canadian adults could benefit from a cochlear implant—a medically necessary intervention for severe hearing loss—yet only about 13,000 currently have one. Access depends on provincial residence rather than clinical need, creating a “postal code lottery” driven by funding caps and inconsistent policies. As a result, some Canadians wait four years for surgery while others wait just six months. This inequity is costly: untreated hearing loss costs the Canadian economy an estimated \$25 billion annually in lost productivity.

The Provincial “Postal Code Lottery”: Where you live determines how long you wait to hear.

National Inconsistency in Wait Times (Referral to Surgery)



Scan for full report and references.



# Why It Matters: Quality of Life & Economics



**5x Greater Risk of Dementia:** Untreated severe-to-profound hearing loss is the largest modifiable risk factor. 2 4 5



**35% Higher Risk of Depression:** Hearing loss is strongly associated with social isolation and loneliness. 6 7 8



**3x Increased Fall Risk:** Falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths for Canadian seniors. 10 11



**47.9% Employment Rate:** Significantly lower than the 73.6% rate for those without hearing disabilities. 9

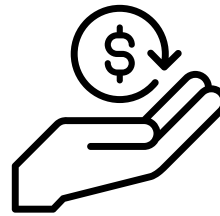
## The Economic Case for Investment



### \$25 Billion

#### Annual National Cost

Disabling hearing loss costs the Canadian economy billions through lost productivity, absenteeism, and early retirement.



### \$2.59

#### Return for Every \$1 Invested

The World Health Organization (WHO) confirms that cochlear implants are a highly cost-effective public health investment.

## Recommendations for Provincial Governments



### Reduce Wait Times to 6 Months

Remove funding caps to expand surgical capacity and ensure timely access to cochlear implants within six months.



### Improve Access for Rural and Remote Patients

Provide travel supports and expand remote programming technologies for followup care to improve access and continuity of services.



### Fund 5-Year Sound Processor Replacement

Adequately fund the replacement of sound processors every five years to ensure continued functionality and prevent technology obsolescence.