

WAITING TO HEAR

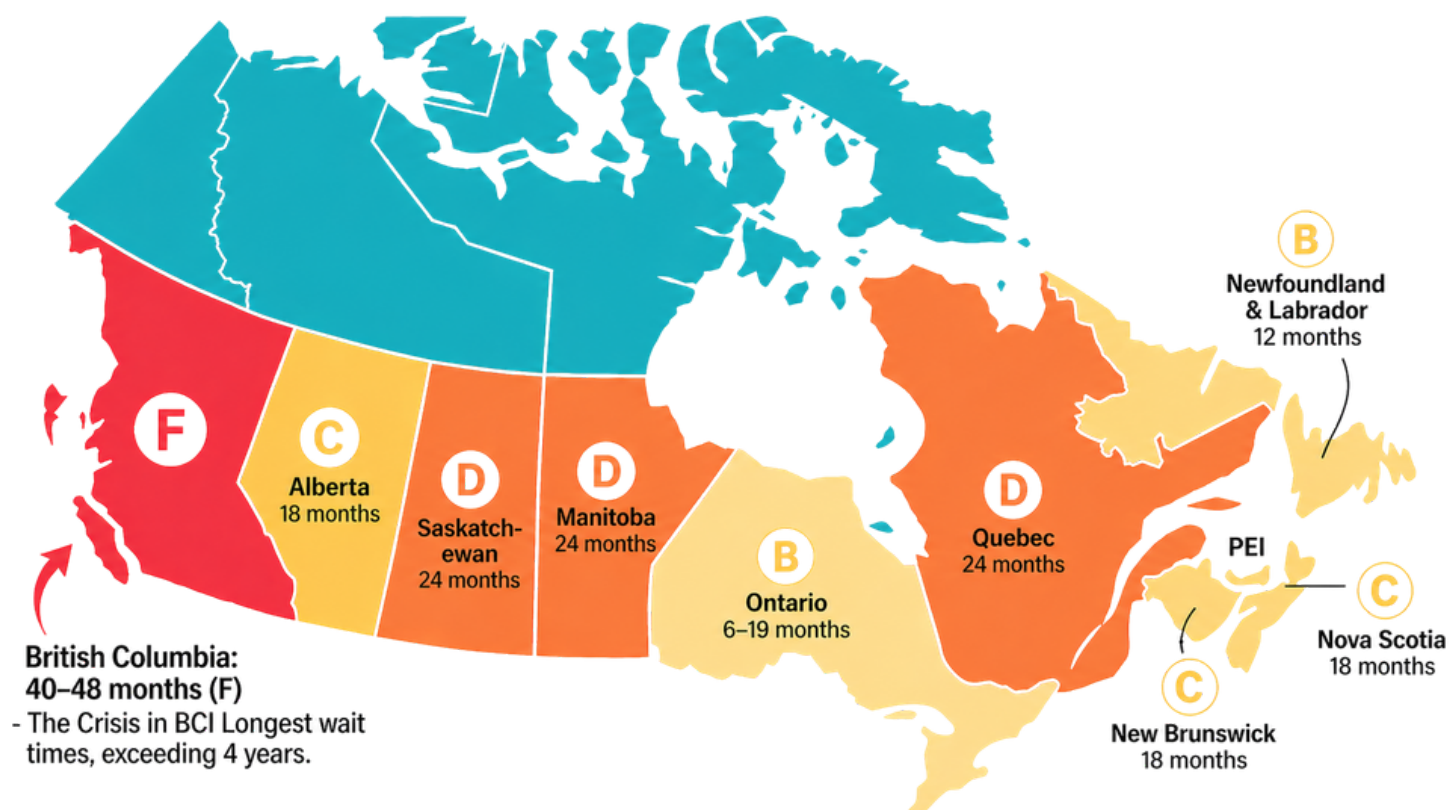
Hear More, Live More: Canada's 2026 Adult Cochlear Implant Report Card

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.