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January 31, 2003

Honourable Colin Hansen  
Minister of Health, Province of British Columbia  
1515 Blanshard Street  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 3C8

**RE: Cochlear Implant restrictions**

Dear Sir:

We are pleased that your government recognises the importance of early intervention for children who have special needs and circumstances as expressed in "*Vision and Mission*." This is especially true for children with hearing loss as we can attest to from personal experience.

Our son has a severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss, which has required various early intervention services. We believe that the services provided for our son by the various Ministries is money well spent! Today Curtis is a top college student, independent, employed participant in mainstream society. We have no doubt that the services he has received contribute to this success story.

It has come to our attention that not all deaf children in B.C. are receiving timely intervention. There is a waiting list for cochlear implantation at B.C. Children's Hospital, which puts children at huge risk for delays in speech, language and cognitive development. Research has established that early intervention can stop effects of auditory-sensory deprivation.

It is a GOOD INVESTMENT for government to fund cochlear implants, as the recipients will require few services in future compared to deaf children who are deprived of this wonderful technology. Cochlear implantation is giving children all over the world the opportunity to hear and lead normal lives. It should be seen as a standard of care for deaf children.

Without the same level of service, we wonder whether young deaf children today living in British Columbia can succeed as our son has.

Respectfully submitted,

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