



AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Brief Coverage Statement

Colorado Medicaid covers Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices (AACD) which allows a client with an expressive speech language disorder to electronically represent vocabulary and express thoughts or ideas to meet the client's speech needs, as an in home benefit.

Services Addressed in Other Policies

- None

Eligible Providers

Providers must be enrolled with Colorado Medicaid and maintain a certification for Medicare accreditation through a Medicare approved accreditation agency.

RENDERING PROVIDERS

Accredited Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Suppliers

PRESCRIBING PROVIDERS

- Physicians (MDs and DOs)
- Physician Assistants
- Nurse Practitioners

Eligible Places of Services

Client's place of residence. Medical supplies provided to clients in hospitals or facilities must be provided by the facility. See 10 CCR 2505-10 §8.590.2.B.

Eligible Clients

Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices (AACD) are a covered benefit for any Colorado Medicaid client with a well documented speech deficit and demonstrate the comprehension and physical skills necessary to communicate using the device.

Covered Services

AACDs are approved for communication support for clients with severe dysarthria, apraxia, and aphasia and to improve the health outcomes of clients with severe communication disabilities. A speech-language pathology assessment process considers AACD only after treatment related to improved, natural communication methods have been proven to be ineffective. It should be well



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documented that the AACD will improve the client's ability to communicate medical needs or prevent secondary impairments, ability to provide feedback on treatment or therapy programs, increase independence and personal safety, and express basic needs. Devices include whole message output devices, speech generating devices, and speech generating software and any necessary accessories.

Digitized Speech Devices

These devices are sometimes referred to as "whole message" speech output devices, using words or phrases that have been recorded by someone other than the AACD system user for playback when commanded by the AACD system user.

- A speech generating device using pre-recorded messages, less than or equal to 8 minutes recording time
- A speech generating device using pre-recorded messages, greater than 8 minutes but less than or equal to 20 minutes recording time
- A speech generating device using pre-recorded messages, greater than 20 minutes but less than or equal to 40 minutes recording time
- A speech generating device using pre-recorded messages, greater than 40 minutes recording time

Synthesized Speech Device

- A speech generating device requiring message formulation by spelling, whereas client access is through physical contact with the device. Use of this system is not limited to pre-recorded messages and messages can be created by the client.
- A speech generating device with capability to create multiple types of message. Multiple methods of message creation must include message selection by two or more of the following: letters, words, pictures or symbols. Multiple methods of access must include the capability to access the device by direct physical contact with a keyboard or touch screen and one or more of the following indirect selection techniques: joystick/switches, head mouse, optical head pointer, light pointer, infrared pointer, scanning device or Morse code.

Tablet Computers (e.g. iPad)

- Tablet computers are a benefit when all AACD medical necessity criteria defined in this policy has been met. A trial period of two months is required prior to requesting a purchase of this device.
 - Tablet computer requests for must specify that the device has a primary use as an AACD and must have the appropriate identifying modifier.

Software

A speech generating software program for communication purposes that can be used on a personal computer or personal digital assistant is a covered benefit with a supporting diagnosis.



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Replacement Lithium Batteries

Non-electric augmentative or alternative communication device communication board

Accessory

- A mounting device that may be used for wheelchair or table mounting so the device is within reach of the client
- Accessories not otherwise classified may be used to enhance the AACD system as the client's condition changes.
- Orthotic and prosthetic supplies and accessories, and/or service components of another HCPCS L code.

Non-Covered Services and General Limitations

The following items are considered not necessary to operate the AACD system, are unrelated to the AACD system, and are not covered:

- Printers
- Carrying bags
- ~~Wireless internet access devices (including blue tooth)~~
- Laptop or desktop computers, PDAs, or other devices that are **not** dedicated ~~to the~~for primary use as an AACD system

Prior Authorization Requirements

Prior Authorization is required for all Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices as outlined in the current Colorado Medical Assistance Program Supply and Durable Medical Equipment CMS codes bulletin. Questionnaire #13 is required as well as documentation to support medical necessity.

References

2009 Texas Medicaid Provider Procedures Manual Policy 24.4.27.11-24.4.27.13

Kansas Health Policy Authority (KHPA) Medical Assistance Program Provider Manual DME

Minnesota Department of Human Services MHCP Provider Manual Equipment and Supplies

Rev. 02-17-2010

North Carolina Division of Medical Assistance Durable Medical Equipment Clinical Coverage

Policy #5A 10-30-2009

Priority Health, Medical Policy No. 91499-RO, Augmentative Communication Speech

Generating Devices for Medicaid Members