

Speech Generating Communication Device Benefit Information Sheet

Introduction

Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) provides funding for Albertans with long term and chronic disabilities for basic medical equipment and supplies to meet their clinically assessed needs. AADL benefits are provided to support individuals to live as independently as possible and to participate in daily activities in their communities.

For individuals with severe communication impairments, AADL provides funding to obtain speech generating communication devices, SGCDs. Communication devices are provided to help people communicate as independently as possible on a daily basis.

Who is Eligible?

Albertans of all ages who have a severe communication impairment may be eligible to use a speech generating communication device. The device is intended to be used as the person's primary means of communication.

The communication impairment must be severe enough that the person cannot speak or be understood by others. This may be due to conditions such as cerebral palsy or autism, an acquired condition such as a stroke or brain injury, or disease such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

How can someone receive help through this benefit?

To be considered for assistance, a person needs to be assessed by an SGCD Service Centre.

For people who are receiving help from a speech-language pathologist in their local community, the Service Centre will work with the community clinicians during the assessment and determine what intervention and follow-up is required. A list of current SGCD Service Centres recognized by AADL is posted on the AADL website:

(<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/aadl/aadl-sgcd-centres.pdf>)

What is an SGCD Service Centre?

Health or educational based agencies that provide augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) services and support people with complex communication needs are eligible to apply to AADL to become an SGCD Service Centre. The Service Centre must be staffed by clinicians who are knowledgeable about assessment and intervention options for people with complex communication needs and familiar with the SGCD equipment available. A speech-language pathologist works with the client and family to identify communication needs. An occupational therapist is part of the team to assist with mounting, access, positioning or ergonomic needs. The Service Centre works collaboratively with the client's community or school based team.

What kind of speech generating communication devices are covered?

The selection of the most appropriate communication device is part of the assessment process and is based on a match between the assessed needs and abilities of the client and the desired features in the communication system using a feature matching process. Using the communication systems under consideration is an important aspect of the assessment process to ensure that it meets the needs of the person to communicate with others throughout their day.

AADL provides a range of communication devices. Access equipment such as switches or mouse alternatives are also provided, as well as mounting options to ensure that the communication device can be used in all environments.

The SGCD approved product list is available on the AADL website:

<http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/AADL-Manual-AS-Products.pdf>

The communication system may comprise new or recycled equipment. SGCD equipment that is no longer needed by a client is returned to a Service Centre and may be recycled. All recycled equipment available has been checked to ensure that it is fully functioning.

Communication device options include:

1. Alphabet based devices: these are alphabet/keyboard based with a display that shows the message created. These devices are used by communicators who prefer to use writing as the basis for creating messages
2. Dynamic display devices: these devices have a touch screen display and many options to create unique message using pictures and words or a combination of both. They can be used for face-to-face communication as well as electronic forms of communication. A range of tablet and iPad based options are available.
3. Simple static display devices: these devices have simple programming options and messages are represented by pictures or photographs. They are designed for communicators who are able to use a small pre-recorded message set.

Do I have to contribute to the cost of the communication device?

AADL is a cost-share program which means that clients and AADL share the cost of approved benefits received from AADL. Clients pay 25% of the cost of the benefit directly to the supplier, and AADL pays 75%. Clients contribute no more than \$500 per family per benefit year (July 1 to June 30) for all AADL benefits received.

Low income clients and those receiving income supplement benefits may be exempt from cost sharing. To determine if a client is eligible for cost share exemption, an **Application for Cost-Share Exemption** must be completed and submitted to AADL.

How can I receive more information?

Check the Alberta Aids to Daily Living website for more detailed information:

AADL website:

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-as>