

Online Training

Alberta Aids to Daily Living




Classification: Public



Module 2.5

Speech Generating Communication Device (SGCD)

Classification: Public




AADL Policy Manual GN

General Policy and Procedures

Speech Generating Communication Devices (SGCD)

Classification: Public



Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)

AADL provides funding for Albertans with long-term and chronic disabilities

- Benefits are provided to support individuals to live as independently as possible and to participate in daily activities in their communities
- Funding is provided to cover *BASIC* medical equipment and supplies to meet *CLINICALLY ASSESSED NEED*

⁴
Classification: Public



Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)

AADL General Policy & Procedures - Policy Manual GN

- AADL establishes service standards for all funded benefits in accordance with Alberta Aids to Daily Living & Extended Health Benefits Regulations, Public Health Act
- It is an AADL requirement that all AADL authorizers are familiar with the general AADL policies
 - Client eligibility
 - Authorizer role
 - Cost-share

⁵
Classification: Public



Resources Available

AADL website

<https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-aids-to-daily-living.aspx>

AADL general policy manual

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

AADL Bulletins

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/alberta-aids-to-daily-living-aadl-bulletin>


⁶
Classification: Public



AADL Policy Manual AS

Speech Generating Communication Devices (SGCD)

Classification: Public



AADL SGCD Policy

- **AADL SGCD Policy**
 - For individuals with severe communication impairments, funding is provided for communication systems to help people communicate as independently as possible on a daily basis within their community
 - Speech that is not functional for daily communication
- **AADL role includes**
 - Setting client eligibility criteria
 - Criteria for SGCD Service Centres, SGCD Authorizers and Manufacturers /Distributors for SGCD Benefit
 - Establishing an approved product list


8
Classification: Public



Alberta Aids to Daily Living

1. Develop and maintain SGCD Policy Manual AS and procedures
2. Establish, maintain and update approved the SGCD Approved Product List
3. Monitor the provision of AADL-funded benefits to ensure communication benefits are used effectively by clients
 - Conduct outcome measures, evaluate client satisfaction

9
Classification: Public



Alberta Aids to Daily Living: Accountability

- **AADL Policies regulate provincial standards of care**
 - Standards for assessment and assessment review process
- **Evidence based decision-making**
 - Assessment criteria
 - Goal based to support clinical need
 - Roles and responsibilities defined for clients and authorizers
- **Clinical and fiscal accountability**
 - Outcomes and client satisfaction

10
Classification: Public



Resources Available on AADL Website

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

11
Classification: Public



Roles and Responsibilities

Speech Generating Communication Device (SGCD)


Classification: Public



Speech Generating Communication Device Benefit (SGCD)

- **SGCD is a secondary product range for AADL**
 - Criteria for Authorizers are specific to the SGCD benefit area
- **Authorization process**
 - Assessment conducted by AADL SGCD authorizers
 - Authorizers must be employed by an AADL-recognized SGCD Service Centre

13
Classification: Public




SGCD Service Centres

Health or educational based agencies that provide Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) services are eligible to become an SGCD Service Centre

Requirements to become an SGCD Service Centre:

- Have a recognized mandate to assess and support the AAC needs of clients
- Employ clinicians who are designated to provide AAC services including speech language pathologist(s) and occupational therapist(s)
- Provide a range of devices from the APL appropriate for their Service Centre level
- Support the clinical and educational needs of the AAC team

14
Classification: Public



Service Centre Level 1


Level 1 Centres provide AAC services to clients in specific age groups or diagnostic categories

Their clients require simple SGCD solutions, with direct access needs, and no mounting

Clinician expectations:

- Minimum of one speech language pathologist designated to provide AAC services
 - Employed directly or contracted by Service Centre
- Familiar with a range of devices on the Approved Product List
 - Catalogue No's A400 and A402
- Assessment documentation submitted directly to AADL for authorization

15
Classification: Public



Service Centre Level 2

Level 2 Centres provide services to clients in specific age groups or diagnostic categories

Clients have direct access needs and use standard SGCD solutions

Clinicians work within a collaborative team environment

- Team must include two or more SLP authorizers
- Team must include an OT if access needs for direct selection and mounting issues are present
- Team members must be familiar with the range of equipment on the APL
 - Catalogue No's A400, A402, A406, A407, A408, A410
- SGCD assessment review process required

16
Classification: Public



Service Centre Level 3

Level 3 Centres provide services for clients of varying ages and diagnostic categories, many with complex needs

Clients require custom solutions to meet their communication needs

Clinicians work within a collaborative team environment to integrate complex assistive technology solutions for communication, access and mounting

- Team includes SLPs, OT, and support personnel
- Team is familiar with the full SGCD APL
 - Catalogue No's A400, A402, A406, A407, A408, A410, A421, A422
- SGCD assessment review process required
- Recycle Centre

17
Classification: Public



SGCD Client Eligibility Criteria

AADL general eligibility criteria must be met

Specific criteria for SGCD:

- Severe speech impairment and communication needs that cannot be met by using speech on a daily basis
- SGCD is provided as the primary means of communication for the client
- Must be assessed by an AADL approved SLP at an AADL designated service centre to ensure the client is able to use the system recommended

18
Classification: Public




SGCD Client Eligibility Criteria

Each client is required to demonstrate the ability to use the recommended system for independent communication

- Supporting documents can be obtained during assessment

Client/caregiver must accept responsibilities to care for the SGCD and maintain it in working order

19
Classification: Public




Client Roles and Responsibilities

Assessment and followup

- Clients and their families are expected to actively participate in assessment of communication needs
 - Feature matching process to identify suitable options that meet assessed needs
- Demonstrate competence in using the system for communication purposes
 - Establish goals to meet functional communication needs
 - Use system in a variety of environments with a variety of partners

20
Classification: Public




Client Roles and Responsibilities

SGCD funding is not available for

- SGCD systems for training for access or communication skills
- Environmental control systems
- Software for educational or other purposes

21
Classification: Public



Client Roles and Responsibilities

Government of Alberta retains ownership of SGCD-funded equipment
Repairs are provided by AADL to maintain the equipment in good working order

Clients / families are expected to

- Return the SGCD to the Service Centre/Authorizer when
 - It is no longer suitable for current needs
 - The client no longer needs to use an SGCD
 - The client moves out of the province.
- Returned SGCD's are placed in the SGCD recycle pool

22
Classification: Public



Client Roles and Responsibilities

Caution: Third-party software and malware

Many communication devices provided by AADL have "open" operating systems. This means you are able to load third-party software onto the device.

Some software may make a device's operating system vulnerable to malware or viruses. It is the client's responsibility to ensure that any software added will not harm the effective operation of the device.

AADL will not pay for repairs that result from issues related to third-party software downloaded by the client.

23
Classification: Public



SGCD Authorizer Qualifications

- Registration with appropriate college: ACSLPA or ACOT
- Familiar with best practice in AAC service delivery
- University course in AAC or equivalent, which may include:
 - Evidence of recent professional development
 - Research and peer reviewed publications such as *Augmentative & Alternative Communication, AAC Assistive Technology Outcomes & Benefits*
 - <https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/atob/>
 - Webinars and conference presentations by organizations such as ISAAC, ATIA, RESNA, AAC-RERC, Closing the Gap
 - Vendor inservices

24
Classification: Public




SGCD Authorizer Qualifications

SLPs and OTs who wish to be authorizers must be employed by an AADL-recognized Service Centre

- The Service Centre must identify the clinicians working within the centre
- Specific expectations for three levels of Service Centres
- Complete online AADL general and SGCD training modules

Any authorizer who leaves the Service Centre loses the AADL SGCD authorizer status


25
Classification: Public



SGCD Authorizer Qualifications

- Experience in AAC by supporting a minimum number of clients over a set time period
- Familiar with the range of equipment on the SGCD Approved Product List appropriate for the Service Centre and clients

26
Classification: Public




SGCD Authorizer Qualifications

Expectations to maintain authorizer status:

- Participate in AAC related educational activities
 - 10 hours annually
- Participate in eight AAC assessments / applications of AAC systems
 - 18 month period
- Participate in SGCD assessment review meetings (Service Centres level 2 & 3)

27
Classification: Public



SGCD Authorizer Qualifications


SGCD Authorizer Application form to be completed by SLPs and OTs
<https://www.alberta.ca/aadl-forms-and-documents.aspx>

- Note: The SGCD authorizer application form is specific to SGCD benefits. It is not the general AADL Authorizer application form

Other relevant SGCD forms and resources available on the AADL website:

- SGCD Benefit Information Sheet
- SGCD Service Centre Application Form
- List of SGCD Service Centres


28
Classification: Public



SGCD Authorizer Responsibilities

- Act on behalf of AADL to interpret policies and procedures to client
- Balance between client needs and AADL policies
- Role is not as an advocate for the client to AADL

29
Classification: Public




AADL Responsibilities

- AADL retains ownership of SGCD equipment
- Standard manufacturer warranty provided for all devices
- AADL covers repairs on a cost-share basis

Not covered by AADL:

- Replacement for lost or misused SGCDs
- Repairs or upgrades to privately owned SGCDs

30
Classification: Public



Assessment Process

Speech Generating Communication Device (SGCD)


Classification: Public



AAC Assessment Process for SGCD

1. Identify communication needs and abilities of client
2. Feature matching process to identify potential SGCD system
3. Clarify communication software required
4. Identify SGCD features to support communication needs
 - Physical and/or sensory access needs
 - Current and future communication
5. Gather data to demonstrate functional use of SGCD system
6. Complete Communication Assessment & Action Plan (CAAP)
7. Present to Assessment Review Panel for review and approval.

32
Classification: Public



AAC Assessment Process for SGCD


AADL recognizes that everyone communicates

- Each person's way of communicating may be unique
- We may not all communicate in the same way, or using the same methods and strategies

SGCD communication guidelines for selecting a communication system for AADL funding:

- Client required to demonstrate ability to use requested SGCD for communication

33
Classification: Public



AAC Assessment Process for SGCD

- Clients need to make an informed choice around which SGCD system will best meet their needs
- Device trials provide evidence of functional device use and support for device within family and community
 - Establish goals for device trial
- Length – as needed
- Equipment may be available from Service Centre's pool of equipment, from vendors, from Recycle options
- Conditional purchase option

34
Classification: Public



Communication Assessment and Action Plan

35
Classification: Public



Client Declaration Form

A completed Client Declaration form is required for all SGCD funding requests, including repairs, parts and changes

- For repairs: submit the Client Declaration form and vendor quote
- For parts or changes to equipment: submit the Client Declaration form, Parts/Change Form, and vendor quote(s)

36
Classification: Public



SGCD Authorizers and Alberta Blue Cross

AADL authorizers must register with Alberta Blue Cross to gain access to the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal
Tutorial available on registration process

- <https://www.ab.bluecross.ca/providers/aadl-communication-home.php>

Alberta Blue Cross Provider Support

1-888-828-8738

1-587-756-8629 (Edmonton & area only)

Email: HealthServicesAADLInquiries@ab.bluecross.ca

Office hours Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time

40
Classification: Public



Alberta Blue Cross Resources

These documents are available on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal for providers

- SGCD Policy Manual and Approved Product List
- CAAP form
- Information sheets for clients receiving an iPad or other SGCD system
- SGCD Repair Information Sheet
- Receipt of SGCD equipment forms
- AADL forms: Client Declaration form, Quantity and Frequency Review Request form, etc.

41
Classification: Public



Alberta Blue Cross Resources


42
Classification: Public



SGCD Authorization Process

- Completed assessment documents for new SGCD system submitted to AADL via Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal
 - CAAP
 - Vendor quote(s)
- A separate authorization is required for each vendor or for different catalogue numbers
- Alberta Blue Cross will provide a confirmation of the authorization(s) with reference number(s) for each authorization.
 - The authorization is considered pending by ABC.
 - Documents are submitted to AADL for review.


43
Classification: Public



SGCD Authorization Process

- Alberta Blue Cross submits the documents to AADL within 24 hours for review
- AADL reviews the documents and the decision is returned to Alberta Blue Cross
- ABC will notify authorizers if additional information or changes are required.

44
Classification: Public




SGCD Authorization Process

Use the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal for reports and patient information:

- Recycle inventory: check the recycle options for SGCDs, complex access equipment and some mounting systems
- Reports: search by patient, provider (vendor) or authorization reference number
- Patient enquiry: requires PHN and date of birth

45
Classification: Public




SGCD Authorization Process

Vendor role

- For approved authorizations, vendors are notified by email with the relevant reference number to process the claim
- The vendor accesses the order in the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal
- When the equipment is ready for shipment, the vendor determines the cost-share portion, as applicable, and processes the claim for payment with Alberta Blue Cross
- The vendor arranges for equipment to be shipped to the Service Centre

46
Classification: Public




SGCD Authorization Process

Role of Service Centre

- Receive the equipment and set up for client
 - Label all items with Government of Alberta stickers
- Meet with client/family and identify followup and training requirements as needed
 - Provide client/family with SGCD Information Sheet and SGCD Repair Sheet
 - Have client sign Receipt of SGCD form and submit to AADL: aadl.sgcd@gov.ab.ca


47
Classification: Public



Alberta Blue Cross Resources

For any issues relating to authorizations or claims, contact the ABC Provider support line:
1-888-828-8738
1-587-756-8629 (Edmonton & area only)
Email: HealthServicesAADLInquiries@ab.bluecross.ca
Office hours Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time

48
Classification: Public



SGCD Approved Products

Speech Generating Communication Device (SGCD)

Classification: Public



SGCD Approved Product List

- The SGCD APL is reviewed annually and updated periodically
 - If you wish to have equipment added to the APL be aware of Policy AS-16, Approved Product List, and AS-14, Criteria for SGCD Manufacturers/Distributors
 - Complete the SGCD Product Evaluation form for potential additions to APL
- Catalogue Number Sections in APL
 - Communication device categories
 - Mounting equipment
 - Simple and complex access categories


50
Classification: Public




Simple Static Display Devices

Catalogue No A 402

- Simple to operate
- Static display – usually containing pictures or photographs
- Digitized speech
- Includes software to create overlays

- Appropriate for clients able to communicate intentionally
- Suitable for Context-Dependent Communicators level 2
- Use of pre-recorded message, set of 10-50+ messages
- Direct access
- No repair
- No recycle


51
Classification: Public



Alphabet-Based Devices

Catalogue No A 400

- Alphabet/keyboard based
- Synthesized speech output
- Rate enhancement features
- Display shows message created
- Appropriate for communicators who have sufficient literacy skills to create a message for communication purposes
 - Suitable for Context-Dependent Communicators level 3, and Independent Communicators
 - Preference for writing as the basis for message creation
 - Direct access
 - Can be repaired and recycled



52
Classification: Public



Dynamic Display Devices

Catalogue No A 406

- Touch screen dynamic display
- Synthesized and digitized speech output
- Communication software supports core words, pre-stored phrases, spelling, grammar support
- Rate enhancement features
- Appropriate for communicators who combine words and phrases to create unique messages
 - Suitable for Context-Dependent Communicators level 3, and Independent Communicators
 - Face-to-face and electronic forms of communication
 - Direct and indirect access options



53
Classification: Public



iPad-Based Communications Systems

Catalogue No A 407

- Touch screen dynamic display
- Synthesized and digitized speech output
- Appropriate for:
 - Context-Dependent Communicators levels 2 and 3, and independent communicators
 - Face-to-face and electronic forms of communication
- iPad-based systems are provided as a package, with one communication app, a protective case with speakers, and keyguard if needed, plus Apple Care +
 - Bridges Canada AADL Support Portal
 - <https://sites.google.com/site/aacforbridges/>

54
Classification: Public



iPad Equivalent Communications Systems

Catalogue No A 408

- Touch screen dynamic display
- Synthesized and digitized speech output
- Appropriate for:
 - Context-Dependent Communicators levels 2 and 3, and independent communicators
 - Face-to-face and electronic forms of communication
- iPad-based system are provided as a package, with one communication app, a protective case with speakers, and keyguard if needed, plus Apple Care +

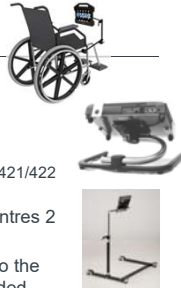
55
Classification: Public



Mounting Hardware

Catalogue No A410 - Mounting Hardware

- One mounting system provided as needed
- Mounting for switches
- Designated suppliers for mounting
- SGCD OT authorizer required for A410 and A421/422 categories
- Mounting can be authorized by Service Centres 2 and 3
- Mounting systems and parts are returned to the Service Centre for recycle if no longer needed



56
Classification: Public



Access Equipment

Catalogue No A421 - Switch Access

- Single or multiple switch or array
- Joystick, adapted mouse
- A421 switches may be combined with A422 when required for selection.

Catalogue No A 422 - Complex Access

- Hands-free access
 - Alternate mouse options
 - Eyegaze camera (internal and stand alone)

Alternate access can be authorized by Level 3 Service Centres



57
Classification: Public



Main SGCD Manufacturers/Distributors

Speech Generating Communication Devices

- Bridges Canada
- Canadian Assistive Technology
- Liberator Communication Canada (PRC & Saltillo products)
- Tobii Dynavox

Mounting

- Daedalus Technologies
- Special Needs Computer Solutions
- ConnectIT Mounts, TD
- CS Mounting / REHAdapt
- Ideas for Independence, IDEAS

58
Classification: Public




Receipt of SGCD equipment

Clients / families are expected to:

- Agree to use the SGCD for the primary purpose of communication
- Maintain, care for and protect the SGCD
- Advise Service Centre if there is any concern about the device
- Acquire adequate private insurance should the SGCD need to be replaced or repaired due to misuse


59
Classification: Public



Quantity and Frequency Review

Speech Generating Communication Device (SGCD)


Classification: Public



Quantity and Frequency

Quantity and frequency limits are placed on all approved products
Replacement of a benefit outside of the limits may occur when an existing SGCD is no longer suitable, due to:


- SGCD cannot be repaired in a cost-effective way
- A change in client's communication needs
 - Language and communication
 - Physical condition

61
Classification: Public 

Quantity and Frequency

Authorizers' role in QFR:


- Quantity decisions based on clinical assessment and client needs
- Not for lifestyle or convenience.
- Advise clients of quantity and frequency limits
- Follow the Quantity and Frequency Review (QFR) process if the client is over quantity.
- QFR Process Policy GN-31

62
Classification: Public 

Quantity and Frequency

SGCD Devices

- Catalogue A400 – Alphabet-based devices
 - One every five years
 - Recycle and repair
- Catalogue A402 – Simple static display devices
 - One every five years
 - No recycle and no repair
- Catalogue A406 – Dynamic Display Devices
 - One every five years
 - Recycle and repair

63
Classification: Public 

Quantity and Frequency

SGCD Devices


Catalogue A407 – iPad-based systems

- One every four years
- No recycle.
- Apple Care+ (two years)

Catalogue A408 – iPad equivalent system

- One every four years
- Manufacturer support for repairs

64
Classification: Public




Quantity and Frequency

Mounting and Access for SGCDs

Catalogue A410 – Mounting hardware

- One per SGCD, as needed

65
Classification: Public



Quantity and Frequency

Access equipment for SGCDs


Catalogue A421- Access equipment

- Switches, joystick, adapted mouse
 - Switch arrays may require two or more switches for one access method
 - Switch may be combined with A422 when needed for selection
 - Two per year

Catalogue A422 – Complex access


- Hands-free options
 - Headmouse
 - Eyegaze
- One every five years

66
Classification: Public



Repairs - Policy AS-10


- AADL supports all SGCDs purchased, except iPad-based systems
 - Standard manufacturer's warranty
- AADL cover repairs beyond the manufacturer's warranty (cost-share will apply as applicable) that are a result of normal wear and tear
- Repair limit: One per year
 - Catalogue No A400 alphabet-based devices
 - Catalogue No A406 dynamic display devices
 - Catalogue No A410 mounting equipment
 - Catalogue No A422 complex access equipment
- Insurance coverage important for lost equipment or for repairs not covered by AADL

67
Classification: Public 

Recycle - Policy AS-11 and AS-12

All Level 3 SGCD Service Centres act as recycle centres for returned SGCD equipment

- All SGCD recycle equipment is maintained in working order
 - **Formal Recycle**
 - Review the recycle options prior to entering a new SGCD authorization
 - Complex access equipment
 - Rolling floor mounts
 - Recycle inventory maintained by Alberta Blue Cross
 - **Informal recycle**
 - Mounting systems and parts


68
Classification: Public 

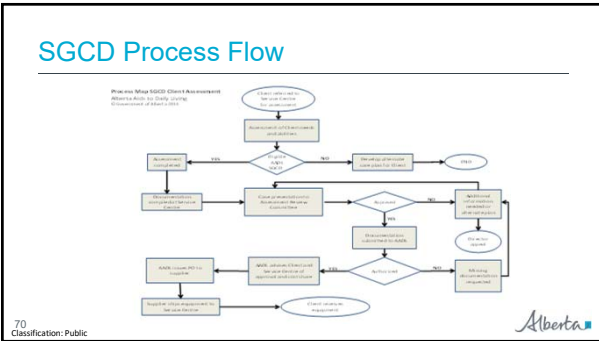
SGCD Conditional Purchase - Policy AS-07

Manufacturer/distributor provides new device, which is available for conditional purchase for up to 10 weeks

- Family contributes cost-share portion based on purchase price
- If device use is successful, client keeps new device.

- If device use is not successful, decision must be made within 10 weeks of shipping date
 - Family must agree to return equipment in same condition
 - Family will be charged for any damaged or missing equipment

69
Classification: Public 



- ### SGCD Key Documents
- SGCD Policy and Procedure manual
 - SGCD Approved Product List
 - CAAP form, to be completed and submitted with the SGCD authorization
 - Note: Client Declaration form is not needed if Section 8 is completed on the CAAP form
 - Upon receipt of a communication device:
 - Provide client with the relevant iPad/SGCD/Recycled device form
 - Insert the relevant Service Centre and Vendor information on the form
 - SGCD Repair Information Sheet
 - Request client/family to sign the Receipt of iPad or Receipt of SGCD form
- 71
Classification: Public

For Further Information

- Contact:
S-LP Consultant
Communication Benefits, AADL

aadl.sgcd@gov.ab.ca
780-422-4846

72
Classification: Public

Alberta Aids to Daily Living Program
Telus House, 13th Floor
10020 100 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0N3

Phone: 780-427-0731; to call toll-free, first dial 310-0000

Deaf/hearing impaired callers within Alberta using a TTY can reach the provincial government by dialing 780-427-9999 in Edmonton or 1-800-232-7215 throughout Alberta.

Fax: 780-422-0968

<https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-aids-to-daily-living.aspx>
or
<https://www.ab.bluecross.ca/provider/type/aadl/index.php>

73
Classification: Public



© 2022 Government of Alberta

74
Classification: Public