

Alberta Aids to Daily Living

Speech generating communication devices factsheet

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 participate in daily activities in their communities.

AADL provides funding for speech generating communication devices (SGCD), such as text-to-speech devices or fixed display communicators, to help individuals with severe communication impairments communicate as independently as possible on a daily basis.

Eligibility criteria

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).

Process

Clients must first have their communication needs assessed by a speech-language pathologist at a speech generating communication device 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 clinician during the assessment and determine what interventions and followup are required.

You can find a list of AADL speech generating communication device service centres here:

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

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 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.

The communication system may include new or recycled equipment. Equipment that is no longer needed by a client is returned to a service centre and may be recycled. All recycled equipment has been checked to ensure that it is fully functioning.

Service centres

A speech generating communication device service centre is a health or education-based agency that provides augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) services and supports to people with complex communication needs.

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 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.

Devices covered

AADL provides funding for a wide range of communication devices and accessories, such as switches or mouse alternatives, and mounting equipment.

Communication device options include:

Alphabet-based devices

Devices that use an alphabet/keyboard 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

Dynamic display devices

Devices with a touch screen display and many options to create unique messages 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.

Simple static display devices

Devices with simple programming options and messages represented by pictures or photographs. They are designed for communicators who are able to use a small, pre-recorded message set.

A complete list of the SGCD benefits funded by AADL is available at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-as>

Cost sharing

AADL is a cost-share program where clients and AADL share the cost of approved benefits received from AADL. AADL will pay 75 per cent of the cost of the benefit and clients pay 25 per cent, up to a maximum of \$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 apply for a cost-share exemption, you can fill out an Application for Cost-Share Exemption form found on the AADL website.

If you are not low-income, but have recently had a significant reduction to your income, you may be eligible for a temporary cost-share exemption.

To qualify for a cost-share exemption, clients must have their most recent tax return on file with the Canada Revenue Agency.

Visit the AADL website for more information about how you can qualify for a cost-share exemption.

More information

You can find AADL speech generating communication device policy and procedure information here: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-as>