

PROCESS FOR OBTAINING AN AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION DEVICE

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1) Contact your insurance carrier.

- Does your policy cover a speech therapy evaluation?
- Does your policy limit the number of visits or sessions with a speech therapist?
- Does your insurance carrier have a preferred provider for speech therapy?
- Do you need a referral from your primary care physician or can the evaluation be ordered by a specialist or neurologist?
- Do you need to get pre-certification for the speech evaluation?
- Are communication devices covered as durable medical equipment or as a prosthetic appliance? (If your policy does not specifically exclude communication devices, it is likely that your insurer will cover the device).

****** Always record the date, time, and name of the person that you talked to. If you do not receive satisfactory answers, request to speak with a supervisor. ******

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

If there is a preferred provider for speech therapy, make sure that the therapist is experienced in augmentative communication. If the speech therapist is not specialized in augmentative communication, ask your insurer to make an exception to the preferred provider specification. If they refuse, ask for an appeal.

Be aware of policy dollar limits for DME (durable medical equipment). Some policies state that in the case of equipment rentals, rental cannot exceed the purchase price. In this case, the length of time that a piece of equipment will be rented must be compared to the purchase price. It may be advisable to request the insurer to purchase the item initially.

2) Contact your physician.

- **A speech evaluation should be done at the first sign of any speech problem.** This could be slurring of words, difficulty with speech when tired, loss of volume, slower speech, difficulty pronouncing some words.
- Ask your physician for a prescription/referral to a speech therapist for an augmentative communication evaluation.

3) Contact a speech therapist who specializes in augmentative communication.

- What are their credentials (they should have a CCC-SLP designation and be a member of ASHA).
- Are they familiar with and able to do an augmentative communication evaluation?
- What is the cost of the evaluation?
- Do they accept reimbursement from your funding source (insurance, HMO, PPO, Medicare, Medicaid)?
- What services will be provided? The evaluation process should include: an assessment of your communication problems & needs, a recommendation for a communication device, a written report for third party (insurance) funding, completion of medical necessity & prescription request paperwork for your physician's signature, report & recommendations to your physician, completion of paper work/information for the augmentative communication device vendor, device set-up, training on device.
- Can they arrange for a trial of different communication devices?

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