



POLICY &
PROCEDURE
MANUAL

AMPLIFICATION BENEFITS



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AMPLIFICATION BENEFITS BACKGROUND

AADL amplification benefits available to eligible clients include:

- Hearing Aids
- Personal Listening Devices
- FM Systems
- Bone Anchored Hearing Aids
- Cochlear Implant Processors

Amplification benefits are assessed by specialty assessors who are audiologists and/or hearing aid practitioners. Amplification benefits are then provided by specialty suppliers.

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HEARING AIDS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Policy Statement:

All clients must meet the following criteria to be eligible for AADL benefits.

- Be a permanent resident of the Province of Alberta.
- Reside at home or in a community facility.
- Have a valid Alberta Personal Health Number (PHN).
- Require benefits due to a long term disability or chronic illness (6 months or longer) or palliative diagnosis. Exceptions are identified in the specific benefit area.
- Have an authorization completed by an AADL Authorizer or Specialty Supplier.
- Meet additional criteria defined by the specific benefit areas.
- Sign the “Client Declaration Section” of the AADL Authorization form.

For clients under the age of 18, there are no additional eligibility requirements for hearing aid benefits.

For clients between the ages of 18 and 65, they must also meet one or more additional criteria:

- eligible for cost-share exemption, based on the current income threshold identified by the program; or
- receiving assistance under the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program or the Income Support Program; or
- a full time student, still receiving benefits under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan as a dependent under their parents plan and is aged 18 to 24 years. Proof of full time educational enrolment is required. This client is then eligible for all benefits available to those under 18 years of age.

For seniors and adult dependents of seniors, they must submit the Alberta Health and Wellness Proof of Age Declaration and/or the Alberta Seniors and Community Supports Seniors Financial Assistance Application package to confirm age.

For further quantity and frequency limits, see policy H-130.

Applicants cannot have the same or similar devices in good working order.

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COST-SHARE FOR HEARING AIDS

Policy Statement:

Hearing aid benefit eligibility is also based on client household income levels, as per the AADL cost-share policy.

Clients and/or Families:

1. Pay 25% of AADL maximum contribution for benefits received directly to the providing vendor or manufacturer.
2. Contribute no more than a maximum of \$500 per family, per benefit year (July 1st to June 30th) for all benefits received. Upgrade charges (see glossary definition) are not included in the \$500 cost-share maximum.
3. Are exempt from additional cost-sharing for the remainder of the benefit year once the maximum annual contribution of \$500 per family is reached.
4. Clients continue to be responsible for any upgrade charges on benefits supplied after they reach the maximum annual cost-share contribution.

AADL Cost-share exemption is available to clients whose taxable income (line 260 of the most recent income tax return) is below:

- \$20,970 for a single person,
- \$33,240 for a family with no children, or
- \$39,250 for a family with children.

For children and youth, cost-share exemption is based upon the income of the parent(s)/legal guardian according to the current income threshold identified by the program.

For adults age 18-64 cost-share status is based on the current income threshold identified by the program; or

- receiving assistance under the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program or the Income Support Program; or
- a full time student, still receiving benefits under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan as a dependent under their parents plan and is aged 18 to 24 years. Proof of full time educational enrolment is required. This client is then eligible for all benefits available to those under 18 years of age.

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For seniors, if eligible for cost-share exemption, based on the current income threshold identified by the program, additional funding may be provided for a second aid. Seniors may qualify for AADL cost-share exemption, however if their income is above the AADL cost-share exemption thresholds, they may also apply under the Special Needs for Seniors threshold levels:

- \$24,500 for a single person
- \$39,900 for a couple

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TEST ENVIRONMENT

Policy Statement:

The environment within which hearing tests and hearing aid evaluations and verifications are performed will meet the following standards:

- If such tests and evaluations are performed within a commercially available sound treated booth, the acoustic characteristics as obtained within the booth following fabrication on site will be noted and retained for conveyance to AADL as required;
- If such tests and evaluations are performed outside a commercially available sound treated booth the acoustic characteristics of the room(s) shall be determined with a sound level meter and noted on the audiogram. The serial number of the sound level meter must also be recorded on the audiogram for audit purposes; and
- Testing may not be performed if the ambient noise level exceeds 40dBA when headphones are used, and 48dBA if insert phones are used.

Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Retain on file acoustic characteristics of commercial sound treated booths.
2. Conduct sound level meter (SLM) readings of ambient noise prior to any test being performed outside of a sound treated booth.
3. Record SLM reading on audiogram, as well as serial number from SLM.

AADL:

1. Conducts testing environment audits.

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EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Policy Statement:

The specialty supplier must have specified equipment at each location where clients are assessed.

For children, the following testing equipment is required:

- A sound isolating booth meeting ANSI standards.
- A clinical audiometer capable of air, bone, masking, speech audiometry and sound field testing.
- A middle ear analyzer (capable of tympanograms and acoustic reflexes).
- Otoscope.
- A hearing aid analyzer/test box.
- A probe tube microphone system.

For adults, the following testing equipment is required:

- A sound isolating booth meeting ANSI standards, or a test environment in which the ambient noise levels do not exceed 40dBA SPL when using headphones or 48dBA SPL when using insert phones.
- A clinical audiometer capable of air, bone, masking and speech recognition.
- A middle ear analyzer (capable of tympanograms and acoustic reflexes).
- Otoscope.
- A hearing aid analyzer/test box.
- A probe tube microphone system.
- Sound Level Meter (if performing assessments outside of sound isolating booth).

All test equipment must meet ANSI specifications, and undergo daily, monthly and annual calibrations.

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Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Performs daily and monthly biologic calibrations.
2. Annually has all diagnostic equipment used in their clinics calibrated.
3. Retains a copy of all equipment calibration documentation which must be produced upon request by the Hearing and Augmentative Communication AADL Program Manager.

AADL:

1. If Specialty Supplier is unable to produce calibration documentation, AADL may take further action until documentation can be provided and verified.

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HEARING ASSESSMENTS

Policy Statement:

A complete audiological assessment will be taken on all clients fitted with a hearing device. All hearing assessments must be performed by an AADL Specialty Assessor or an audiologist employed by Alberta Health Services. No results from testing performed by physicians will be accepted. If the assessment has been completed less than 6 months prior to the fitting, the assessment need not, but may at the discretion of the Specialty Assessor be repeated.

All unaided and aided test results shall be dated and signed (name of tester and signature) by the Assessor and test reliability shall be noted.

Individuals 0 to 17 years of age must be assessed by an audiologist. These audiologists may be employed in either private practice or by Alberta Health Services, and it is strongly recommended that children diagnosed with hearing loss seek medical consultation with an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist.

Hearing assessments must consist of, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Case History:
The case history should include identifying information, purpose of referral, communication history and pertinent medical history. For potential hearing aid candidates the history should consider the person's candidacy by recognizing lifestyle considerations, physical and cognitive capabilities and expectations of hearing aid use. Use of communication inventories (formal or informal) are strongly recommended to assist the Assessor in prescribing amplification.
- Otoscope Examination:
Visual and otoscopic examinations are to be completed with all results recorded on the audiogram as part of the assessment process.
- Standard Pure Tone Audiometry:
Pure tone air and bone conduction thresholds will be obtained for both ears, with masking where appropriate, as per current standards and guidelines. Results will be clearly recorded upon an audiogram and will minimally include air conduction thresholds over the frequency range of 250 to 8000 Hz at octave steps. For Program purposes, air conduction thresholds shall also be obtained at the mid-octave frequency of 3000 and 6000 Hz in both ears. Bone conduction thresholds will be obtained at octave steps between 500 and 4000 Hz in both ears unless the hearing loss is bilaterally symmetrical, in which case thresholds may be established for only one ear.

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- Speech Audiometry:
Assessment must include Speech Recognition Threshold (SRT) or Speech Recognition Scores (SRS) completed on both ears, with masking where appropriate. It is recommended that the test be completed according to recognized guidelines, which specify familiarization, to ensure reliable and valid test results. Additional speech tests, which are deemed relevant to the hearing aid prescription process, such as Word Recognition Scores (WRS) and Speech in Noise may be completed at the discretion of the Specialty Assessor.
- Acoustic Impedance Testing:
Acoustic impedance testing will be completed for both ears and will include static compliance, middle ear pressure and canal volumes. Acoustic reflex measurements in the ipsilateral condition are mandatory, and contralateral when applicable. All results are to be entered on the audiogram form.

If test results, or lack thereof, indicate the need for further diagnostic evaluation (i.e. Auditory Brainstem Response, Oto-Acoustic Emissions) to clarify the nature and degree of the hearing loss and the Specialty Assessor is unable to perform such evaluation, the client must be referred to a clinic capable of such evaluation.

When test results indicate the need for medical examination or intervention, the client must be referred to a physician prior to proceeding with the fitting of amplification and signed off by that physician if no medical intervention is warranted.

Procedure:

Specialty Assessor:

1. Ensure the client:
 - a) Has a valid Personal Health Number (PHN).
 - b) Signs the Client Declaration Form.
 - c) Meets the current AADL hearing aid eligibility criteria, including submission of the Alberta Health and Wellness Proof of Age declaration for those over 65 available at <http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/AHCIP-form-AHC0312W.pdf> .
2. Completes all aforementioned hearing assessment requirements.
 - a) All individuals who exhibit unreliable/inconsistent audiological results and who cannot be tested using conventional test procedures must be referred to a clinic that can meet their needs.

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- b) The assessor makes the appropriate referral to a physician if medical consultation is required.
3. Document results of each hearing test and hearing aid evaluation on the audiogram form.
 - a) Symbols used must also be noted in a key on the audiogram form and shall conform to current audiometric standards.
 - b) Complete a summary of all findings, including assessor's recommendations and retain on the client file.
4. Explain thoroughly all test results and recommendations to client and/or caregivers.
5. Date and have client sign first line (Hearing Test Date) of AADL Validation Certificate.

Client:

1. Agrees to undergo full audiological evaluation, attends and follows assessor's instructions.
2. If a referral is recommended to meet assessment requirement, the client is responsible to obtain the appropriate documentation before proceeding with a hearing aid fitting.
3. Listens to test results and recommendations as they are explained by the assessor.
4. Signs the test line of the AADL Validation Certificate.

AADL:

1. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from assessors and/or clients regarding assessment.
2. Performs regular audit of documentation and adherence to hearing assessment policy and procedures.

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AURAL REHABILITATION

Policy Statement:

Besides providing amplification the Specialty Supplier must provide aural rehabilitative counseling in the following areas:

- Understanding their Hearing Loss
- Understanding Hearing Aids and their use
- The use of assistive devices
- Communication strategies and goals for the hearing impaired client and their communication partners

The client and his/her family need to be involved in every decision making process as they are responsible for, and should be comfortable with, all decisions made related to their aural rehabilitation.

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HEARING AID SELECTION

Policy Statement:

The Supplier must offer an entry-level digital or advanced programmable hearing aid within the identified program maximum prices to all clients. If the price of the hearing aid preferred by the client exceeds the limits set by the AADL Program, the Specialty Assessor may bill the client the difference. The hearing aid provided to the client must have a one-year warranty, at minimum.

Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Discusses a range of amplification options with the client, starting with those available within the program maximum funding and restricted to AADL approved manufacturers.
2. Confirms with client which hearing aid(s) are to be ordered.

Client:

1. Listens and considers amplification options presented by the Specialty Supplier.
2. Confirms with the Specialty Supplier which hearing aid(s) are to be ordered and whether the aids fall within the program maximum funding.

AADL:

1. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from assessors and/or clients regarding amplification selection.
2. Provides a full listing of approved manufacturers.

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FITTING AND VERIFICATION

Policy Statement:

At the **initial fitting** of an amplification benefit, the following must be completed:

- Electroacoustic verification to ascertain that the hearing aid is meeting electroacoustic specifications;
- A subjective listening test of the hearing aid;
- Real Ear Measurements (REM) are the method required by the AADL Program for verifying and optimizing the electro-acoustic characteristics of the hearing aid fitting.

In fitting children 0-17 years of age with amplification, all hearing aid verification procedures must be conducted by either an AADL Specialty Assessor who is a private practice audiologist or an audiologist employed by Alberta Health Services.

Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Electroacoustic assessment via a hearing aid analyzer test box as well as a listening check must be performed prior to the hearing aid being fit on the client.
2. Hearing Aid verification using REM is to occur at the time of the initial fitting of a client's amplification.
3. If cases in which Real Ear Measurements cannot be performed arise, alternate methods of verification must be performed. This documentation must be forwarded to the Hearing and Augmentative Communication Program Manager along with a written explanation as to why Real Ear Measures could not be obtained. Consideration of payment for non-compliance will be given by the Program Manager. Copies of this documentation must be entered in the client's file.
4. Verify functionality of any special features ordered with the hearing aid; eg. directional microphone, digital noise reduction.
5. The following information is required to be documented on the verification and copies must be kept in the client's file and provided to AADL upon request:
 - Client's name
 - Date
 - Ear (L or R)
 - Serial Number of hearing aid

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- Make and model of hearing aid
 - Hearing aid settings
 - REM strips
6. Instruct client to date and sign Fitting Line (second line) of AADL Validation Certificate.
 7. Recover client's cost-share portion, if applicable.

Client:

1. Must undergo verification procedures at time of initial fitting.
2. Sign Fitting Line on AADL Validation Certificate.
3. Pay cost-share portion, if applicable, and any upgrade costs.

AADL:

1. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from assessors and/or clients regarding verification requirements.

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TRIAL PERIOD

Policy Statement:

The specialty supplier shall provide eligible clients a trial period of at least twenty-eight (28) days after the fitting of a hearing aid. If applicable, the client shall have the benefit of a personally fitted custom (non-stock) ear mold during the trial period.

The Specialty Assessor must have contact with the client a minimum of once between the initial fitting date and the required Validation appointment at the end of the trial period to address any concerns that may arise.

If the client is refitted with a different model of hearing aid during the trial period, the trial period recommences from the date of the re-fitting with the different model.

The 28-day trial period does not include days when the aid is not in the client's possession.

Where the client plans to leave for an extended vacation prior to completion of the 28 day trial period the Specialty Supplier must have personal contact with the client a minimum of one week after the initial fitting. The client must provide a written statement in a form acceptable to AADL acknowledging that he or she has not had the benefit of a full trial period and waiving any rights he or she may have related to the full trial period.

Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Upon completion of the fitting and verification appointment a future Validation appointment (minimum 28 days from fitting) is to be scheduled, which designates the end of the client's trial period with his/her amplification.
2. Must also schedule an interim contact with the client between the initial fitting and the Validation appointment.
3. The above scheduled appointments must be rescheduled to reflect a minimum 28 day trial period if the amplification is returned and a new model of amplification is fitted, or if the client is without their hearing aid for over 24 hours.
4. In cases where the client wishes to waive their rights to a trial period the Specialty Supplier must see the client within one week of the fitting and obtain in writing the client's statement reporting their request to waive.

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5. All documentation regarding appointments and/or waivers must be kept on the client's file.

Client:

1. Attends all scheduled appointments required to receive funding for their hearing aid.
2. Address any concerns regarding the trialed hearing aid with the specialty supplier prior to the Validation appointment.
3. If client waives the trial period they must provide in writing their acknowledgment of relieving their rights of return.

AADL:

1. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from assessors and/or clients regarding verification requirements.
2. Retains all requested documentation within the specialty supplier file.

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VALIDATION CERTIFICATE

Policy Statement:

At the end of the trial period (28 days minimum) the Specialty Assessor shall, in person, validate the effectiveness of the hearing aid fitting with the client.

If the fitting is satisfactory to the client, the Specialty Assessor shall obtain from the client their signature on an AADL Validation Certificate or, where the client is under 18 years of age, the signature of their parent or guardian.

The Validation Certificate is a three-part form, in that the client will sign this form on three separate occasions; at time of assessment, at fitting and following a minimum twenty-eight day trial period. It is mandatory that the Specialty Assessor read and explain to the client what it is they are signing for. No pre-dating or pre-signing of the certificate is permitted. All services are to be provided in person. A copy of the signed certificate of satisfaction must be given by the Specialty Assessor to the client, on the day they receive the service, for the client's personal file.

Where the client refuses to travel back to the clinic to sign the certificate, due to time or distance, the client must provide a written statement to AADL acknowledging that he or she is accepting their hearing aid. The original is kept in the clinic's client file, and a copy is sent to the Program Manager at AADL.

If a client dies prior to signing the certificate, the amplification device(s) are to be returned to the Specialty Supplier. The Specialty Supplier may then charge a return fee to AADL. If unable to obtain the aid(s), the Specialty Supplier may then charge the manufacturer's invoice cost of the aid(s), up to the AADL maximum allowed, as well as a return fee.

It is also the Specialty Assessor's responsibility to have contact, in the form of a letter or appointment, with the client following the signing of the Validation Certificate at the following times:

- contact between 90 to 120 days following the signing of the certificate;
- contact between 120 days following the signing of the certificate and the 1 year anniversary date of the initial fitting.

Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

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1. Validation must be obtained from the client. Many assistive tools such as inventories, diaries and scales are available to assist the Specialty Assessor to determine the client's satisfaction and capability with the prescribed hearing aid(s). The Specialty Assessor may also devise his/her own tool, providing that client feedback is documented in the records.
2. Documentation of validation is recorded/maintained in the client's file.
3. Read over and discuss the final signing of the Validation Certificate with the client, including the recommendation for insurance coverage related to loss, theft or damage.
4. Have the client sign the final line, stating validation, if the client agrees. Client is to sign their name, in full, for each service or item received.
5. If the client does not agree to sign, alternate decisions regarding the status of the hearing aid must be made:
 - a) Further adjustments to the current aid may need to be made with an extension of the trial period, or
 - b) Order and trial another model, or
 - c) Return the hearing aid.
6. If (a) is chosen another future appointment needs to be booked for the client to be checked prior to the client leaving the office.
7. If (b) is chosen the trial period process will begin again once the new hearing aid is fitted, and the client will resign with a new date on the Fitting Line below where the initial fitting date and signature exists.
8. If (c) is the result no final signature will be obtained on the Validation Certificate.
9. If the client refuses to travel in to sign the certificate, the Specialty Supplier must obtain in writing from the client their declaration of acceptance and the reason they refuse to come back into the clinic.
10. Forwards a copy of the Client's letter to the attention of the AADL Hearing and Augmentative Communications Program Manager.
11. If the client refuses to sign the Validation Certificate or alternative and does not return the hearing aid(s), the Specialty Supplier will submit all clinical documentation and the Validation Certificate, as well as documentation regarding efforts to contact the client, to the AADL Hearing and Augmentative Communications Program Manager.
12. If the client dies prior to signing the certificate, the Specialty Supplier may charge the test and return fees to AADL, if the aid(s) are able to be returned. If the aid(s) are unable to be returned, the Specialty Supplier may charge the manufacturer's invoice cost, to the AADL maximum allowed, as well as the return fee.
13. Keeps all documentation regarding the Validation Certificate on the client's file.
14. A copy of the signed Validation Certificate is given to the client, once their signature has been obtained.

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Client:

1. The client makes decision regarding acceptance of his/her hearing aid(s).
 - a) If accepting, the client signs and dates the AADL Validation Certificate.
 - b) If not accepting, the client discusses alternatives with his/her Specialty Supplier.
2. If the client refuses to attend the end of trial period appointment, he/she must submit in writing a letter stating his/her acceptance of his/her hearing aid(s) and a reason why they refuse to come into the clinic to sign.
3. If the client refuses to sign the Validation Certificate and no alternate arrangements are made, the client is responsible to return the hearing aid(s) to the Specialty Supplier.
4. If the client deceases during the trial period, it is the responsibility of the family to return the hearing aid to the vendor for refund.
5. The client shall receive a copy of the signed Validation Certificate for their personal files.
6. Acknowledges that by signing the Validation Certificate, the client accepts responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of the aid or obtains appropriate insurance coverage.

AADL:

1. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from assessors and/or clients regarding the AADL Validation Certificate.
2. Retains all requested documentation within the specialty supplier file.
3. Pays the specialty supplier for the claim submitted following the end of the trial period.

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HEARING DEVICE REPLACEMENT

Policy Statement:

Hearing devices may be replaced **after five (5) years** if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Electroacoustic analysis and/or real ear measurements demonstrate that the client's hearing aid(s) is no longer appropriate, due to changes in hearing.
- The hearing device requires a major repair and is more than five (5) years old.
- Improvements in design and technology would result in an overall improvement in the client's ability to hear and ultimately improve their reported satisfaction with their hearing aid.
- The physical ability of the client to manually operate the controls of the hearing aid becomes impaired since the original fitting, to the extent that the aid cannot be effectively used.
- When the hearing device has been lost, stolen or damaged and alternate means of replacement (eg. insurance) have been exhausted.

Hearing devices may be replaced **within five (5) years** of the original fitting only with the prior written consent of the AADL Hearing and Augmentative Communication Program Manager. Consideration will be given only if the client:

- Has undergone a significant change in hearing loss – more than 20dB pure tone average loss for those losses moderate and less, and more than a 10dB pure tone average for those losses moderately-severe to profound; or
- Has undergone a significant change in physical condition (eg. Stroke) resulting in the hearing aid no longer being appropriate, or
- A major repair of the hearing aid is required and the client is within 6 months of the five year replacement criteria.

AADL funded hearing aids have a minimum one-year purchase and/or repair warranty. Clients must seek repair and replacement through the warranty, if applicable, in that time period.

AADL may replace hearing aid(s) that have been lost, stolen or damaged, within the 5 year eligibility period in limited circumstances, through Director's Appeal, if all other means of replacement (eg. insurance) have been exhausted.

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Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Confirm client eligibility for replacement amplification on the IVR system.
2. Confirm client status regarding cost-share or cost-share exemption with the client.
3. Inform the client as to their eligibility status.
4. Documentation as to why hearing aid(s) require replacement must be noted in the client's file.
5. If the client is not eligible for replacement, yet meets early replacement criteria a QFR form found at http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/AADL/AV/forms_brochures/pdf/qfr_form.pdf is to be completed, with pertinent clinical information including audiological test results, current real ear measurements and/or quote for repair.
6. Obtain client signature on the QFR form.
7. Fax the completed QFR form to the AADL QFR Coordinator.

Client:

1. Confirms cost-share eligibility and completes a cost-share exemption form, if applicable.
2. If a QFR is required, the client must sign a QFR form.

AADL:

1. Maintain the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system.
2. Receive and log QFR requests.
3. AADL Hearing and Augmentative Communications Program Manager reviews the request.
4. Decision regarding the QFR request is forwarded to Specialty Supplier and client.
5. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from assessors and/or clients regarding hearing aid replacement guidelines.
6. Retains all relevant documentation received in chronological files.

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EARMOLD REPLACEMENT

Policy Statement:

Earmolds may be replaced once every three months for children (0-3 yrs), once every 6 months for children (4-17yrs) and full time students (18-24 yrs) who meet criteria outlined in policy and once a year for adults (18yrs and up). The replacement of ear molds is not automatic. Ear molds may only be replaced when one of the following conditions apply:

- Significant, age-typical development of the external ear.
- Loose fitting resulting in feedback.
- Inadequate high-frequency response due to feedback.

Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Confirm client eligibility for replacement earmold on the IVR system or e-business site.
2. Confirm client status regarding cost-share or cost-share exemption <add link> with the client.
3. Inform client as to their eligibility status.
4. Re-verify fitting following earmold replacement with Real Ear Measures.
5. Read and instruct client regarding the AADL Service Certificate.
6. Have the client sign the AADL Service Certificate. This form serves as an acknowledgement of the replacement of the earmold(s).
7. Provide the client with a copy of the signed AADL Service Certificate.
8. Retain all related documentation within the client's file regarding the earmold replacement:
 - Manufacturer's invoice
 - Real ear verification strips
 - Dated and signed AADL Service Certificate
9. Recovers client cost-share portion, if applicable.

Client:

1. Provide the Specialty Supplier with appropriate information to obtain eligibility information.
2. Undergo Real Ear verification measures with new earmold(s).

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3. Date and sign the AADL Service Certificate.
4. Retain a copy of the AADL Service Certificate for their files.
5. Pay the cost-share portion, if applicable.

AADL:

1. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from assessors and/or clients regarding earmold replacement guidelines.

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HEARING DEVICE REPAIRS

Policy Statement:

The AADL Program will pay, up to the AADL set maximum towards the manufacturer's invoice cost for repair of current hearing devices only. Devices are eligible for one repair per year after the manufacturer's minimum one-year warranty has expired. A six-month warranty on repairs is acceptable if there is less than 12 months prior to the next replacement eligibility period.

All hearing devices must be registered with AADL in order for billing to occur. AADL will fund the repair for a registered hearing aid even if AADL did not contribute to the purchase of that aid, for example:

- If an eligible client moves to Alberta, wearing a pre-existing hearing instrument.
- If a client replaces a lost, stolen or damaged AADL instrument on their own

A major repair is done when the instrument is sent to the manufacturer's factory, or to an authorized repair facility.

The following services are not covered by AADL:

- Minor repairs and adjustments.
- Fees for extended warranties, other than a 12-month repair warranty, or rush services.

Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Confirm client eligibility for a hearing aid repair on the IVR system or e-business site.
2. Confirm client status regarding cost-share or cost-share exemption with the client.
3. Inform the client as to their eligibility status.
4. Inform AADL Hearing and Augmentative Communication staff of the serial number of the hearing aid to be repaired if it is not already on the system by using the e-business website to register the hearing aid with AADL.

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5. Re-verify fitting following hearing aid repair with Real Ear Measures.
6. Read and instruct the client regarding the AADL Service Certificate.
7. Have the client sign and date the AADL Service Certificate. This form serves as an acknowledgement of a major repair being done.
8. Provide the client with a copy of the signed AADL Service Certificate for their files.
9. Retain all related documentation within the client's file regarding the hearing aid repair:
 - Manufacturer's invoice
 - Real ear verification strips
 - Dated and signed AADL Service Certificate
10. Recovers the client's cost-share portion, if applicable.

Client:

1. Provide the Specialty Supplier with appropriate information to obtain eligibility information.
2. Undergo Real Ear verification measures with the repaired aid if electroacoustics have been modified.
3. Date and sign the AADL Service Certificate.
4. Retain a copy of the AADL Service Certificate for their files.
5. Pay the cost-share portion, if applicable.

AADL:

1. Records serial numbers of hearing aids not purchased by AADL.
2. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from assessors and/or clients regarding hearing aid repair guidelines.

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QUANTITY & FREQUENCY LIMITS

Policy Statement:

The quantity and frequency of hearing devices and repairs available to eligible clients shall not exceed the following:

Cost-sharing Seniors(> 65 years of age):

- One hearing device every five years.
- One earmold every year only for users of behind-the-ear hearing aids.
- A personal assistive listening device may be substituted for a conventional hearing aid only with prior approval.
- One major hearing aid repair a year to currently worn amplification once the original manufacturer's warranty has expired.

Cost-share exempt Seniors (>65) and Adults (18-64 years of age):

- One hearing device per affected ear every five years.
- One earmold every year, per affected ear for users of behind-the-ear hearing aids only.
- One major hearing aid repair a year, per aid once original manufacturer's warranty has expired.

Full Time Students (18 to 24 years of age) and Children (4 to 17 years of age):

- One hearing device per affected ear every five years.
- One earmold every six months, per affected ear for users of behind-the-ear hearing aids only.
- One major hearing aid repair a year, per aid once original manufacturer's warranty has expired.

Children (0 to 3 years of age):

- One hearing device per affected ear every five years.
- One ear mold every three months, per affected ear for users of behind-the-ear hearing aids only.
- One major hearing aid repair a year, per aid once original manufacturer's warranty has expired.

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Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Checks client eligibility through the IVR system.
2. If the client is not eligible for the regular quantity and frequency limits but the client meets early replacement criteria as outlined in H-90, submit a Quantity and Frequency Request and provide all supporting clinical documentation for consideration.
3. If the aid was not purchased through AADL, register the aid with AADL prior to the repair.

Client:

1. Obtain repairs through the manufacturer's warranty, if available.
2. Signs the QFR form, if appropriate.

AADL:

1. Adjudicate the QFR and provide a response to the client and vendor.
2. Register aids not originally purchased through AADL.

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QUALIFICATIONS OF SPECIALTY ASSESSORS

Policy Statement:

All Specialty Assessors providing AADL hearing aids must either be private practice Audiologists, or private Registered Hearing Aid Practitioners. Specialty Assessors must no longer have supervisory conditions on their practice permit and have a minimum of one year dispensing experience to be granted Specialty Assessor status by AADL.

- Audiologist means a person who is a member in good standing of the Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, and who has a minimum of one year clinical experience providing hearing aid services as a certified audiologist.
- HAP means a person who is a member in good standing of the College of Hearing Aid Practitioners of Alberta with a designation of Hearing Aid Practitioner and who has a minimum of one year clinical experience providing hearing aid services as a HAP.

Trainees:

HAPs with less than 1 year post graduate experience providing hearing aid services must have in-house indirect supervision. In house means that the supervisor must be on site, but not necessarily in the same room.

Audiologist with less than 1 year post graduate experience providing hearing aid services must have in-house indirect supervision. In house means that the supervisor must be on site, but not necessarily in the same room.

Individuals who have not completed:

- their education requirements,
- certification exams,
- and have not received ACSLPA or CHAPA practice permits

require direct supervision. Direct supervision means that the supervisor must be in the same room and supervising the trainee at all times.

All AADL documentation must be signed by both the trainee and their supervisor.

All new assessors' work will be monitored by AADL for a minimum of 6 months.

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Procedure:

Specialty Assessor:

1. Registers with the AADL Program, by filling out a Specialty Assessor form.
2. Attaches proof of membership in good standing from applicable professional association (CHAPA or ACSLPA) indicating that no supervision is required.
3. Attaches proof of required one-year hearing aid dispensing experience following completion of all certification exams.
4. Forwards their Specialty Assessor form and attachments to AADL.

AADL:

1. Approves or denies Assessor application.
2. Provides approved Assessor with pertinent AADL information:
 - AADL Section H manual.
 - Fee schedules for Hearing Aid Benefits.
3. Monitors new Assessor's work for a minimum of 6 months.

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APPROVED MANUFACTURERS LIST

The following table outlines approved AADL manufacturers who may provide eligible clients with new or replacement and repair of hearing devices.

MANUFACTURER	CODE
Audio Controle	AC
Beltone	BL
Bernafon	BR
NuEar	NU
Oticon	OT
Phonak	PK
ReSound	RS
Rexton	RE
SeboTek	SK
Siemens	SI
Sonic Innovations	SO
Starkey	ST
Unitron	UN
Vivatone	VI
Widex	WI

The following table outlines manufacturers' codes that may be used for the repair of hearing devices, but are not approved for the supply of new or replacement AADL hearing devices.

MANUFACTURER	CODE
Argosy	AR
Audiotone	AT
Danavox	DV
Electone	EL
Hadsco	HD
Haltone	HA
Magnatone	MG
Maico	MA
Qualitone	QU
Rion	RI
Sentech	SE
Telex	TE

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PERSONAL LISTENING DEVICES

A Personal listening device is a wired device that is intended to facilitate conversation between a person with hearing loss and another person. It consists of a processor about the size of a small transistor radio, a microphone that connects to the processor, and an output device that also connects to the processor.

The second person speaks into the microphone, and the person with hearing loss uses the output device to improve their speech comprehension. The output device may be a pair of headphones, earbuds or custom fit molds that the person with hearing loss wears.

Some of these devices may be configured for multiple speakers, but they are primarily intended for one-on-one situations.

Testing and Environment, as well as Aural rehabilitation requirements are the same as for hearing aid benefits.

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PERSONAL LISTENING DEVICES QUANTITY LIMITS

Policy Statement:

The AADL Program will provide eligible clients one (1) Personal Listening Device every five (5) years, in lieu of a hearing aid.

Replacement after this time period may be requested only if the previous device can no longer be used, or is too costly to repair.

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PERSONAL LISTENING DEVICES PRIOR APPROVAL

Any individual who meets the eligibility criteria for hearing aids may substitute a personal listening device, as defined below, for traditional amplification.

A written prior approval request, submitted by a Specialty Assessor, to the AADL Hearing and Augmentative Communication Program Manager is required before approval of a Personal Listening device can occur.

Procedure:

Specialty Assessor:

1. The prior approval request should contain the following:
 - a) Patient information/history.
 - b) Patient need and description of environments the device will be used in.
 - c) Confirmation of family/caregiver support of the use of the system.
2. Submit the written request to the Hearing and Augmentative Communication Program Manager at AADL.

AADL:

1. Reviews the request and documentation.
2. Approves or denies the request.
3. Advises the Specialty Assessor of the decision in writing.

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PERSONAL LISTENING DEVICE REPAIRS

Policy Statement:

The AADL Program will provide eligible clients one (1) Personal Listening Device repair each year outside of the manufacturer's original warranty.

Procedure:

Specialty Supplier:

1. Confirm client eligibility for a hearing device repair on the IVR system or e-business site.
2. Confirm client status regarding cost-share or cost-share exemption with the client.
3. Inform the client as to their eligibility status.
4. Inform AADL Hearing and Augmentative Communication staff of the serial number of the device to be repaired if it is not already on the system by using the e-business website to register the device with AADL.
5. Re-verify the device setting following the repair.
6. Read and instruct the client regarding the AADL Service Certificate.
7. Have the client sign and date the AADL Service Certificate.
8. Provide the client with copy of the signed AADL Service Certificate for their files.
9. Retain all related documentation within the client's file regarding the hearing aid repair:
 - Manufacturer's invoice
 - Fitting verification - settings
 - Dated and signed AADL Service Certificate
10. Recover the client's cost-share portion, if applicable.

Client:

1. Provide the Specialty Supplier with appropriate information to obtain eligibility information.
2. Undergo device verification measures with repaired device if electroacoustics have been modified.
3. Date and sign the AADL Service Certificate.
4. Retain a copy of the AADL Service Certificate for their files.
5. Pay the cost-share portion, if applicable.

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AADL:

1. Record serial numbers of personal listening devices not purchased by AADL.
2. Respond to all questions and/or concerns from assessors and/or clients regarding personal listening device guidelines.

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PERSONAL FM SYSTEMS

Personal FM Systems are systems in which the parent/care giver wears a microphone with an FM transmitter that broadcasts his/her voice directly to an FM receiver worn by the individual thereby bypassing environmental sounds (noise). These devices may be used inside and/or outside of the home.

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FM SYSTEMS QUANTITY LIMITS

Policy Statement:

The AADL Program will provide eligible clients one (1) Personal FM System every five (5) years.

Replacement after this time period may be requested only if the previous device can no longer be used, or is too costly to repair. Replacement of devices must demonstrate improved client outcomes.

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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA: PERSONAL FM SYSTEMS

Policy Statement:

Clients must meet the general AADL eligibility criteria and the following criteria for Personal FM Systems:

- Individuals must be under 18 years of age, or a full time student, still receiving benefits under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan as a dependent under their parent's plan and is between the ages of 18 to 24 years. Proof of full time educational enrolment is required for those 18 - 24.
- The FM system must be used in conjunction with an amplification benefit, or by individuals who present a permanent, unaidable, unilateral hearing loss.
- It must be established that the equipment shall be used in a variety of listening environments, not solely for school use.
- The individual's caregivers must be trained in the use of the device and motivated to use it in a variety of listening environments.

Procedure:

Audiologist:

1. Determines client eligibility.
2. Collects proof of full time educational enrollment from eligible clients age 18-24.

Client/Family:

1. Provide the Audiologist with appropriate information to obtain eligibility information.

AADL:

1. Answers any questions or concerns regarding FM system eligibility criteria.

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FITTING, VERIFICATION AND VALIDATION OF FM SYSTEMS

Policy Statement:

Personal FM Systems must be fitted and verified by an Audiologist. The Audiologist is the only professional who is qualified to select, evaluate, fit and dispense FM systems through AADL.

The Audiologist will discuss all audiological, developmental, listening environment, and technology issues prior to recommending an FM System.

At the time of fitting and at routine follow-up, the Audiologist should confirm that the electro-acoustic fitting goals have been attained or maintained.

The Audiologist shall provide the eligible client with a trial period of at least 28 days after the fitting of the FM System. The 28 day trial period does not include days when the FM System is not in the client's possession.

At the end of the trial period, the Audiologist shall, in person, validate the effectiveness of the FM System with the client and/or parents.

If the fitting is satisfactory to the client, the Audiologist shall obtain from the client their signature on an AADL FM Validation Certificate or, where the client is under 18 years of age, the signature of their parent or guardian.

The FM Validation Certificate is a two-part form, in that the client will sign this form on two separate occasions; at time of fitting and at the end of the trial period. It is mandatory that the Audiologist reads and explains to the client what it is they are signing for. No pre-dating or pre-signing of the certificate is permitted. All services are to be provided in person. A copy of the signed Validation Certificate must be given by the Audiologist to the client, on the day they receive the service, for the client's personal file.

Procedure:

Audiologist:

1. Orders the FM device from the approved manufacturers list.
2. Fits the FM system and uses verification methods to ascertain adequate benefit.
3. Provides training in the use of the device to family members, and others who may use the

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FM system.

4. Provides the client with a minimum 28-day trial period.
5. Recovers the client's cost-share portion if applicable, at the time of the trial.
6. Has the client sign the FM Validation Certificate, both at fitting and at the end of the trial period.

Client/Family:

1. Trained in the use of the FM system.
2. Pay their cost-share portion if not eligible for cost-share exemption.
3. Sign the FM Validation Certificate at fitting and upon satisfaction.

AADL:

1. Pays vendor for submitted claim following successful trial period.

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REPAIRS OF FM SYSTEMS

Policy Statement:

The AADL Program will pay the manufacturer's invoice cost for repairing Personal FM Systems used by eligible clients. Items, such as receivers and transmitters may be repaired once per year per unit once the device is out of the manufacturer's original warranty period.

Procedure:

Audiologist:

1. Forwards device to manufacturer for repair.
2. Obtains a quote for repair cost if the item is not a standard flat rate repair charge.
3. Refits the FM system to the client following the repair.
4. Reads and instructs the client regarding the AADL Service Certificate.
5. Have the client sign and date the AADL Service Certificate.
6. Provide the client with a copy of the signed AADL Service Certificate for their files.
7. Retain all related documentation within the client's file regarding the FM system repair:
 - a. Manufacturer's invoice
 - b. Real ear verification documentation
 - c. Dated and signed AADL Service Certificate
8. Recovers client's cost-share contribution, if applicable.

Client/Family:

1. Sees Audiologist for repairs.
2. Receives a quote for repair cost if the item is other than a flat rate repair.
3. Undergoes refitting following return of the repaired FM system.
4. Signs the AADL Service Certificate when the device is returned.
5. Pays the cost-share portion, if applicable.

AADL:

1. Responds to any questions or concerns regarding FM system repairs.

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APPROVED MANUFACTURER LIST

Policy Statement:

Personal FM Systems shall be ordered from the following approved AADL Manufacturers:

MANUFACTURER	CODE
Phonak	PK
Oticon	OT
Sennheiser	SH

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STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

Policy Statement:

Amplification benefit suppliers must provide every client with a statement of account for each hearing service invoiced to the AADL program. The statement of account must include the AADL contribution, the cost-share portion, and any upgrade charges for each amplification benefit (when applicable).

Procedure:

Amplification benefit suppliers:

1. Provides the client with a statement of account for AADL amplification benefits when invoiced to the AADL program.
2. For cost-share clients, identify the AADL contribution and the client's cost-share contribution for each amplification benefit.
3. For cost-share exempt clients, identify AADL's contribution for each amplification benefit.
4. For all clients, identify any upgrade charges for each amplification benefit.

AADL:

1. Reviews discrepancies of costs with client.

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