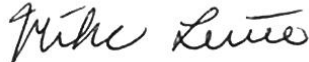




All Provider Bulletin 415

DATE: April 2026

TO: All Providers Participating in MassHealth

FROM: Mike Levine, Undersecretary for MassHealth 

RE: **Update to MassHealth Coverage of Speech-Generating Devices and Review of Coverage for Augmentative and Alternative Communication-related Services**

Background

This provider bulletin substantially restates and supersedes [All Provider Bulletin 266](#) issued in March 2017. The purpose of this updated bulletin is to clarify MassHealth coverage of speech-generating devices and to align with the updated [Guidelines for Medical Necessity Determination for Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices, Including Speech-Generating Devices](#). This bulletin also details coverage of augmentative and alternative communication-related services.

MassHealth covers medically necessary, dedicated speech-generating devices under its durable medical equipment (DME) program. To be eligible for federal matching funds (Federal Financial Participation or FFP), DME items covered by MassHealth must have a primary medical purpose, as required by the federal definition of DME. Under 42 CFR 440.70: *Home Health Services*, DME is “used primarily and customarily to serve a medical purpose... [and is] generally not useful in the absence of disability, illness, or injury.” Under state law, MassHealth may generally only cover items or services eligible for FFP.

There are two main categories of speech-generating devices (SGDs).

- **Dedicated SGDs** are designed to primarily serve a medical purpose (that is, solely for the purpose of expressive communication) such that they are generally NOT useful in the absence of disability, illness, or injury. Dedicated devices qualify for federal matching funds. Prior authorization (PA) for a dedicated SGD is submitted by the DME provider.
- **Non-dedicated SGDs** are designed for a non-medical purpose and are generally useful in the absence of disability, illness, or injury. Non-dedicated devices (tablets) are not considered medical devices and therefore do not qualify for federal matching funds. PA for a non-dedicated SGD is submitted by a MassHealth-enrolled provider of speech language pathology services or their staff.

In general, MassHealth does not provide coverage for items or services unless federal matching funds are available; however, state law (M.G.L. c. 118E, section 10H) authorizes the expenditure of 100 percent state funds for “non-dedicated” devices, including non-medical electronic tablets that can serve as a member’s medically necessary SGD under certain circumstances.

Specifically, MassHealth may cover these devices for members who

- are younger than 21;
- have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder;
- have a severe expressive communication disorder;
- have evidence that the non-dedicated SGD is determined to be the most clinically appropriate communication device versus a dedicated SGD, and all attempts have been made to obtain coverage of the non-dedicated SGD if the member has insurance other than MassHealth. (This is called third-party liability [TPL]); and
- meet MassHealth PA requirements for an SGD. (See [MassHealth Guidelines for Medical Necessity Determination for Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices, Including Speech-Generating Devices](#))

In addition, the device must meet the cost-comparison requirement of M.G.L. c. 118E, section 10H, as determined by MassHealth.

Note that all other MassHealth requirements apply and must be met, including but not limited to, member eligibility requirements and TPL requirements, such as those related to MassHealth’s role as payer of last resort. (See 130 CMR 409.403: *Eligible Members*; 130 CMR 409.428: *Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices and Speech Generation Devices (AAC)*; and 130 CMR 450.316: *Third-party Liability: Requirements*.) MassHealth regulations at 130 CMR 450.105: *Coverage Types* specifically state which services are covered for each coverage type and which members are eligible to receive those services.

Coverage Summary

There is no change in coverage for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)-related services through MassHealth. MassHealth will continue to cover DME accessories that are medically necessary for a member’s use of an SGD (whether the SGD is dedicated or non-dedicated). MassHealth will also continue to cover services related to the use of an SGD.

Providers serving members enrolled in a MassHealth-contracted managed care entity (MCE), excluding Senior Care Options (SCO) and One Care, must submit PA and medical necessity documentation for the non-dedicated device through the MassHealth Third-Party Administrator (TPA) PA process at www.MassHealthLTSS.com. The TPA will review SLP PA submissions and determine if medical necessity is appropriate. Please note that all MCEs currently cover dedicated devices for qualifying members. PA for dedicated devices must be submitted to the member’s MCE plan for review, utilizing their DME provider network.

Table 1 summarizes coverage of AAC devices.

Table 1. Summary of MassHealth AAC Coverage

| Category of AAC Device | AAC Devices (including but not limited to) | Coverage |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dedicated AAC Devices <i>Note: MassHealth does not cover cellular service/data.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication boards or books; • Electro larynxes; • Speech/voice amplifiers; • Electronic devices that produce speech or written output (SGD); and • Generation software and applications | No change in coverage. Currently covered under MassHealth regulation 130 CMR 409.428: <i>Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices and Speech Generation Devices (AAC)</i> . |
| Non-dedicated SGD <i>Note: MassHealth does not cover cellular service/data.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tablets: Varies • Covered Tablet Models: Varies • Covered Tablet Capacity: Varies | Coverage subject to the conditions and limitations described in this bulletin and related materials. |

Guidelines for Prior Authorization Process

MassHealth created clinical guidelines for medical necessity determination detailed in [Guidelines for Medical Necessity Determination for Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices, Including Speech-Generating Devices](#) to identify the clinical information that MassHealth needs to determine medical necessity through its PA process for coverage of an SGD. The guidelines address PA for both dedicated and non-dedicated SGDs, software, and accessories for medically indicated purposes that require speech to be produced for members with severe expressive communication impairments.

Providers should consult MassHealth regulations at 130 CMR 409.000: [Durable Medical Equipment Services](#), giving particular attention to Section 409.428: *Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices and Speech Generation Devices (AAC)*.

Dedicated SGD—PA Submitted by DME Provider

MassHealth has not made any changes to the process for DME providers to request PA for medically necessary speech-generating devices and accessories. Please reference the AAC Medical Necessity Guidelines mentioned above.

Non-Dedicated SGD—PA Submitted by MassHealth-enrolled Provider of Outpatient Speech Language Pathology Services

The MassHealth-enrolled provider of outpatient speech language pathology services is required to coordinate with the member’s ordering practitioner and provide clinical documentation as outlined in the AAC Medical Necessity Guidelines.

Table 2. Submitting PA to MassHealth for Non-Dedicated SGD and Accessories

| Authorized Provider | Description of Service | Procedure Code | Modifier | Billed Amount | Comments |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provider of speech language pathology services | Non-dedicated SGD | E2510 – Speech-generating device, synthesized speech, permitting multiple methods of message formulation and multiple methods of device access | TW | \$0 | MassHealth will purchase the tablet and give it to the therapist for delivery to the member. |
| Provider of speech language pathology services | Non-dedicated SGD software | E2511 – Speech-generating software program | TW | \$0 | MassHealth will purchase the software and download it directly to the tablet. |
| Provider of speech language pathology services | Protective Case | E2599 – Accessory for speech-generating device, not otherwise classified (protective case) | TW | \$0 | MassHealth will purchase the protective case and will give it to the therapist for delivery to the member. |
| Provider of speech language pathology services | Follow up Visits | 92609 - Therapeutic service(s) for the use of speech-generating device, including programming and modification | TW | No changes. MassHealth will pay the existing MassHealth rate. | See AAC Medical Necessity Guidelines. |

| Authorized Provider | Description of Service | Procedure Code | Modifier | Billed Amount | Comments |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DME Provider | Accessories other than protective cases (for example, mounting systems, speakers, etc.) | <p>E2512 - Accessory for speech generating-device, mounting system</p> <p>E2599 - Accessory for speech-generating device, not otherwise classified (not covered if used as a modification to home internet or phone)</p> | None | DME provider's billed amount is set forth in 101 CMR 322.00: Rates for Durable Medical Equipment, Oxygen and Respiratory Therapy Equipment. | DME providers should continue to follow current MassHealth billing protocol when billing for DME accessories. |

Claim Submission to MassHealth

Dedicated SGD

DME provider claims submission will not change when billing for a dedicated device for MassHealth members. When submitting claims to MassHealth for a dedicated SGD, please refer to the [MassHealth DME Provider Manual](#).

Non-Dedicated SGD

There is no claim submission for a non-dedicated SGD.

Participating AAC Tablet Speech Language Pathology Clinics

MassHealth has partnered with enrolled providers of outpatient speech language pathology services to facilitate the evaluation, data-driven trial, and distribution of devices configured to function as a non-dedicated SGD to meet the needs of qualifying MassHealth members. Please contact one of these [Speech Language Pathology Tablet Clinics](#) for help obtaining non-dedicated SGDs for members.

MassHealth Website

This bulletin is available on the [MassHealth Provider Bulletins](#) web page.

[Sign up](#) to receive email alerts when MassHealth issues new bulletins and transmittal letters.

Questions?

If you have questions about the information in this bulletin, please contact:

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