

Hearing Aids

A hearing aid is any wearable instrument or device designed for, offered for the purpose of, or represented as aiding persons with or compensating for, impaired hearing.

Coverage and Payment Policy

Prior authorization is required.

Licensed Dealers must submit the following documentation:

1. Prior authorization form
2. A Certificate of Medical Necessity form signed by a licensed physician attesting to the beneficiary's need for a hearing aid based on an otological exam.
3. A copy of the results of the audiometric testing (completed within one year) that supports the need for the hearing aid. In most cases this will be an audiogram with Speech Reception Threshold and Word Recognition Scores. Alternate industry-accepted test results are acceptable when it is not possible to do the audiogram, SRT and/or Word Recognition testing.
4. Dealers requesting prior approval for a cost plus mark-up repair or specialty hearing device such as FM system must also submit a manufacturer invoice certifying the actual cost of the item.

Except in limited cases, a hearing aid is to be purchased only once in five years. A significant change in hearing (at least 15dBHL, change in at least one frequency between 500 and 4000Hz) will be considered as justification for a new hearing aid on an individual basis.

Specialty listening devices such as an FM system will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, a beneficiary/family member and professional fitting the hearing aid must sign and submit documentation within the initial 30 day trial period that answers the following questions:

1. Has the device been used in the beneficiary's living/school/work environment, and is it meeting the needs for each of the applicable environments?
2. Has the device provided a benefit that was not obtained with traditional hearing aids? If so, describe the benefits.

Binaural Hearing Aid Requirements

Payments for binaural hearing aids will only be considered when the Physician submits justification on why binaural hearing aids have a medically necessary application that cannot be met with one hearing aid. For example, a person who has uncorrectable blindness and a severe hearing loss would have no means other than binaural hearing aids to detect where sound from a potential danger is coming from.

Blindness is defined as visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of corrective lens; or visual field limitation such that the widest diameter of the field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees. This finding is equivalent to having a critical visual acuity of 20/200 or less.

Guarantee

Hearing aids must be unconditionally guaranteed for both parts and service for a period of one year from the date on which the aid is provided to the beneficiary.

Replacement:

Replacement hearing aids will be covered only when the current device no longer meets the beneficiary's needs, has been lost or has been damaged beyond repair.

For a hearing aid that no longer meets the beneficiary's need, the provider shall document the significant change in the beneficiary's hearing loss to warrant the replacement.

For a hearing aid that has been lost, stolen or damaged beyond repair, the provider shall document:

1. The disposition of the prior hearing aid and statement of circumstances of loss or damage;
2. In the case of damage, a statement from the hearing aid dealer or audiologist that the hearing aid cannot be repaired;
3. The measures to be taken by the beneficiary, family or other caregiver, to prevent future loss or damage.

Long Term Care Residents

All requests for hearing aids for beneficiary's residing in Nursing Facilities, and Intermediate Care Facilities must be accompanied by a statement from the Administrator or Director of Nurses which answers the following questions:

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1. Has the beneficiary been wearing a hearing aid? If so, how long?
2. Do you believe that this beneficiary will use a hearing aid if Medicaid authorizes the purchase of a hearing aid?
3. Are you of the opinion that this beneficiary will derive sufficient social/medical benefits to justify the purchase of a hearing aid?

Hearing Aid Repairs and Custom Ear molds

The allowance for hearing aid repairs is provided to cover the expenses of postage, insurance and the use of another aid while the repair is being completed. There are set rates for standard office and manufacturer repairs, recasing, and an option for repair cost plus set mark-up when a repair will cost more than the set amount, but still be less than a replacement hearing aid. In no instance will a hearing aid repair be paid that occurred within the one year guarantee period other than reduced cost replacement.

Payment

The Medicaid Program will make payment for hearing aids on the following basis:

The allowance for monaural and binaural hearing aids will be based on standard fees set by EOHHS.

Assistive listening devices (such as FM systems) and specialty aids (such as Bone Conduction aids) will be reimbursed at manufacturer's cost plus a mark-up only after receipt of the beneficiary/family member and professional statements signifying acceptance of the devices. Prior authorization for these devices will be conditional upon receipt of these statements.

Approved by  Associate Medical Director

Jerry Fingerut, MD

Date: 10 December, 2014

Reviewed: _____

Revised: _____