
Alberta Health

**Alberta Aids to Daily Living
Voice Restoration and Electrolarynx
(VRE) Benefits**

Policy & Procedures Manual

November 23, 2020



Revision History

Description	Date
Process updates throughout to reflect authorization and claim processing being transitioned to Alberta Blue Cross	November 23, 2020
Rename benefit to Voice Restoration and Electrolarynx Products	October 1, 2016
A-01 Eligibility criteria defined for electrolarynx, communication products for tracheostomies, and voice restoration products for laryngectomies	October 1, 2016
A-02 Wording changes for Client Roles and Responsibilities	October 1, 2016
A-03 Quantity and Frequency Limits defined	October 1, 2016
A-04 Wording changes for Electrolarynx Repairs	October 1, 2016
A-05 Wording changes for Recycling Electrolarynx	October 1, 2016
A-06 Updated Vendor List	October 1, 2016
A-07 Inserted Process Flow Chart	October 1, 2016
A-08 removed	October 1, 2016
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Voice Restoration and Electrolarynx Benefits

Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) assists Albertans with a long-term disability, chronic illness or terminal illness, in maintaining independence in their community. AADL provides funding for basic medical equipment and supplies to meet clinically assessed needs.

Voice restoration and electrolarynx (VRE) supplies are funded by AADL to meet the basic communication needs of clients who have had a laryngectomy or a tracheostomy.

An assessment by a speech-language pathologist (SLP) determines the voice restoration equipment and supplies that an eligible Albertan can receive through the AADL program. The type of items covered, the annual quantity and the frequency that items can be provided are listed in the VRE Approved Product List. This is available on the AADL website: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-a>.

Benefit authorizations and claims are processed through the Alberta Blue Cross Online Services Website (Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal).

It is the client's responsibility to purchase items which are not included on the AADL approved product list.

Policy A – 01

Client Eligibility Criteria

Policy Statement

AADL clients must meet the general AADL program eligibility requirements in order to be considered for voice restoration and/or electrolarynx benefits. AADL General Policies and Procedures are available on-line at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-gn>.

Eligibility for voice restoration and/or electrolarynx (VRE) benefits must be determined by an AADL Authorizer who is a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) and a member in good standing with the Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (ACSLPA). Authorizers must meet the requirements of Alberta Health Services (AHS) for this area of specialization.

Benefits are provided to eligible clients to meet basic needs for communication. Clients must meet the following criteria for specific benefits:

1. Electrolarynx

- a) An electrolarynx is an artificial larynx used for communication purposes by individuals who have had their larynx removed and have been unsuccessful in learning tracheo-esophageal speech.
- b) An electrolarynx may be provided only when the client is medically stable following surgery. For individuals who are not yet medically stable, the authorizer should consider other options, such as a temporary loaner.

2. Communication Products for Tracheostomies

- a) External speaking valves are provided to maintain communication health for people who have undergone a tracheostomy or use a ventilator and have demonstrated that they can benefit from using a speaking valve for communication purposes.
- b) Speaking valves are not supported by AADL for treatment purposes, such as when clients are being assessed for removal of a tracheotomy.
- c) A voice amplifier may be provided for children up to age 18 years who have undergone a tracheostomy or use a ventilator.
- d) An assessment and trial of using the voice amplifier must be completed to ensure it can be used effectively in educational and community settings.

3. Voice Restoration Products

- a) Indwelling voice prostheses and laryngectomy products are provided to maintain communication health and provide voice restoration for people who have undergone a total laryngectomy.
- b) Products are selected by the authorizer from the Approved Product List (APL), based on identified basic clinical needs.

Procedure

SLP Authorizers:

1. Conduct assessment to determine client is able to use the specific VRE product(s) under consideration to meet the daily communication needs.
2. Confirm client meets AADL eligibility requirements.
3. Confirm client does not have access to other funding sources (AADL Policy GN-16)
4. Process authorization through the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal.
5. Provide clinical rationale for prior approval items.

Clients:

1. Actively participate in the assessment process.
2. Demonstrate ability to use and care for the product(s) under consideration.
3. Provide daily care to maintain the product(s) in good working order.
4. Pay cost share portion if applicable.
5. For clients receiving an AADL funded electrolarynx, return the electrolarynx to the authorizer if no longer needed (see Policy A-06).

Vendors:

1. Process preauthorization notification from Alberta Blue Cross.
2. Obtain cost-share portion from client, if applicable.
3. Ship product(s) to the client, in accordance with directions provided in the purchase order.
4. Process claim for the product(s) provided through the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal.

Policy A – 02

Client Roles and Responsibilities

Policy Statement

Clients must be assessed by an SLP Authorizer to ensure they can benefit from using voice restoration and/or electrolarynx products to meet their daily communication needs.

Clients must advise the SLP Authorizer if they have access to alternate funding sources for VRE products and are expected to be actively involved in the assessment process and participate in educational activities to learn how to clean, care and maintain products in good working order.

Clients eligible for cost-sharing are expected to pay the Vendor the cost-share portion prior to products being shipped.

Clients are responsible for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged products. AADL is not responsible for replacement products that have been lost, stolen or damaged due to misuse. It is the client's responsibility to purchase any supplies which are not listed on the VRE Approved Product List.

Procedure

SLP Authorizers:

- 1 Conduct an assessment of the client's needs and abilities to benefit from using voice restoration and/or electrolarynx products.
- 2 Evaluate each client's eligibility to receive AADL benefits including ensuring the client:
 - a) Has a valid Alberta Personal Health Number (PHN).
 - b) Signs the Client Declaration Form.
 - c) Does not have access to other sources of funding.
- 3 Advise the client of AADL policies and procedures on the provision of VRE products.
- 4 Complete required documentation through the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal.
- 5 Provide ongoing client, family and care team support as needed on the use, care and maintenance of the products.

Clients, with family support as needed:

1. Actively participate in the assessment process.
2. Provide feedback on equipment and products.
4. Upon successful completion of the assessment, sign AADL documentation.
5. If appropriate, pay the cost-share amount to the Vendor/Distributor.
6. Accept responsibility for the care and maintenance of the VRE products and use in accordance with directions provided by the authorizer.

Alberta Blue Cross:

1. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from authorizers and/or clients regarding assessment.
2. Performs regular audit of documentation and adherence to AADL policy and procedures.
3. Refer questions and/or concerns to AADL, if required.

Policy A – 03

Authorizer Requirements

All AADL authorizers are responsible for providing quality services to eligible AADL clients.

All Authorizers will need to be registered on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal prior to submitting benefit authorization requests.

Speech-Language Pathology Authorizers for VRE benefits must meet these requirements:

- Be a registered member in good standing with the Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (ACSLPA).
- Meet the clinical experience requirements for restricted activities identified by the Alberta College of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists Services for speech-language pathologists working with clients who require VRE supplies.
- Follow a best practice approach to clinical procedures.
- Provide clients with information and answers regarding AADL eligibility criteria.
- Adhere to AADL Policies and Procedures as stated in the most current General Policies and Procedures Manual, VRE Benefits Manual, and Approved Product List.
- Register with Alberta Blue Cross to obtain website access to the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal.
- Comply with monitoring and/or audits conducted by Alberta Blue Cross and/or AADL.
- Resolve all errors relating to the assessment of a client's benefits, eligibility status and pre-authorization of claims.
- Inform Alberta Blue Cross AADL Provider Contact Center if there is a change of authorizer status.

Authorizers who have not submitted an authorization within 18 months will have their access to the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal removed. To be re-activated, users will have to contact the Alberta Blue Cross AADL Provider Contact Center.

Any new Authorizer who wishes to join the program will need to provide the required documentation to Alberta Blue Cross. Alberta Blue Cross will then work with AADL to validate the authorizer and, if approved, register them on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal for the appropriate benefits.

Policy A – 04

Quantity and Frequency Limits

Policy Statement

Clients are eligible for voice restoration and electrolarynx benefits subject to quantity and frequency limits stated on the Approved Product List (APL). The APL is available online at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-a>.

If benefit maximums have been reached and a client’s basic functional need is not being met, an authorizer may submit a Quantity and Frequency Review (QFR) Request identifying the products required with a clinical rationale to support the requested items.

A QFR request will not be considered for items that are not on the Approved Product List (APL).

Procedure

SLP Authorizers:

1. Review with client the quantity and frequency of products required to meet their clinical needs
2. Follow the AADL Quantity and Frequency Review process (Policy GN-30 and GN-31).
3. Complete a QFR Form and submit documentation with clinical rationale on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal for consideration.

Clients:

1. Discuss clinical needs with the authorizer.
2. Sign the Quantity and Frequency Review (QFR) Form.

Alberta Blue Cross:

1. Receives and logs QFR requests.
2. Forwards QFR requests to AADL.
3. Forwards AADL decisions regarding the QFR request to the authorizer and client.
4. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from authorizers and/or clients regarding QFR requests.

5. Retains all relevant documentation submitted through the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal.

AADL:

1. Reviews QFR request in view of identified clinical needs.
1. Adjudicates the QFR request and provides a response to Alberta Blue Cross to update the QFR status.
2. Retains all relevant documentation submitted through the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal.

Policy A - 05

Electrolarynx Repairs

Policy Statement

Vendors must register eligible electrolarynges by serial number on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal in order for billing to occur.

The standard manufacturer warranty applies to all AADL equipment. AADL does not pay for repairs on equipment covered by warranty.

AADL will pay for one repair per year that is the result of normal wear and tear when the warranty has expired.

If the electrolarynx is not deemed repairable, replacement can be requested in accordance with quantity and frequency limits.

Procedure

Clients:

1. Contact SLP Authorizer or Vendor to troubleshoot malfunctioning device.
2. If troubleshooting fails, send malfunctioning equipment to Vendor for repair.
3. Pay cost-share portion for repair directly to Vendor, if applicable.

Speech-Language Pathologist SLP Authorizers:

1. Advise client if electrolarynx needs repairing and confirm repair procedures with client.
2. Confirm client eligibility for repairs through Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal, Client Inquiry Screen.
3. Register the serial number of the electrolarynx to be repaired through the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal, if it is not already in the system.

Vendors:

1. Assist with trouble shooting electrolarynx.
2. Repair device if necessary.
3. Return repaired electrolarynx to client or speech-language pathologist, as indicated.

4. Enter claim(s) through the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal.
5. Collect client's cost-share portion, if applicable.
6. Provide client with Alberta Blue Cross Claim Statement.

Alberta Blue Cross:

1. Adjudicates authorizations and claims.
2. Pays eligible claims.
3. Retains all relevant documentation.
4. Responds to all questions and/or concerns from authorizers, clients and/or vendors regarding claims submissions.
5. Refers questions and/or concerns to AADL, if required.

Policy A - 06

Recycling Electrolarynx

Policy Statement

The client should return any electrolarynx purchased by AADL if no longer needed to the SLP Authorizer. Recycled electrolarynges may be used by the SLP Authorizer for demonstration and assessment purposes.

Procedure

Clients:

1. Return electrolarynx to SLP Authorizer when no longer needed.

SLP Authorizers:

1. Inform client at time of original purchase that the device must be returned when no longer needed or used.
2. Accept devices returned from client and recycle device within centre.

Policy A – 07

Vendor Requirements

Policy Statement

All AADL Vendors are responsible for providing quality supplies and services to eligible AADL clients.

All Vendors will need to sign Provider Agreements with Alberta Blue Cross and Alberta Aids to Daily Living, and be registered on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal to submit benefit claims for AADL benefits.

The following current vendors are approved by AADL to provide voice restoration and electrolarynx benefits:

ATOS Medical, Ontario
AutoControl Medical, Ontario
Ontario Home Health, Ontario

Any new Vendor who wishes to join the program will need to provide the required documentation to Alberta Blue Cross. Alberta Blue Cross will then work with AADL to validate the Vendor and, if approved, register them on the online-portal for the appropriate benefits.

Policy A-08

Statement of Account

Policy Statement

VRE Vendors must provide every client with a statement of account for all supplies invoiced to the AADL program.

General information including statement details, Alberta Blue Cross contact information and client data appear on the claim statement. The claim statement is comprised of three sections: statement information, claim summary, and claim details.

The claim summary displays the overall breakdown of how much each client is responsible for against the total claimed amount for all claims submitted:

Total amount claimed – The sum of claimed amounts for all claims submitted.

AADL will pay – The total amount that AADL will cover for all claims submitted.

Client will pay – The total amount the client is responsible to pay for all claims submitted. This amount is the sum of any cost share amount the client owes and upgrade charges that are not covered by AADL.

Clients must be provided with a copy of their claim statement.

Procedure

Vendors:

1. Provide the client with a statement of account for VRE benefits.
2. Provide client with the Statement of Claim.

Alberta Blue Cross:

1. Provides the vendor with a detailed claim statement.

Process Flow Chart

Voice Restoration & Electrolarynx Products

