



# Therapeutic footwear benefits

Alberta Aids to Daily Living  
Program Manual Section FT



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## **Policy FT – 01**

### **Therapeutic Footwear Benefits Background**

#### **Policy Statement**

Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) provides funding for therapeutic footwear benefits to eligible clients who require pressure downloading orthoses, commercially available therapeutic shoes, total contact inserts or custom shoe modifications

Clients must meet AADL general and benefit-specific eligibility criteria to qualify for AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefits.

Therapeutic footwear management for the neuropathic foot is intended as a long-term management technique for maintaining healed areas and preventing further ulceration. Appropriate prescription of therapeutic footwear is considered an important factor in this effort, particularly in the insensate foot.

The provider of therapeutic footwear benefits must hold qualifications stipulated under Policy FT – 10 Therapeutic Footwear Provider Roles and Responsibilities and be employed by a facility that has an agreement with AADL to provide therapeutic footwear benefits.

The maximum funding amounts for therapeutic footwear benefits is listed in Alberta Aids to Daily Living Approved Product List FT – Therapeutic Footwear.

Authorizations and claims for therapeutic footwear benefits must be entered on the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal.

Throughout this policy, “provider” and “specialty assessor/supplier” will be used interchangeably unless otherwise stated.

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## **Policy FT – 02**

### **Process for Obtaining Therapeutic Footwear Benefits**

#### **Policy Statement**

Clients and therapeutic footwear providers must follow AADL's general and benefit-specific policies and procedures for obtaining and providing therapeutic footwear benefits.

#### **Procedure**

##### **Clients:**

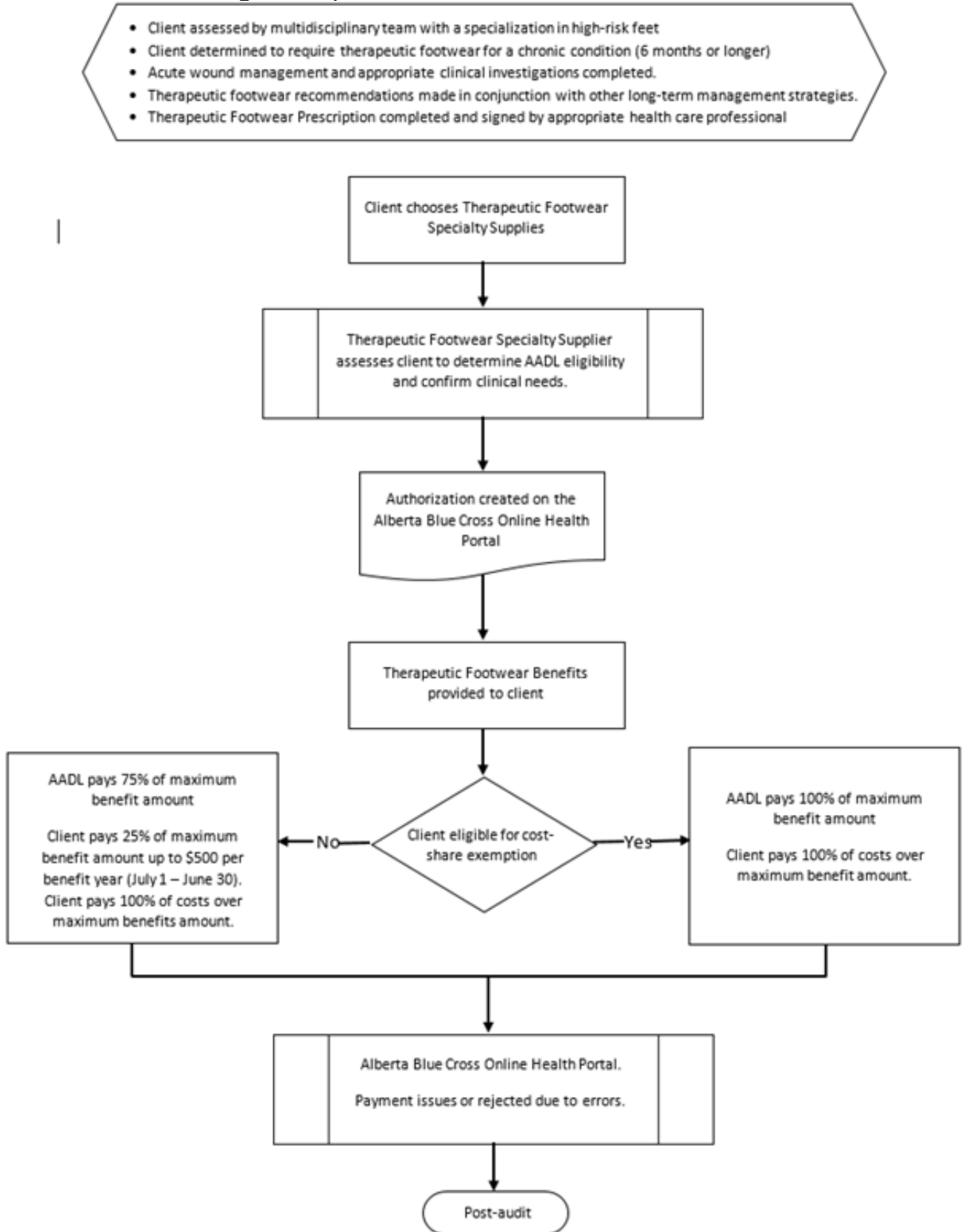
- Follow process for obtaining therapeutic footwear benefits as outlined in Figure 1, below.

##### **Therapeutic Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:**

- Follow process for obtaining therapeutic footwear benefits as outlined in Figure 1, below.

# Figure 1

## Process for Obtaining Therapeutic Footwear Benefits



# Policy FT – 03

## Eligibility Criteria

### Policy Statement

Clients must meet the general and benefits-specific eligibility criteria from the AADL policy and procedure manuals, which includes the following:

- clients must be ambulatory
- client must present with one or more of the following:
  - foot neuropathy determined by monofilament testing and detailed assessment demonstrated by a:
    - Carville Risk Category 1 or higher, or
    - University of Texas Wound Classification System Grade 1 or higher
  - ischemia that has been demonstrated by:
    - Ankle Brachial Index < 0.5 mm Hg, or
    - photoplethysmography toe pressure < 40 mm Hg
  - if the Ankle Brachial Index and/or photoplethysmography testing is deemed to be clinically unreliable for demonstrating ischemia, eligibility may be determined by the presence of two or more of the following foot-specific signs and/or symptoms:
    - intermittent claudication
    - pain at rest
    - nocturnal pain
    - dependent rubor/blanching on elevation
    - loss of hair on foot and toes
    - history of gangrene
    - cyanosis
  - history of a lower extremity ulcer
  - healed ischemic foot ulcer
  - bony deformity of the foot/feet resulting in toe pressure and a history of pedal ulcers
  - chronic, non-healing ulcer(s) of the foot/feet with no or limited potential for healing, or
  - must require a custom total contact insert to provide off-loading pressure relief to areas of the feet most in jeopardy of skin breakdown and/or ulceration

AADL does not provide therapeutic footwear benefits for:

- non-ambulatory clients
- clients that do not comply with all the clinical recommendations from the multidisciplinary high-risk foot team

AADL does **not** provide therapeutic footwear funding for:

- foot orthotics
- over-shoes
- winter boots
- therapeutic shoes that do not accommodate or meet the requirements of extra width, extra depth and/or extra depth and width of the toe box
- therapeutic footwear benefits in absence of a therapeutic footwear prescription as described in Policy FT – 05 Therapeutic Footwear Prescription



## Procedure

### Clients:

- Follow the procedure(s) and process for obtaining therapeutic footwear benefits as outlined in Figure 1 of this policy, above.
- Obtain a prescription for therapeutic footwear as described in Policy FT – 05 Therapeutic Footwear Prescription.
- Select a therapeutic footwear benefits provider from Alberta Aids to Daily Living Approved Product List FT – Therapeutic Footwear, available on the [AADL website](#).
- Provide prescription to and be assessed by an AADL-approved therapeutic footwear provider.
- Sign the Client Consent form.
- Must seek alternative funding for therapeutic footwear benefits if ineligible.

### Therapeutic Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:

- Follow the procedures and processes for providing therapeutic footwear benefits as outlined in Figure 1, above.
- Determine if client meets AADL eligibility requirements, and verify client cost-share status and benefit consumption.
- Submit a quantity and frequency review request on the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal early replacement of a benefit is required due to a change in the client's clinical condition.
- Maintain accurate, up-to-date client files with clinical notes and required AADL and Alberta Blue Cross documentation including but not limited to prescription(s), original signed Client Consent form and patient claim statement(s).
- Do not accept prescriptions that are not current (i.e., greater than three months old) and that do not conform to prescription requirements stipulated under Policy FT – 05 Therapeutic Footwear Prescription.
- Document any patient encounter, which includes initial assessment, dispensing of benefits and follow-up with clients.
- Complete authorization on the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal and upload the Client Consent form and any other required documentation.

### Alberta Blue Cross:

- Respond to telephone or email requests for information on benefit eligibility and provides reference to the [AADL website](#).
- Adjudicate and audit authorizations submitted through the Alberta Blue Cross inline health portal for completeness and accuracy

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## Policy FT – 04

### Multidisciplinary High-Risk Foot Team

#### Policy Statement

Clients who are eligible to receive AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefits must be assessed and treated by a multidisciplinary team with a specialization in high-risk feet. The team may include a:

- client
- family member
- occupational therapist
- physical therapist
- registered nurse and/or enterostomal therapy registered nurse
- physician
- social worker
- custom-made footwear specialist
- certified orthotist
- certified pedorthist
- certified pedorthic technician
- other qualified health professionals as required

#### Procedure

##### Multidisciplinary High-Risk Foot Teams:

- Perform the initial assessment and subsequent annual reassessments, including followup, and record the required clinical data. In accordance with in Policy FT – 03 Eligibility Criteria, and prior to prescribing AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefits, conduct annual:
  - Ankle Brachial Index testing; and/or
  - photoplethysmography toe pressure testing
- Prior to prescribing AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefits, investigate and apply appropriate clinical interventions to:
  - reduce edema
  - ensure ulcers are closed, except in the case of a documented chronic non-healing ulcer
- Collaborate with the therapeutic footwear provider to ensure the client achieves the best clinical outcome via receipt of the correct AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefits, which may include:
  - pressure downloading orthoses
  - commercially available therapeutic shoes
  - total contact inserts
  - custom shoe modifications
- Retain a copy of the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription for AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefit on the client's file.

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## Policy FT – 05

### Therapeutic Footwear Prescription

#### Policy Statement

The AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form captures clinical/diagnostic eligibility criteria for AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefits and provides an associated therapeutic footwear recommendation. Specialty assessor(s)/supplier(s) must use the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form to confirm client eligibility for AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefits, and then provide the benefits listed form.

An AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form must only be completed and signed by a member of a multi-disciplinary high-risk foot team, as follows:

- a physician in good standing with the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta who is a member of a multi-disciplinary high-risk foot team
- a nurse practitioner in good standing with the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta who is a member of a multi-disciplinary high-risk foot team
- a health care professional who is listed on the AADL-Recognized High-Risk Foot Teams List:
  - an occupational therapist in good standing with the Alberta College of Occupational Therapists
  - a physiotherapist in good standing with Physiotherapy Alberta – College + Association
  - a registered nurse in good standing with College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta

#### Procedure

##### Therapeutic Footwear Prescribers:

- Participate in the assessment as a member of the multidisciplinary high-risk foot team.
- Fully complete the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form stating the:
  - client's diagnosis, and
  - results of completed diagnostic testing
- Type of AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefits that are required which may include:
  - pressure downloading orthoses
  - commercially available therapeutic shoes
  - total contact inserts
  - custom shoe modifications, or
  - any other information regarding the foot problem(s) and/or specific instructions as required
- Provide the original, signed AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form to the client or directly to the client's preferred provider.
- Retain a copy of the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form in the client's file.
  - Must approve any requests for alterations to the clinical data that is captured on the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription.

##### Clients:

- Participate in the assessment process.
- Provide specialty assessor(s)/suppliers(s) with an AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form, if appropriate.
- Must adhere to the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form, and acknowledge that changes to the manufacturer, make or model of therapeutic shoes are not permitted.

### **Therapeutic Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:**

- Receive an AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form from client or directly from therapeutic footwear prescriber, and ensure that the:
  - AADL Therapeutic Footwear Prescription form is fully completed and signed by an AADL-approved therapeutic footwear prescriber. Confirm by the following means:
    - physicians via College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta
    - nurse practitioners via College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, or
    - occupational therapists, physiotherapists and registered nurses via the AADL-Recognized High Risk Foot Teams list available on the [AADL website](#).
  - Client meets the general and specific therapeutic footwear benefit eligibility criteria.
- Retain the original prescription in the client's file.
- Provide a copy of prescription to the client if requested.

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## Policy FT – 06

### Choice of Therapeutic Footwear Provider

#### Policy Statement

Clients have a choice of therapeutic footwear provider. Clients must use only one therapeutic footwear provider at a time.

Clients must not switch their therapeutic footwear provider during the fabrication process unless prior approval is given by AADL.

#### Procedure

##### Clients:

- Select an AADL therapeutic footwear benefit provider from one of the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Provider Approved Vendor Lists.
- Responsible for giving the chosen therapeutic footwear provider the opportunity to provide therapeutic footwear benefits that meet their basic clinically assessment needs.
- Contact AADL regarding any concerns with service or device.
- Submit a formal complaint, if applicable. The AADL Complaint form is available on the AADL website.

##### Therapeutic Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:

- Check Alberta Blue Cross online health portal to verify if a client has an active authorization for AADL-funded therapeutic footwear or other competing benefits.
  - If no, commence pertinent clinical and AADL eligibility assessment(s).
  - If yes, contact Alberta Blue Cross to identify the current therapeutic footwear provider. Following discussion with the client, either:
    - Refer client back to the original provider for ongoing service and followup with therapeutic footwear benefits; or
    - Obtain the client's consent to contact the previous provider to discuss transferring care to the new therapeutic footwear provider. Advise Alberta Blue Cross if agreement of a transfer of care is reached.
  - If the client refuses to return to the previous provider, the new provider must not provide service to the client unless the client is willing to pay for the services themselves, or an agreement of transfer of care has been reached.
- Do not submit a quantity and frequency review request if client requests to switch provider.
- Advise the client to submit a formal complaint, if applicable.
- Contact Alberta Blue Cross for advice as required.

##### AADL:

- Maintain a list of AADL-approved therapeutic footwear benefit vendors comprised of therapeutic footwear benefit providers that clients may access for therapeutic footwear benefit information and services.
- Reviews client's concerns via formal complaint process.
- Refers client to a multidisciplinary team for assessment if available.
- Recommends change of provider if appropriate.

# Policy FT – 07

## Quantity and Frequency Limits

### Policy Statement

Clients are eligible to receive therapeutic footwear benefits per the benefit-specific quantity and frequency limits listed in Alberta Aids to Daily Living Approved Product List FT – Therapeutic Footwear.

Based on clinical need, as determined by the multidisciplinary high-risk foot team, clients are eligible for the following AADL therapeutic footwear benefits:

#### Twelve months:

- One pair of therapeutic shoes
- One pair of total contact inserts and custom modifications

#### Two years:

- One pressure-downloading orthosis, and only if the pressure-downloading orthosis must be required for six months or longer.
- After the provision of an AADL-funded pressure-downloading orthosis, clients are not eligible for AADL-funded:
  - ankle-foot orthoses/knee-ankle-foot orthoses benefits, or
  - modifications or repairs to these devices for six months

The AADL program does not replace lost, stolen, or broken/damaged benefits. It is the client's financial responsibility to cover the cost of replacements in these instances.

AADL providers of therapeutic footwear benefits must submit a quantity and frequency review request if a client requires benefits that are over the quantity and frequency limit due to a significant change in their condition. The quantity and frequency review request is submitted through the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal.

### Procedure

#### Clients:

- Maintain care of therapeutic footwear to prolong life of benefit provided through AADL and to prevent need for premature replacement of benefit.
- Consult with specialty assessor/supplier when replacement is required.
- Ensure replacement footwear meets their basic need during fitting and when delivered.
- Seek alternate funding for equipment needs that fall outside the quantity and frequency limits. Clients are responsible for the cost of the benefit if the quantity and frequency review request is denied.

#### Therapeutic Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:

- Check client's previous consumption of benefits via the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal.
- Advise clients of quantity and frequency limits.
- Explain quantity and frequency review policy and procedure to clients.
  - The preceding service date and associated quantity and frequency limits for the therapeutic footwear benefits determines the next eligibility date for AADL-funded therapeutic footwear benefits.
- If the client has previously received a specific benefit, and if there is a clinically justifiable reason to seek replacement of a benefit, the specialty assessor must:
  - confirm request is not for duplicate benefits
  - confirm if replacement is not possible under warranty
  - confirm alternate funding has been explored and/or exhausted

- If there is no alternate funding available, enter a quantity and frequency review request authorization on the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal, and include the following documents:
  - Quantity and Frequency Review Request form
  - Client Consent form
  - other eligibility-specific and required supporting documentation

**Alberta Blue Cross:**

- Receives and logs quantity and frequency review requests.
- Forwards quantity and frequency review requests to AADL for adjudication.
- Updates quantity and frequency review request status on the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal, which can be viewed by the provider on the provider portal.
- Provides notification of quantity and frequency review decisions to the provider, and client if necessary.

**AADL:**

- Receives quantity and frequency review requests and supporting documentation from Alberta Blue Cross.
- Adjudicates quantity and frequency review requests and provides decision(s) to Alberta Blue Cross.

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## **Policy FT – 08**

### **Therapeutic Footwear Provider Qualifications**

#### **Policy Statement**

The provider of therapeutic footwear benefits must be one of the following:

- certified pedorthic master craftsman in good standing with the College of Pedorthics of Canada
- certified pedorthist in good standing with the College of Pedorthics of Canada
- certified orthotist in good standing with the Canadian Board for Certification of Prosthetists and Orthotists

The provider must be employed by a facility with a Specialty Assessor/Supplier Agreement with AADL and Alberta Blue Cross to provide custom-made footwear benefits.

#### **Procedure**

##### **Therapeutic Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:**

- Notify Alberta Blue Cross when changing employment location.

##### **Alberta Blue Cross:**

- Updates employment location information of eligible providers.



## Policy FT – 09

### Therapeutic Footwear Provider Roles and Responsibilities

#### Policy Statement

Therapeutic footwear providers are responsible for providing benefits and services to clients in accordance with AADL policies and procedures.

General roles and responsibilities of an AADL therapeutic footwear providers include:

- assessing clients for AADL therapeutic footwear benefits
- determining eligibility to receive AADL therapeutic footwear benefits
- providing education to clients regarding the AADL program and AADL therapeutic footwear benefits
- collaborating with the therapeutic footwear prescriber and multidisciplinary high-risk foot team
- providing eligible clients with AADL therapeutic footwear benefits
- providing clients with follow up concerning AADL therapeutic footwear benefits
- submitting authorizations and claims for AADL therapeutic footwear benefits on the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal
- adhering to the AADL Specialty Assessor/Supplier Agreement, Alberta Blue Cross Health Provider Agreement and both the AADL general and specific therapeutic footwear benefit policies and procedures

#### Procedure

##### Therapeutic Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:

- Conduct assessment which includes:
  - determining the client eligibility and cost-share status through:
    - history of provision of benefits
    - the cost-share status of clients, and
    - obtaining from clients the original AADL therapeutic footwear prescription for therapeutic footwear benefits
  - in accordance with the original AADL therapeutic footwear prescription for therapeutic footwear benefits, recommending the most appropriate AADL therapeutic footwear prescription for therapeutic footwear benefits that will meet the client's needs
  - explaining cost-sharing and cost-share exemption policies to clients
  - explaining the quantity and frequency limit related to benefits
  - discussing client's expectations regarding function outcomes of the therapeutic footwear benefits, and
  - obtaining client's signature on the Client Consent form prior to providing therapeutic footwear benefits
- Provide therapeutic footwear benefits:
  - ensure trained staff is accessible and available to clients
  - provide AADL-approved therapeutic footwear benefits only as per the current Alberta Aids to Daily Living Approved Product List FT – Therapeutic Footwear
  - advise client of their role and responsibilities concerning AADL therapeutic footwear benefits
  - provide appropriate advice and followup activity to ensure the benefits serve the purpose for which they were provided
  - educate clients regarding proper wear and care of their therapeutic footwear, including therapeutic shoes, total contact inserts and/or custom modifications
  - honour manufacturer warranties
  - ensure defective therapeutic footwear benefits are replaced at no cost to the client or AADL
  - promptly resolve all errors relating to the assessment of a client's benefits (e.g., duplication of benefits, client's eligibility status and assessment errors)
  - resolve provider errors at no cost to the client or AADL
  - ensure replacement benefits are only provided when the current benefits no longer meets the client's needs and/or are not cost-effective to repair
  - obtain prior approval for AADL therapeutic footwear benefits from Alberta Blue Cross as necessary, and

- provide a patient claim statement to the client for all AADL therapeutic footwear benefits provided and invoiced to Alberta Blue Cross; the patient claim statement can be printed from the online health portal

**AADL:**

- Maintains and updates the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Provider Approved Vendor List in accordance with AADL regulation, agreements, policies and procedures, and operational need and best practices.
- Provides support to Alberta Blue Cross as it pertains to the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Provider Approved Vendor List, and associated therapeutic footwear provider roles and responsibilities, in accordance with AADL regulation, agreements, policies and procedures, and operational need and best practices.

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## Policy FT – 10

### Therapeutic Footwear Prescriber Roles and Responsibilities

#### Policy Statement

The therapeutic footwear prescriber will provide guidance and information to clients to ensure they meet AADL eligibility criteria, complete the necessary forms, and understand the process and their role with the multi-disciplinary high-risk foot team.

#### Procedure

##### Therapeutic Footwear Prescriber:

- Completes an AADL therapeutic footwear prescription as outlined in Policy FT – 05 Therapeutic Footwear Prescription.
- Ensures appropriate followup concerning AADL therapeutic footwear prescription.
- Submits required clinical competency documentation to AADL to be listed on the AADL-Recognized High-Risk Foot Teams List.
- Alerts AADL of a change of facility or if no longer working as part of a specialized high-risk foot team.

##### AADL:

- Maintains and updates the AADL-Recognized High-Risk Foot Teams List in accordance with AADL regulation, agreements, policies and procedures, and operational need and best practices.
- Provides support to Alberta Blue Cross as it pertains to the AADL-Recognized High-Risk Foot Teams List, and associated therapeutic footwear prescriber roles and responsibilities, in accordance with AADL regulation, agreements, policies and procedures, and operational need and best practices.

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# Policy FT – 11

## Therapeutic Footwear Client Roles and Responsibilities

### Policy Statement

Clients who receive therapeutic footwear benefits must meet the current AADL therapeutic footwear eligibility criteria for the benefits they are receiving, must comply with AADL policies and procedures, and acknowledge their roles and responsibilities.

Clients who receive therapeutic footwear benefits are required to adhere to the AADL's general client responsibilities as well as the following responsibilities specific to this program:

- Attend scheduled appointments with the multidisciplinary high-risk foot team.
- Follow the multidisciplinary high-risk foot team's directions on:
  - foot-care routine
  - diet management
  - medication management
- Follow other therapeutic interventions as recommended.
- Take proper care of therapeutic shoes, total contact inserts and/or custom modifications.

### Procedure

#### Clients:

- Are assessed and prescribed therapeutic footwear benefits as described in Policy FT – 04 Multidisciplinary High-Risk Foot Team and FT – 05 Therapeutic Footwear Prescription.
- Select therapeutic footwear provider from the AADL Therapeutic Footwear Provider Approved Vendor List.
- Provide the therapeutic footwear provider with the original prescription for the therapeutic footwear benefit(s).
- Sign the AADL Client Consent form.
- Adhere to AADL client roles and responsibilities as stipulated in both the AADL general and therapeutic footwear benefits policies and procedures manuals.
- Are aware that therapeutic footwear benefits funded by AADL is to serve basic needs, and is specifically for function and not cosmetic purposes.
- Are aware that it is their responsibility to repair and maintain their AADL-funded therapeutic footwear, including therapeutic shoes, total contact inserts and/or custom modifications. Replacement of AADL-funded therapeutic footwear including therapeutic shoes, total contact inserts and/or custom modifications is based on basic need as determined by the provider in conjunction with AADL general and benefit-specific therapeutic footwear eligibility criteria.
- Are aware that AADL does not provide early replacement of lost, stolen or damaged therapeutic footwear, including therapeutic shoes, total contact inserts and/or custom modifications.
- Are aware that AADL will not assist with replacement of worn therapeutic footwear unless no longer economically feasible or safe to repair, or when there is a significant change in associated clinical condition of their foot/feet. In these cases, replacement of benefits requires a quantity and frequency review request.
- Comply with provider policies regarding abuse-free facility environments. Failure to comply may result in the provider declining to provide further services.

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## **Policy FT – 12**

### **Service Dates**

### **Policy Statement**

The service date used for submitting claims for therapeutic footwear benefits is the date the client actually receives the therapeutic footwear benefit(s).

### **Procedure**

#### **Therapeutic Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:**

- Submit claim to Alberta Blue Cross following the provision of therapeutic footwear benefit(s) to the client.

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## Policy FT – 13

### Patient Claim Statement

#### Policy Statement

Custom-made footwear vendors must provide every client with a patient claim statement for each custom-made footwear benefit invoiced to the AADL program. The statement can be printed from the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal, and must include general information such as statement details, Alberta Blue Cross contact information and client data.

The patient 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 patient claim statement.

#### Procedure

##### Custom Made Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:

- Provide clients with a patient claim statement for AADL benefits. The patient claim statement must be printed from the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal.
- For cost-share clients, identify the AADL contribution and the client's cost-share contribution for each benefit.
- For cost-share exempt clients, identify AADL's contribution for each benefit.
- Retain a copy of the patient claim statement on the client's file.

##### Alberta Blue Cross:

- Provide vendors with a patient claim statement through the online health portal as required.