



Harmony Behavioral Health, Inc.

Harmony Behavioral Health of Florida, Inc.

Harmony Health Plan of Illinois, Inc.

HealthEase of Florida, Inc.

*'Ohana Health Plan, a plan offered by
WellCare Health Insurance of Arizona, Inc.*

WellCare Health Insurance of Illinois, Inc.

WellCare Health Insurance of New York, Inc.

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WellCare of Texas, Inc.

WellCare Prescription Insurance, Inc.

Speech Generating Devices

Policy Number: HS-024

Original Effective Date: 6/5/2008

**Revised Date(s): 6/25/2009; 6/25/2010;
8/2/2011**

DISCLAIMER

The Clinical Coverage Guideline is intended to supplement certain standard WellCare benefit plans. The terms of a member's particular Benefit Plan, Evidence of Coverage, Certificate of Coverage, etc., may differ significantly from this Coverage Position. For example, a member's benefit plan may contain specific exclusions related to the topic addressed in this Clinical Coverage Guideline. When a conflict exists between the two documents, the Member's Benefit Plan always supersedes the information contained in the Clinical Coverage Guideline. Additionally, Clinical Coverage Guidelines relate exclusively to the administration of health benefit plans and are NOT recommendations for treatment, nor should they be used as treatment guidelines. The application of the Clinical Coverage Guideline is subject to the benefit determinations set forth by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) National and Local Coverage Determinations and state-specific Medicaid mandates, if any.

APPLICATION STATEMENT

The application of the Clinical Coverage Guideline is subject to the benefit determinations set forth by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) National and Local Coverage Determinations and state-specific Medicaid mandates, if any.

BACKGROUND

Speech generating devices (SGDs) are defined as speech aids that provide an individual who has a severe permanent speech impairment with the ability to meet his functional speaking needs. A SGD may also be considered an electronic augmentative and alternative communication device that generates speech output. Augmentation and alternative communication involves the attempt to compensate for the impairments of individual with severe permanent impairment.

SGDs have been divided into these technologically and clinically distinct categories:

- SGD with digitized speech output
- SGD with synthesized speech output, includes these two types:
 - Devices which require message formulation by spelling and device access by physical contact, with direct-selection techniques
 - Devices which permits multiple methods of message formulation and multiple methods of device access

The devices vary in the features found in each. The features may include:

- Methods of displaying language/message components: this may include dynamic or static display
- Methods of storing and retrieving language: this includes the levels and encoding strategies utilized (e.g., numeric, letter, semantic)
- Rate enhancing method (e.g., message prediction)

Software that allows a laptop computer, desktop computer or personal digital assistant (PDA) to function as a speech generating device would be eligible for coverage.

The following devices are **NOT** considered SGDs:

- Devices that are not dedicated speech devices, but are devices that are capable of running software for purposes other than for speech generation (e.g., devices that can also run a word processing package, an accounting program, or perform other non-medical functions); **OR**
- Laptop computers, desktop computers, or PDAs, which may be programmed to perform the same function as a speech generating device, are non-covered as they are not primarily medical in nature and do not meet the definition of DME; **OR**
- A device that is useful to someone without severe speech impairment is not considered a speech generating device; **OR**
- Communication aids that do not generate speech. E.g.: picture books, flashcards, Braille typewriters, TTY devices, devices that allow messages in writing, i.e. a display screen or printout, and devices that allow the member to communicate with a computer rather than another individual; **OR**
- Fluency enhancing devices for stuttering.

This CCG does not apply to electronic speech aids that are used by laryngectomized persons and persons with a permanently inoperative larynx. These are considered prosthetics. There are two types of electronic speech aids. One operates by placing a vibrating head against the throat. The other amplifies sound waves through a tube which is inserted into the user's mouth. A person who has had radical neck surgery and/or extensive radiation to the anterior part of the neck would generally be able to use only the "oral tube" model or one of the sensitive and more expensive "throat contact" devices.

POSITION STATEMENT

Speech generating devices **are considered medically necessary** durable medical equipment (DME) for members who meet ALL of the following criteria:

1. Prior to the delivery of the speech generating device (SGD), the member has had a formal evaluation of their cognitive and language abilities by a speech-language pathologist (SLP). The formal, written evaluation must include, at a minimum, **ALL** of the following elements:
 - Evaluation of current communication impairment, including the type, severity, language skills, cognitive ability, and anticipated course of the impairment; **AND**
 - An assessment of whether the individual's daily communication needs could be met using other natural modes of communication; **AND**
 - A description of the functional communication goals expected to be achieved and treatment options; **AND**
 - Rationale for selection of a specific device and accessories; **AND**
 - A treatment plan that includes a training schedule for the selected device; **AND**
 - Demonstration that the member possesses the cognitive and physical abilities to effectively use the selected device and any accessories to communicate; **AND**
 - For a subsequent upgrade to a previously issued SGD, information regarding the functional benefit to the member of the upgrade compared to the initially provided SGD; **AND**
2. The member's medical condition is one resulting in a permanent severe expressive speech disability; **AND**
3. The member's speaking needs cannot be met using natural communication methods; **AND**
4. Other forms of treatment have been considered and ruled out; **AND**
5. The member's speech disability will benefit from the device ordered; **AND**
6. A copy of the SLP's written evaluation and recommendation have been forwarded to the member's treating physician prior to ordering the device; **AND**
7. The SLP performing the evaluation of the member may not be an employee or have a financial relationship with the supplier of the SGD; **AND**
8. An order for the Speech-Generating Device and all requested accessories must be signed and dated by the treating physician.

Accessories are considered **medically necessary** if criteria for the base device are met and the medical necessity for each accessory is clearly documented in the formal evaluation by the speech language pathologist. For any subsequent upgrade of equipment or accessories to a previously issued device, information regarding the functional benefit to the patient of the upgrade compared to the initially provided device must be submitted to demonstrate medical necessity.

Only one speech generating device or speech generating software program at a time is considered **medically necessary** per member. Multilingual modules for SGDs are considered **not medically necessary**.

CODING

CPT®* Codes

- 92607** Evaluation for prescription for speech-generating augmentative and alternative communication device, face-to-face with the patient; first hour
- 92608+** Evaluation for prescription for speech-generating augmentative and alternative communication device, face-to-face with the patient; each additional 30 minutes. +(List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)
- 92609** Therapeutic services for the use of speech-generating device, including programming and modification

ICD-9-CM Procedure Codes

- 93.74 Speech Defect training
- 93.75 Other speech training and therapy

HCPCS Codes

- E2500 Speech generating device, digitized speech, using pre-recorded messages, less than or equal to eight minutes recording time
- E2502 Speech generating device, digitized speech, using pre-recorded messages, greater than 8 minutes but less than or equal to 20 minutes recording time
- E2504 Speech generating device, digitized speech, using pre-recorded messages, greater than 20 minutes but less than or equal to 40 minutes recording time
- E2506 Speech generating device, digitized speech, using pre-recorded messages, greater than 40 minutes recording time
- E2508 Speech generating device, synthesized speech, requiring message formulation by spelling and access by physical contact with the device
- E2510 Speech generating device, synthesized speech, permitting multiple methods of message formulation and multiple methods of device access
- E2511 Speech generating software program, for personal computer or personal digital assistant (PDA)

ICD-9-CM Diagnosis Codes

- 784.3 Aphasia
- 784.41 Aphonia
- 784.49 Other voice disturbance
- 784.5 Other speech disturbance, Multiple/Varied

*Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) ©2010 American Medical Association: Chicago, IL.

REFERENCES

Peer Reviewed

1. Hayes, Augmentative and Alternative Communication and Speech Generating Devices for Dysarthria, November 29, 2007.

Government Agencies, Professional and Medical Organizations

1. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. National Coverage Determination Speech Generating Devices (60-23) NHIC, Corp. Local Coverage Determination (LCD) for Speech Generating Devices (L11534), July 1, 2007.

HISTORY AND REVISIONS

Date	Action
12/1/2011	• New template design approved by MPC.
8/2/2011	• Approved by MPC. No changes.