

441—78.14(249A) Hearing aids. Payment will be approved for a hearing aid and examinations subject to the following conditions:

78.14(1) Physician examination. The member shall have an examination by a physician to determine that the member has no condition that would contraindicate the use of a hearing aid. This report shall be documented in the patient record. The requirement for a physician evaluation shall be waived for members 18 years of age or older when the member has signed an informed consent statement acknowledging that the member:

a. Has been advised that it may be in the member's best health interest to receive a medical evaluation from a licensed physician before purchase of a hearing aid.

b. Does not wish to receive a medical evaluation prior to purchase of a hearing aid.

78.14(2) Audiological testings. A physician or an audiologist shall perform audiological testing as a part of making a determination that a member could benefit from the use of a hearing aid. The department will cover vestibular testing performed by an audiologist only when prescribed by a physician.

78.14(3) Hearing aid evaluation. A physician or an audiologist shall perform a hearing aid evaluation to establish if a member could benefit from a hearing aid. When a hearing aid is recommended for a member, the physician or audiologist recommending the hearing aid shall see the member at least one time within 30 days after purchase of the hearing aid to determine that the aid is adequate.

78.14(4) Hearing aid selection. A physician or audiologist may recommend a specific brand or model appropriate to the member's condition. When a physician or an audiologist makes a general hearing aid recommendation, a hearing aid dispenser may perform the tests to determine the specific brand or model appropriate to the member's condition.

78.14(5) Travel. When a member is unable to travel to the physician or audiologist because of health reasons, the department will make payment for travel to the member's place of residence or other suitable location. The department will make payment to physicians as specified in 78.1(8) and payment to audiologists at the same rate it reimburses state employees for travel.

78.14(6) Purchase of hearing aid. The department will pay for the type of hearing aid recommended when purchased from an eligible licensed hearing aid dispenser pursuant to rule 441—77.14(249A). The department will pay for binaural amplification when:

a. A child needs the aid for speech development,

b. The aid is needed for educational or vocational purposes,

c. The aid is for a blind member,

d. The member's hearing loss has caused marked restriction of daily activities and constriction of interests resulting in seriously impaired ability to relate to other people, or

e. Lack of binaural amplification poses a hazard to a member's safety.

78.14(7) Payment for hearing aids.

a. Payment for hearing aids will be acquisition cost plus a dispensing fee covering the fitting and service for six months. The department will make payment for routine service after the first six months. Dispensing fees and payment for routine service shall not exceed the fee schedule appropriate to the place of service. Shipping and handling charges are not allowed.

b. Payment for ear mold and batteries will be at the current audiologist's fee schedule.

c. Payment for repairs will be made to the dealer for repairs made by the dealer. Payment for in-house repairs will be made at the current fee schedule. Payment will also be made to the dealer for repairs when the hearing aid is repaired by the manufacturer or manufacturer's depot. Payment for out-of-house repairs will be at the amount shown on the manufacturer's invoice. Payment will be allowed for a service or handling charge when it is necessary for repairs to be performed by the manufacturer or manufacturer's depot and this charge is made to the general public.

d. Prior approval. When prior approval is required, an Examiner Report of Need for a Hearing Aid form shall be submitted along with the forms required by 441—paragraph 79.8(1)“a.”

(1) Payment for the replacement of a hearing aid less than four years old will require prior approval except when the member is under 21 years of age. The department will approve payment when the original hearing aid is lost or broken beyond repair or there is a significant change in the member's hearing that would require a different hearing aid.

(2) Payment for a hearing aid costing more than \$650 will require prior approval. The department will approve payment for either of the following purposes:

1. Educational purposes when the member is participating in primary or secondary education or in a postsecondary academic program leading to a degree and an in-office comparison of an analog aid and a digital aid matched (+/- 5dB) for gain and output shows a significant improvement in either speech recognition in quiet or speech recognition in noise or an in-office comparison of two aids, one of which is single channel, shows significantly improved audibility.

2. Vocational purposes when documentation submitted indicates the necessity, such as varying amounts of background noise in the work environment and a need to converse in order to do the job, and an in-office comparison of an analog aid and a digital aid matched (+/- 5dB) for gain and output shows a significant improvement in either speech recognition in quiet or speech recognition in noise or an in-office comparison of two aids, one of which is single channel, shows significantly improved audibility.

[ARC 0315D, IAB 5/27/26, effective 7/1/26]