

## Medical and Behavioral Health Policy Activity

Policies Effective: February 3, 2025    Notification Posted: December 2, 2024

### Policies Developed

- None

### Policies Revised

- **Speech Generating Devices (SGD), VII-52**

#### I. Initial Request

A speech generating device (SGD) may be considered **MEDICALLY NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE** when **ALL** the following criteria are met:

- The patient has one of the following conditions:
  - Anarthria
  - Aphasia
  - Aphonia
  - Dysarthria
  - Persistent speech impairment associated with a neurodevelopmental disorder;
- **AND**
- The patient's ability to communicate daily functional needs (e.g., ability to describe hunger, thirst, pain, or hygiene) cannot be met using natural communication methods (e.g., gestures, speech, and/or written communication); **AND**
- Patient has had a formal evaluation of their cognitive and communication abilities by a speech-language pathologist (SLP); **AND**
- Other forms of treatment have been considered and ruled out (e.g., no-tech options, communication aids, communication boards); **AND**
- The patient possesses the cognitive and physical abilities to use the selected device to effectively communicate as documented in the medical record; **AND**
- The SLP performing the patient evaluation has no financial relationship with the supplier of the SGD.

#### II. Options and Accessories

Options and accessories may be considered **MEDICALLY NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE** when:

- Both of the following are met:
  - The patient meets all medical necessity criteria in section I; and
  - Medical necessity is clearly documented in the evaluation by the SLP;
- **AND**
- One or more of the following are required:
  - Optical head pointer;
  - Joystick;
  - SGD scanning device switch;
  - Mounting system necessary to place the SGD device, switches, and other access devices within reach of the patient;
  - Protective cover or carrying case for a device without a mounting system;
  - Electronic power wheelchair/SGD interface;

- Replacement accessories such as batteries, battery chargers and AC adapters;.

### III. Device Upgrades

Upgrades to an SGD may be considered **MEDICALLY NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE** when **ALL** the following criteria are met:

- All medical necessity criteria in section I are met; **AND**
- Medical necessity is clearly documented in the evaluation by the SLP; **AND**
- Upgrade of a device will provide functional benefit to the patient compared to the current device. Examples include but are not limited to eye tracking and gaze interaction accessories.

### IV. Not Medically Necessary

The following are considered **NOT MEDICALLY NECESSARY**:

- Laptop computers, desktop computer or other devices that are not dedicated SGDs;
- Specific features of a speech generating device that are not used by the individual to meet his or her functional speaking needs;
- Devices that allow the patient to communicate messages to others with writing (e.g., a display screen or printout) rather than synthesized speech;
- Devices that allow the user to communicate with a computer rather than with another person including but not limited to video communication and conferencing;
- More than one SGD;
- Communication aids that are not SGDs, as they are not prosthetics for speech. These include but are not limited to the following:
  - Picture books;
  - Flash cards;
  - Braille typewriters;
  - Text telephone or telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD).

### **Policies Delegated to eviCore**

**None**

### **Policies Inactivated**

**None**