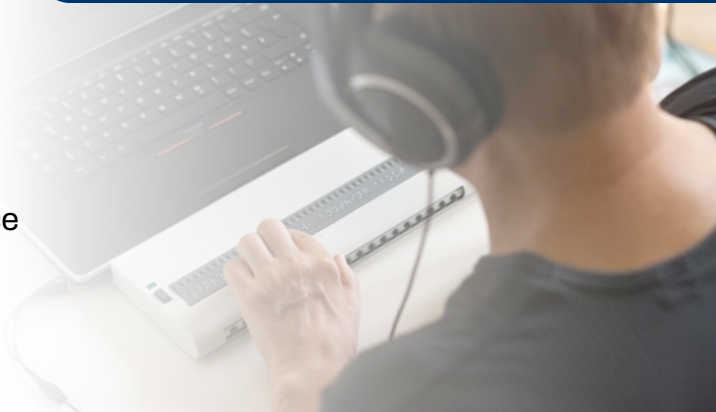


# The Process for Getting an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) System

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) service benefits may be available to Division Members who are also eligible for the Arizona Long-Term Care System (ALTCS). This guide outlines the process for getting an AAC device.



## Starting the Process for an AAC System

- 1 Get a Prescription:** Obtain a prescription for an AAC evaluation from the member's Primary Doctor. The prescription is valid for one year.
- 2 Find a contracted Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) to complete the evaluation.** Members who need assistance finding an SLP should:
  - Ask their DDD Support Coordinator.
  - Search their DDD Health Plan's provider directory.
  - Contact their DDD Health Plan's Member Services.
  - Review their DDD Health Plan's Member Handbook.
  - Contact AHCCCS DFSM Member Services for the Tribal Health Program.

*Note: Ask if the SLP does AAC evaluations. Not all SLPs perform AAC Assessments.*
- 3 Schedule an Evaluation:** Contact the SLP to arrange the evaluation.
- 4 Approval Process:** The SLP needs permission (prior authorization) from the member's DDD Health Plan. The SLP will send the information to the DDD Health Plan.
- 5 Appointment Timing:** The evaluation should be scheduled within 45 days of the request.
- 6 Approval Wait Time:** The DDD Health Plan should decide on the evaluation authorization within 14 days of the request.
- 7 If Approved:** The SLP will schedule the evaluation.
- 8 If Not Approved:** The member will get a letter called a Notice of Adverse Benefit Determination (NOA). The letter will explain the decision and include the member's appeal rights.

## What Happens During the AAC Evaluation?

- 1** The SLP will determine if an AAC device is medically necessary or if other non-device tools will meet the member's needs.
- 2 Device Selection:** The SLP will pick out at least three AAC devices for the member to try.
- 3 Trying Devices:** The member should try the devices during the visit. Sometimes, an Occupational Therapist or Physical Therapist may assist.
- 4 Device Trial:** The member can choose a device to try at home for 30 days. The SLP will help make sure it works for them.
- 5 Final Decision:** The SLP will send a report to the doctor for approval for the device that works best for the member's needs. The SLP will also request approval for training on using the device.

## What Happens After the AAC Evaluation?

- 1 Doctor's Approval:** After your doctor signs off on the device and training sessions, the SLP will ask your health plan for permission to get it for you. This will happen within 20 days of your evaluation.
- 2 Submitting for Approval:** The SLP's request will include all the important information. This includes a list of things the member needs with the device.
- 3 Approval Wait Time:** The DDD Health Plan will make a decision within 14 days.
- 4 If Approved:** The device, training, and accessories will be ordered.
- 5 If Not Approved:** The member will receive an NOA explaining the decision and the member's appeal rights.

## How will the Member Receive the Device?

- 1 Delivery:** The AAC device will be sent to the member's home.
- 2 Training:** The SLP who completed your AAC device evaluation will contact you to plan your training sessions once you receive the AAC device.
- 3 Training Timeline:** The member should have their first training session within 90 days of the device being approved.

## What Accessories May Come with an AAC System?

- **Selection Devices:** These include medically necessary optical head pointers, joysticks, and scanning devices for choosing letters, words, or symbols.
- **Switches and Buttons:** For members who have trouble moving their arms or head.
- **Head Control Devices:** Laser or infrared pointers are for individuals who can't use their hands but can move their head.
- **Software:** Special programs for the AAC device.
- **Device Case:** To protect the AAC device.
- **Batteries and Charger:** To power the device.
- **Power Supplies and Cables:** For connecting and powering the device.
- **Sensors and Moisture Guard:** To keep the device safe and working.
- **Adapters:** For electrical connections.
- **Memory:** Enough storage for at least three years.
- **Mounting Systems:** To attach the AAC device to a wheelchair or table if needed.
- **Warranty:** An extended warranty from the manufacturer.



## What is Not Included with the AAC System?

- Computers, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), or non-dedicated AAC devices
- Items not needed for the AAC system, like printers, home speakers, or internet routers

## Members should contact their Support Coordinator or their DDD Health Plan/ Tribal Health Program for more information about AAC.

- Mercy Care
  - <https://www.mercycareaz.org/dd/more-benefits.html>
  - Phone Number: 1 (800) 624-3879 (TTY/TDD 711)
- United Healthcare Community Plan
  - <https://www.uhcprovider.com/content/dam/provider/docs/public/commplan/az/news/AZ-Guidelines-for-AAC-Devices.pdf?time=17095736801>
  - Phone Number: 1 (800) 348-4058
- Tribal Health Program
  - Tribal Health Program Healthcare Coordinator — AHCCCS DFSM
  - Phone Number: (602) 417-4994