



## DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

### ANNOUNCEMENT

**POSTED June 29, 2020**

#### **DDD is Soliciting Written Comments Regarding Proposed Changes to:**

#### **The Administration of the Augmentative & Alternative Communication Services Benefit**

In its continuing efforts to promote an integrated health care delivery system and provide choice for members enrolled in the Arizona Department of Economic Security ("Department" or "ADES") / Division of Developmental Disabilities ("Division" or "DDD"), the Division proposes to transfer the administration of the Augmentative & Alternative Communications (AAC) benefit currently administered internally by DDD to DDD's sub-contracted DDD Health Plans (Managed Care Organizations), Mercy Care and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan.

The DDD Health Plans manage all other Durable Medical Equipment (DME) benefits with the exception of AAC. Historically, DDD has directly administered the AAC benefit. However, DDD has identified opportunities for improved member experience and access to this benefit by integrating responsibility for AAC into the Health Plans along with all other DME benefits.

DDD's Health Plans will have responsibility for the full complement of DME including equipment and AAC services. This will promote the integration of care and improved access to services for DDD members and families. Leveraging the Health Plans' broad network of providers and clinical and operational resources is expected to result in a more efficient and timely process for the provision of these services and/or devices. The transfer of this benefit to the DDD Health Plans would include all aspects of the current AAC program – including service evaluation, prior authorization, medical necessity and cost effectiveness determinations, device acquisition, installation, training, modification, and repairs.

The transition of this benefit is targeted for October 1, 2020. All requests for services and devices that are initiated before October 1, 2020, will be administered directly by DDD. All requests for services and devices that are initiated on and after October 1, 2020 will be administered by the DDD Health Plans.

As part of DDD's oversight responsibilities, DDD will oversee and monitor the Health Plans' administration of this benefit to ensure the provision of medically necessary, cost effective, and timely delivery of services and devices.

#### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

##### **What does this change mean for DDD members?**

AAC services will still be a covered benefit. This change will promote improved access to AAC services that are determined to be medically necessary and will support a timely, streamlined, and efficient prior authorization process for AAC and associated services.

##### **Will a member's Support Coordinator still be engaged in the process?**

Yes, the member's Support Coordinator will still be engaged in this process. The Support Coordinator will assist the member with the completion of the referral packet before submitting the packet to the Health Plan. The Support Coordinator will monitor the authorization request until a decision is made on the request. For those requests that are approved, the Support



## DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*

Coordinator will monitor the process until the member has received the device and authorized training. The Support Coordinator will provide guidance and support to the member and family.

### **Will the same providers be available who currently serve members now?**

Many of the current DDD providers are already contracted with the health plans as a provider. Before the transition, DDD and the Health Plans will work with members to identify the most appropriate provider to meet each member's needs.

### **How will DDD monitor the Health Plans for the administration of this service?**

DDD's contract with AHCCCS (Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System) requires DDD to monitor the delivery of services by the Health Plans. As part of DDD's ongoing monitoring of the Health Plans, DDD will oversee and monitor the prior authorization process, determination decisions, the timeliness of the process and the timeliness of the delivery of approved devices and training.

### **Will the administration of the ACC benefit by the health plans cover the entire State of Arizona?**

Yes, the Health Plans have statewide coverage.

### **Will this affect the timeliness of authorization decisions?**

The Health Plans routinely utilize a prior authorization process for requested services and have the staff and resources to meet their contractual requirements for delivery of services. DDD fully expects that the Health Plans will meet timeliness of authorizations requirements.

### **ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK REQUESTED**

As a part of this request for public comment, DDD would also like feedback to the following questions:

1. What information would be helpful for members/families to understand the process and authorization requirements for this benefit?
2. What information would be helpful for providers to understand the process and authorization requirements for this benefit?

### **DATES**

Written comments and opinions on the proposed transition will be accepted until 11:59 PM (Arizona Time) on Monday, July 13, 2020.

### **SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS**

The Department prefers that comments be submitted electronically through the DDD Policy Unit email box at [DDDPolicy@azdes.gov](mailto:DDDPolicy@azdes.gov). Please include the following information about the Commenter in the submittal:

- First, Middle, and Last Name
- Mailing Address, including City, State, ZIP Code
- Email Address



---

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*

---

- Phone Number
- Fax Number
- Organization's Name

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**

Customer Service Center

Division of Developmental Disabilities

Arizona Department of Economic Security

Toll-Free: (844) 770-9500 ext. 1