

NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS (NIHB) PROGRAM MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT (MS&E) BENEFITS

Questions and Answers – New coverage for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) face-to-face equipment and supplies under the NIHB Program:

As of January 6, 2021, the NIHB Program provides coverage for AAC face-to-face equipment and supplies, as well as mounting and access equipment.

1. What benefits are covered under the AAC benefit category and who can prescribe them?

Benefit Category	Who can prescribe
Quick messaging device	Speech-Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist
Speech generating device (SGD)	Speech-Language Pathologist
SGD software	Speech-Language Pathologist
Communication display boards and software	Speech-Language Pathologist
Integrated and Complex systems	Speech-Language Pathologist
Access devices such as pointers and switches	Occupational Therapist, Speech-Language Pathologist
Mounting systems and accessories	Occupational Therapist

2. What are the eligibility criteria for AAC benefits coverage?

- Client has a moderate to severe communication impairment and whose communication needs cannot be met by using speech alone.
- Client has a long-term disability and requires an AAC device for personal use for a minimum of 6 months, or client has been identified as palliative.
- AAC device cannot be prescribed for the purpose of acquiring new communication skills.

For more information on the MS&E policy and coverage and eligibility criteria please consult the [MS&E Guide and Benefits List](#).

3. Who can dispense AAC items/articles to clients through NIHB?

- Only Providers who have enrolled with the NIHB Program can dispense AAC items/article through NIHB.
- For a list of enrolled Providers, contact the NIHB regional office in your area (listed below).

NIHB PROGRAM MS&E BENEFITS

Indigenous Services Canada Regional Offices:

- Alberta: 1-800-232-7301
- Atlantic: 1-800-565-3294
- Manitoba: 1-800-665-8507
- Northwest Territories/Nunavut: 1-888-332-9222
- Ontario: 1-800-881-3921
- Quebec: 1-877-483-1575
- Saskatchewan: 1-866-885-3933
- Yukon: 1-888-332-9222
- First Nations clients living in British Columbia:
FNHA support line: 1-855-550-5454
- Inuit and non-resident First Nations NIHB clients in British Columbia:
contact the NIHB Program: 1-800-232-7301

4. What information is required when prescribing AAC items?

- In all Provinces and territories with the exception of Ontario, clinician must submit an *NIHB AAC Application Form* (which serves as a prescription dated within the last 12 months) completed by a Speech-Language Pathologist. When mounting equipment is required, the Occupational Therapist must complete the portion of the application form related to that equipment.
- In Ontario, clinicians must provide the *NIHB AAC Application Form* for open benefits (do not require prior approval). Clinicians must provide both the *NIHB AAC Application Form* and the completed ADP submission form for limited use benefits (require prior approval).

Please note, for integrated and complex systems, complex mounting systems and complex access equipment, the application form must be completed by a professional working at an AAC clinic. A list of AAC clinics can be found in the [Medical Supplies and Equipment Guide and Benefits List - 12.0 Communication](#).

5. What is the process to obtain coverage for AAC items?

The clinician consults the Medical supplies and Equipment Guide and Benefit List for AAC benefits that are eligible for coverage. These lists specify which items are open benefits, and those which are limited use items.

OPEN BENEFITS:

The Clinician assesses client and completes the *NIHB AAC Application Form*. The *NIHB ACC application form* can be found on the [ESC website](#).

The clinician submits the *NIHB AAC Application Form* to the enrolled Provider.

If the client is eligible, the enrolled provider will dispense the item to the clinic/client.

LIMITED USE BENEFITS:

The Clinician assesses client and completes the *NIHB AAC Application Form*. The *NIHB ACC application form* can be found on the [ESC website](#).

The Clinician sends the completed *NIHB AAC Application Form* to the enrolled Provider.

The Provider completes an *NIHB Prior Approval (PA) form* and sends it to the clinician/clinic.

The Clinician submits both the *NIHB AAC Application Form* with the PA form(s) to the NIHB regional office for approval. In Ontario, the clinician submits the completed ADP submission form in addition to the *NIHB AAC Application Form* and the PA form(s) to the regional office.

NIHB regional office reviews the application package, then sends a letter of confirmation with PA number to the Provider(s) to communicate that requested item/s has/have been approved.

The Provider dispenses the item to the clinician/client.

6. Who can I contact for more information?

For additional information please contact the NIHB regional office in your area (listed above).