

# Alberta Aids to Daily Living

## Bulletin #125

### Q&A summary and session recording AADL recycle program

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The Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) recycle program is moving to a more efficient recycle model. This will result in process changes for authorizers. Please refer to Bulletins #118 and #120 (revised) for more information.

Information sessions on the new recycle program were held October 26, 27 and November 9. Questions and answers (Q&As) captured from those sessions and a link to the recording of a session is below.

#### Links to session recording

- [November 9, 2021 session](#)

#### Q&As

##### Timelines

##### **When do we stop using 1250 and 1251 forms?**

All 1250/1251 forms need to be post marked January 4, 2022 to be received and processed by AADL before we go into the blackout period in mid-January and go live with Alberta Blue Cross. More information on the blackout period timing will be provided in future bulletins.

##### **When do we start sending recycled equipment to Eco Medical?**

As of October 1, 2021, all AADL recycled equipment must be returned to Eco Medical. See below for recycle in information.

##### **When do we start this new process for recycled equipment?**

The new process will begin January 31, 2022 when we transition wheelchair, seating and large equipment benefits to Alberta Blue Cross.

**The generic form is currently not available. What document or process do we use to request a recycled tilt or wheelchair from Eco?**

AADL will process all recycle requests until January 31, 2022. Continue to trial with the client's vendor of choice and continue to submit 1250 and 1251 forms to AADL until January 3, 2022.

**Contacting Eco**

**What should we do if we have trouble reaching Eco or they do not come to our area often?**

Eco Medical Edmonton and Eco Medical Calgary have contracts with AADL as the recycle vendor and have increased staff specifically for the recycle program. They will provide recycle service to the entire province. Contact information is below.

**Will vendors be in touch via fax or email?**

Any documents with personal information must be sent by fax; you can also contact them by telephone.

**Recycle In**

**To whom do we send AADL equipment?**

Call Eco Medical to arrange for equipment to be returned - please include the **client's name, date of birth and personal health number** with the documentation.

Eco Edmonton  
Phone 780-483-6232  
1-800-232-9450

Eco Calgary  
Phone 403-270-1880  
1-866-456-0759

Ask for recycle when phoning. You can leave a message and your call will be returned within 24 hours.

**Does the client have to pay to send the chair?**

No, AADL pays for shipping and Eco Medical arranges it.

**What are the timelines for the recycle vendor to respond?**

The recycle vendor will arrange for pick up within 5 days from both urban and rural locations.

**How are chairs going to be picked up in rural areas?**

The recycle vendor may arrange for a third party pick up, but the same 5 day timelines apply.

**What if a client does not want to deal with Eco?**

Just like our bed depot, the equipment comes through the contracted vendor for AADL. A client can choose not to go through AADL if they do not want to agree to AADL policy.

**Define Red Deer North? Is it by client location or therapist location?**

If the rural location were parallel to Red Deer, it would be north. It would be the client's location.

**Generic specification form/search requests**

**What options/ features are available on the generic specification form?**

Most options and features are available on the form. If it is not there, you can add it to "other" or "comments."

**Will the generic specification form be widely shared for feedback?**

The form has been shared with AHS leadership and a working group chosen by AHS. Additional feedback will be accepted on the form once it is being used.

**Do we email, fax or mail the generic specification forms? Does it go to Eco or a separate entity?**

The generic specification form is faxed to Eco Medical to the number on the form; Eco has a dedicated fax line to receive these forms. The response will be faxed back to the authorizer; unfortunately, email is not a secure way to transmit personal information.

**For clients where the total weight of the chair is a critical specification, are we able to still stick to a particular model for this purpose?**

The clinical justification can be provided, but must be a need and not a want. Comparable substitutes are still expected to be accepted.

**How is a comparable substitute determined? What will be substituted?**

A different make and model may be substituted, but not size or features. For example, if you ask for Category A Move and there is none in recycle, the recycle vendor may give you the choice of a Catalyst 4C, Quickie or Myon if available. This is also the current process with AADL.

**Recycle out/ trial**

**If a wheelchair is available through recycle, do we enter it into the online health portal or just complete the generic specification form?**

After you submit the generic specification form to the recycle vendor and you receive notice that a chair is available in recycle, you confirm the choice and then submit an authorization on the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal.

### **Can we trial a recycle chair?**

Yes, the chair received based on the generic specification form could be considered a trial chair if it was required. Instead of requesting a trial from a vendor, you request one from the recycle vendor first based on your best assessment. If a chair is available based on the generic specifications submitted, and it is working for the client when you assess the client with the equipment, the client can keep it. If it does not work, you can make the necessary changes or use it as your assessment chair and determine what to order. If we do not have an appropriate chair in recycle, you can go to the client's preferred vendor to trial, authorize and then order a new chair.

### **What is the trial process to ensure we meet a client's needs before ordering?**

See question above. Your assessment of the client should determine what is needed for size and features. If we have something in recycle, you would trial that first. If nothing is available in recycle you can trial through the client's preferred vendor.

### **Why do I have to submit an authorization before I see the client in the chair?**

An authorization with Alberta Blue Cross is not an order. It is simply verifying the client requires this equipment based on the assessment and confirming the client is eligible.

### **How can I order a chair for a client before I have seen them in it?**

The recycle chair is your trial chair; the difference now is that the client can keep it if it works. The recycle vendor requires cost share payment prior to refurbishing (as is currently done) as it is often difficult to collect cost share after a client receives the equipment.

### **Why not trial with a vendor, then contact recycle?**

There are three reasons: 1) Clients are often disappointed when they trial new equipment and get recycled equipment. 2) We want to increase the efficiency and utilization of the recycle inventory and 3) Most importantly, we hope to get the equipment to the client in a more timely manner. If the client trials the chair and it works, they can keep it.

### **Is the recycled chair ready to go?**

Yes, it will be refurbished, clean and set up as per the authorizer's specifications. If other modifications are needed, they can be made, as you have 90 days to submit changes that might still be required if missed on the initial assessment.

### **Would adjusting dump, axle plates and back angle be completed by Eco prior to delivery?**

It will be set up as per authorizer's request prior to delivery.

**Question for rural therapists (Red Deer, so not close to either Eco location). How is Eco delivering trial or recycle chairs? Are they coming to the therapist for delivery or directly to the client?**

Eco will deliver the chair to wherever the authorizer requests. This could be the client's home, the therapist office, rehab department or seating clinic.

**Are they willing to ship multiple times?**

We would not want to see multiple shipping if the assessment is done correctly. We see this as the exception not the rule.

**Is Eco medical increasing staff to manage all the requests and potential joint visits that will be coming through as this will likely be quite a bit higher? Eco is**

expected to deliver the equipment within 10 business days of approval, or later if the therapist requests a later delivery. Staffing has been increased to meet this timeline. They are not expected to be present for the therapist assessment.

**Will Eco be coming to rural locations within the timeframe?**

Yes.

**Will there be a timely process to get palliative clients quicker access to seating?**

Palliative requests for equipment are a priority for the recycle vendor and are to be delivered within 5 business days from when the accepted quote is received and the cost share paid. AADL cannot speak for accessing the seating clinic as that is under the purview of AHS.

**I am a rural therapist who acts as an authorizer for a couple of rural assessors. How will this process work when authorizer/assessor are different people? i.e., will I need to get the generic specs submitted to Eco, or can the assessor do that?**

Assessors will have access to the recycle vendor and can complete the assessment portion with the client. Ensure the assessors have the required education and are informing the client of AADL requirements. An authorizer is the only one that can enter the authorization on the online health portal and is responsible for the authorization.

**Currently, the wait time for seating is greater than 90 days. Could there be an extended trial period for clients who will not be trialing the chair until their clinic appointment?**

If the chair is being delivered to a seating clinic, the 90 days starts when the chair is delivered. If you are required to have the equipment prior to going to a seating clinic, then you would assess the client first. But you can talk to the seating clinic and Eco to coordinate where and when to have the chair delivered.

**Are the recycle pool wheelchairs strictly for ordering, or would they also be available for trial purposes?**

Both - the order is the trial. If it works for the client, they can keep it. If it does not, then use it as an assessment chair.

**Can recycled chairs be shipped to rural areas?**

Yes, a recycled chair can be shipped to the address provided by the authorizer, anywhere in Alberta, within 10 business days from receiving an accepted quote and cost share payment.

**Will authorizers need to provide clinical reasoning to get a trial?**

No, therapists are the professionals and can determine what the client needs, keeping in mind AADL policies and procedures.

**For the wheelchair, are there any other forms besides the client declaration form that the client needs to sign in order to input the authorization online?**

If the client is receiving a grant wheelchair, the eligibility summary form for grants needs to be signed by the client. The online health portal will guide you through the required documents.

**Is the process the same for pediatric recycle? Will there be assessment standing frames and pediatric walkers available?**

The process is the same. You will request equipment from the recycle vendor first using the generic specification form for large equipment. If the recycle item works for the assessment, the client can keep it. If the equipment is not available in recycle, the authorizer would proceed to the client's vendor of choice and can trial if needed.

**Will authorizers also be able to trial recycle lifts?**

The process is the same. Please see answer above.

**Cost share**

**If the trial chair does not work, my concern is that the client has already paid cost share on it. It may be difficult for a client to pay cost share if they have not seen a chair.**

As with all AADL equipment, the vendor requires the cost share be paid first so if the product is left with the client the vendor has already received payment. It is often difficult to collect after the equipment is received. If the equipment does not work for the client, the cost share paid can go towards the next equipment obtained through recycle. If the equipment is returned, the client is refunded and the process moves to the preferred vendor.

### **Is the cost share portion the same for recycle and for new?**

The cost share portion remains 25% of the cost, so a recycled chair cost share is likely to be around \$250. New equipment is likely to be the full \$500 if the equipment is more than \$2000.

**Will the cost share process work the same way?** Yes, if the client is required to cost share, clients still pay 25% of the cost - up to \$500 in a benefit year. They are expected to pay prior to equipment being refurbished or ordered. This has not changed. The vendor may request a deposit, then collect the remaining cost share just prior to delivery.

### **Cushions**

#### **How do we trial a cushion?**

Cushions are not a recycled item and therefore not provided by the recycle vendor. You can continue to trial and order cushions through the client's preferred vendor. Coordinate the cushion trial with the recycle chair being delivered so they are both available when you do your assessment.

#### **Are cushions still done using the old system, i.e., a 1250 form?**

All remaining authorizations currently processed on 1250/ 1251 forms will be discontinued when we transition mobility, seating and large equipment to Alberta Blue Cross on January 31, 2022. These benefits include wheelchairs, lifts, beds, pediatric recycle and seating. These 1250/1251 forms must be postmarked January 4, 2022 to be entered by AADL prior to the blackout period and go live date.

### **Making adjustments**

#### **What is considered a minor adjustment? Who is responsible for major adjustments?**

Minor adjustments would include arm height and leg rest length, as examples, and would be made based on the competency of the individual completing it. This expectation has not changed from previous AADL policy. Assessors and therapy assistants can also make these adjustments if it is within their competency. Eco will be available to make any other adjustments.

**We are located in a rural setting and thankfully have a seating technician on site. If we are required to do additional work on a recycle chair (i.e., changing height, moving axle), is it ok if we complete this work, within our level of competence, rather than ship it back to Eco?**

Most definitely! That is great!



**I am just clarifying that Eco is willing to come to rural sites to modify the recycle chair, i.e., seat to floor height for cushion?**

Optimally, the cushion height and favorite shoe height would be considered in the assessment when determining seat to floor height. Depending on the changes needed, you can make the adjustments on site. You may have to return the chair to Eco for more complex adjustments or if parts need to be changed.

**Are other vendors allowed to assist with modifying/adjusting the trial wheelchair?**

That is not expected or part of their contract with AADL.

**90-day satisfaction Period**

**Does the 90 days start when the wheelchair is delivered or when it is requested?**

The 90 days starts when the chair is delivered. This gives time to assess and make any necessary adjustments.

**During the 90 day period after the wheelchair is delivered, what kinds of changes are possible?**

Any changes that are cost effective are possible. If the chair chosen ends up not working, it can be used as the assessment chair and then returned and a different chair requested.

**What happens if the client changes and needs something different?**

If it happens within the 90 days, you can make the changes without needing a different authorization. If it happens after 90 days, it would become a QFR, the same as it is now.

**If changes need to be made to a recycled wheelchair, is the process to directly reach out to the vendor to have changes made or will there be administrative paperwork?**

There is no extra paperwork; the authorizer can work directly with the recycle vendor. The recycle vendor will keep track of changes and repairs etc. and claim accordingly.

**What happens after 90 days? Do we still need to send to Eco?**

The authorizer is expected to review the equipment with the client and make any adjustments or changes to the equipment within 90 days. If there are extenuating circumstances, the authorizer can contact AADL.

**Internal transfers**

**Will internal transfers still occur within the new system?**

Yes, there are two parts to this process:

1. Submit an authorization for an internal transfer on the online health portal for the new client.
2. Notify the recycle vendor via the generic specification form; the current client and the previous client's name, personal health number and date of birth are required for all internal transfers.



## **Ordering new**

### **If a chair is not available in recycle, can the client still trial and does the chair then go to the client's vendor of choice?**

Yes. Check the recycle inventory and if nothing is available, then you can proceed with the client's vendor of choice to trial, authorize and order.

### **If a client prefers a new chair, can they go directly to the vendor?**

No, unless they want to pay for and own the equipment themselves. It is important to explain to the client that AADL is a recycle program first, as good stewards of public funds.

## **Repairs/ future changes**

### **Who does repairs?**

Eco will manage any warranty issues within the first 90 days, but any future repairs will be done by the client's vendor of choice.

### **What happens after 90 days?**

If the client's condition has changed, a QFR or a prior approval for a parts change would be required to change the equipment in the first six months. After six months, repairs and parts changes can be completed on the online health portal by the preferred vendor to a yearly maximum. Prior approval is required if above the maximum. QFRs are still required to change equipment only if the client's condition has changed; otherwise, it is the client's responsibility.

## **Donations**

### **Can sites request donations? How?**

Yes, please contact Larry Oswald at [larry.oswald@gov.ab.ca](mailto:larry.oswald@gov.ab.ca) and make your request. Do not call as we need written documentation of the request. Donations can be used as assessment chairs or for other needs. The chairs will be older or discontinued models, and provided as is; you will be responsible for any repairs. With the transition to Alberta Blue Cross, we will not be able to fulfil these requests until early 2022 due to system and resource constraints.

## **Education**

### **How do authorizers learn about equipment features?**

To become a wheelchair authorizer, you are expected to be familiar with the equipment you are ordering. The vendors and manufacturers (and their websites) are available as a resource. Vendors and manufacturers often provide education days to demonstrate products; unfortunately, due to COVID-19, limited online options are available.

If this is a need, AADL could help coordinate education sessions. Please notify your program lead or manager to request.

We have heard two requests: 1) doing wheelchair adjustments and 2) product knowledge. We will work towards coordinating education in the new year.

## **General Questions**

### **Won't Eco be really busy and the other vendors not?**

As part of the contract with AADL as the recycle vendor, they have requirements and expectations to meet. They have increased their staff accordingly to deal with the search requests and the recycle out orders. We recycle approximately 25% of our equipment. After the initial search, new orders will be routed to the vendor of the client's choice approximately 75% of the time.

### **Can AADL look at how clients that are eligible for Category C seating but only Category A wheelchairs are managed?**

Wheelchair categories have no relationship to seating categories; they have independent and benefit specific criteria within their benefit line policies.

### **Who is involved in this collaboration with AHS?**

Elaine Finseth, Carmen Lazorek, Sylvia Wong-Kathol and various leaders throughout Alberta.

### **Why wouldn't the vendor upload the notification that nothing is available in recycle?**

Vendors do not have access to authorizations. This document is the authorizer's proof that the recycle pool was searched.

### **Are there specific expectations/guidelines as to what wheelchair updates the vendor vs. clinician will do?**

The expectations and requirements to be an AADL authorizer are in the AADL policy manuals. Authorizers/ assessors have competency requirements as directed by their college. The vendors are available as a resource, but cannot make decisions on what a client needs.

### **Why make these changes now during a pandemic?**

We recognize this is a stressful time; unfortunately, due to our mainframe system being decommissioned March 31, 2022, we have to move forward with these changes.

### **Will AADL support this change?**

Absolutely. Our goal is to serve Albertans in a timely manner and support the authorizers through this process.

**Would AADL consider a consumer handout that describes the process for communication with families?**

Explaining the process to clients is in the general policy manual and specific product manuals. We could consider a handout in the future, but would prefer to remain paperless if other ways to communicate can be found.

**If I have a question about the process, on how or what to do, who do I contact?**

The AADL manuals will be updated and training videos will be available on the Alberta Blue Cross and AADL websites.

Alberta Blue Cross will have a call center to handle any questions regarding the authorization process. AADL can assist with recycle process questions.

## More information

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