

Updates to Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) Seating and Wheelchair Accessory Benefits

As of October 1, 2016, AADL is combining Wheelchair Accessories (V) and Seating Benefits (X), into a one benefit area. There will be a new Approved Product List (APL) and Program Manual.

As part of the changes, AADL is restructuring the APL. All catalogue numbers are now categorized based on a “level” of seating. Each level corresponds to the level of clinical need. Clients with more complex seating needs will be eligible for more complex seating benefits. Clients who have more basic needs will be eligible for basic seating equipment.

The three Seating Needs Levels are:

- Level A – Basic Seating
- Level B – Specialized Seating
- Level C – Complex Seating

The new APL is a benchmark model. This means all catalogue numbers have a generic description with a price maximum. A client is eligible to receive up to the maximum amount for the benefits within their level. Clients may choose to upgrade equipment if the cost exceeds the maximum listed in the APL. However, all clients should be able to receive appropriate equipment to meet their basic needs, without an upgrade.

Level of Seating Needs

AADL has developed a decision tree and screening tool which will categorize clients based on their level of need. Any OT or PT will be able to determine the client’s seating needs level.

The eligibility criteria for each level has been developed in direct collaboration with seating experts and also informed by current best practice and evidence.

Authorizers

As of October 1, 2016, all current wheelchair accessory (V) authorizers, who have current authorizations, will be transferred over to the new Level A Seating product range.

New AADL authorizers (after October 1, 2016), will need to submit an application form to be approved for Level A Seating.

Vendors

Vendors who currently provide wheelchair accessory benefits will be transferred over to Level A Seating.

Benefits

Level A Seating benefits include basic cushions, backrests, headrest, upper extremity supports, lower extremity supports and wheelchair accessories. More specialized equipment is designated as Level B or Level C.

All benefits use benchmark pricing. This means that there is a maximum price. All seating vendors must offer a choice of benefits that:

- matches the generic description
- is from an approved manufacturer
- meet AADL minimum standards
- is at or below the benchmark price

A client is able to pay an upgrade for equipment that is more than the maximum.

Authorization Process

All Level A authorizations will be submitted using a 1250 authorization form and an AADL Seating Assessment form. Refer to the AADL Seating Assessment form instructions for more information. Authorizations submitted without a completed AADL Seating Assessment form will be returned to the authorizer. (Refer to Question #3 for further details)

The AADL Seating Assessment form does not need to be submitted for the following:

- occasional User cushions (V990)
- transfer boards (E105, E106, E107, E110)
- maintenance and repairs (V101, V571, V570, V596, V599, V594)

Level B and C authorizations are submitted online using E-business. All documentations related to the authorization is kept in the client file with the authorizer.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What does a benchmark APL mean?

The new APL works the same way as the APL for walkers, and other AADL benefits that use an APL.

For example, a client that is a full-time wheelchair user, who has Level A seating needs is eligible for a V980 cushion. This catalogue number has a price maximum of \$589. Any cushion, that is from an approved manufacturer can be provided to the client and authorized using V980.

2. The new APL with a generic catalogue number and the benchmark system is confusing to me. How will I know what seating benefits products I can authorize for my clients?

The revised seating APL works the same way as the APLs for walkers, bathing and toileting equipment, or transfer aids. Authorizers can contact a vendor for more information about which specific products meet the generic description and fit within the price maximums. For seating benefits, there is a list of approved manufacturers. All seating equipment must be provided from an approved manufacturer.

3. Why is the new seating assessment form so long?

The new AADL Seating Assessment form is designed to capture the relevant clinical details that are assessed during a seating assessment. Clients with more basic needs will have many sections that state “within normal limits” or “no concerns”. For example, a therapist would not complete all range of motion measurements for each body segment for a client who has no deformities.

4. Do I have to submit the Screening Tool with the Seating Assessment Form?

No, the Screening Tool is a tool for assist authorizers in determining a client’s seating needs level. The form is a checklist that guides the authorizer through the clinical eligibility criteria. Experienced authorizers may be able to assess eligibility without using the Screening Tool.

5. I have a client who is a part time wheelchair user. I require a Level A wheelchair cushion. Do I have to complete the entire MAT assessment form?

The AADL Seating Assessment form must be completed and submitted with the 1250 authorization form.

There are several situations when the AADL Seating Assessment Form is not required or submitted. These include:

- occasional User cushions (V990)
- transfer boards (E105, E106, E107, E110)
- maintenance and repairs (V101, V571, V570, V596, V599, V594)

6. Does there have to be two clinicians to assess a client that screens for Level A benefits?

No. Level A assessments require one authorizer in collaboration with a vendor technician.

7. I assess clients in their homes. Is a MAT assessment possible to conduct in a client’s home environment?

Yes, it is possible to complete a MAT assessment in a client’s home. All AADL seating benefits require a comprehensive mobility and seating assessment to address and assess the unique needs of every client. This is not a change in policy. The change is that AADL now requires the

new AADL Seating Benefits Assessment form to be submitted with the authorization. This form replaces the previous cushion assessment form.

8. Where do I learn how to perform a MAT assessment, Braden or Level of Sitting Scale?

There are a variety of different courses including free online education and information. Although these are all specific assessments, all OTs and PTs learn many of the assessment skills required to conduct these assessments as part of their university education. The term MAT stands for Mechanical Assessment Technique.

An example of an online seating assessment resource is [New South Wales online resources](#)

9. How do I get a ROHO Quadro replacement?

The process to assess for a replacement cushion is the same for every client.

1. Screen the client to determine their seating needs level.
2. Refer the client to an appropriate authorizer or team based on their seating needs level.
3. Conduct a seating assessment and select equipment for trial.
4. Confirm eligibility and authorize seating equipment.

For a full-time wheelchair user with Level A needs, the maximum funding amount for a cushion is \$589. Based on the current MSRP of the ROHO Quadro, the client would be required to pay an upgrade \$130. However, there are a wide variety of cushions, including a standard or dual valve ROHO, that are available within the maximum funding amount. A Level A client should not have to upgrade unless they choose to. For a Level B client, the maximum funding amount for a cushion is \$719. Based on the current MSRP of a ROHO Quadro, this client would have no upgrade cost.

Note: All seating benefits are subject to AADL cost-share.

10. What happens to the old catalogue numbers after October 1, 2016?

For authorizations with assessment dates PRIOR to October 1, you will continue to use the previous catalogue numbers. Contact AADL if there are any issues creating authorizations or claims.

For authorizations with assessment dates on or after October 1, you will use the new catalogue numbers.

11. My client needs a wheelchair cushion immediately and a Level B seating team assessment will take time to access. What can I do to acquire a cushion quickly to support safe seating for the client?

All AADL benefits are intended to meet a client's long term needs. AADL benefits are not intended to address acute changes in condition or to be used for active intervention of acute conditions. As always, therapist will need to find short-term solutions for these types of situations.

For concerns regarding access to seating teams, please discuss with your internal operation leadership. AADL is a supplemental health benefit program. As such, AADL does not have the authority to determine how or where seating teams operate. The allocation of clinical resources (i.e., FTE for seating therapists) is within the mandate of Alberta Health Services and other health services providers.

12. I am applying to become a Level B authorizer for seating benefits. Is there a specific course that I must take to qualify?

There is no specific course. AADL requires that a Level B authorizer demonstrate they have the appropriate clinical skills and competency to assess and authorize seating benefits for Level B clients. Other requirements of a Level B seating authorizer include:

- be employed by an AADL recognized Level B Seating Team.
- have a minimum experience of participating in 10 Level B seating assessments and fittings.
- be approved by AADL Seating Benefit Panel to authorize Level B Seating Benefits.

13. What do I do if I don't know where the Level B clinics in Alberta are located?

A list of the recognized seating teams is published on the AADL website.

14. My team wants to start a Level B seating team. Do you have a proposal template?

To apply to be recognized by AADL as a Level B seating team, you will first need to develop a seating team. You will need to approach your internal operational leadership to seek support. Once you have a team in place you will be able to submit a proposal to AADL to request to be recognized as an approved Level B seating team. This proposal will be reviewed by the Seating Benefits Panel, which is comprised of clinical seating experts and AHS professional practice.

There is no template for the proposal. However, the proposal should provide information about how the seating team operates. Specifically, the proposal should indicate how the team meets requirements outlined in AADL Recognized Seating Teams X-06 and Seating Standards X-10.

15. The Level B seating team requirements state that the team needs linkages to interdisciplinary allied health services. What does this mean?

It is well recognized that Level B clients have multidimensional needs, and as such, will often require the expertise of a team of health care providers some of whom will be allied health clinicians. While a Level B assessment does not require more than one clinician to be present, healthcare providers of other disciplines must be available to collaborate as required. Each seating team is unique; therefore the specific configuration of the interdisciplinary team that supports the clients' needs will vary. The proposal for a Level B team will provide information about the interdisciplinary team for the Seating Panel to review.