

Alberta Aids to Daily Living Bulletin

#170

Alberta wildfires 2024: Information for clients, vendors and authorizers

Albertans forced to evacuate their homes because of wildfires may not have their required medical equipment and supplies, which they obtained through the Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) program. The following information for clients, authorizers and vendors outlines how clients may access AADL funding or replace equipment and supplies in the event of loss due to wildfire evacuation.

For clients impacted by wildfires

- AADL clients can contact an authorizer or vendor to get help replacing AADL equipment or supplies that were destroyed or left behind in the evacuation.
- AADL recommends that clients contact the authorizer or vendor who helped them get their current equipment or supplies to request a replacement. If they are not available, clients can contact another AADL authorizer or vendor for assistance.
- To locate an AADL authorizer, clients may contact Health Link Alberta toll-free at 811.
- To locate an AADL vendor, clients may refer to the approved vendor list at <https://www.alberta.ca/aadl-approved-vendors-list.aspx>
- AADL clients who have lost all identification may identify themselves to an AADL authorizer or vendor with their name, address, date of birth, Alberta Personal Health Number (PHN), or any other information they can provide along with a description of what AADL approved medical equipment and/or supplies were lost or damaged.

Oxygen and BPAP

AADL will extend oxygen and bi-level positive airway pressure (BPAP) funding, on an exceptional basis, for clients who cannot get required testing done in time because of a wildfire evacuation.

The exception applies to clients with an authorization expiring in 30 days or less, whose clinical tests were cancelled or delayed because of a wildfire evacuation. AADL will extend funding by three months to allow time to complete the required tests.

Clients in this situation are encouraged to contact their vendor immediately. Vendors can follow the process below to request a funding extension. Clients can find contact information for their vendor on the AADL vendor list:

<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/aadl/aadl-vendors-respiratory.pdf>

Exceptional funding process

For oxygen:

- Enter an RE1 funding request in the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal.
- In the comment section, enter "Wildfire Evacuation."
- If this notation is missing, funding may not be approved.
- If an in-person assessment is not possible, a phone assessment will be accepted. Use the date of the phone assessment as the "respiratory assessment date."
- For SpO2, enter "50."
- For oximetry test date, enter the phone assessment date.

Specialty assessors should arrange for any required testing for the next authorization step as soon as possible. For example, if a client currently has RH1 funding and is applying for the exceptional RE1 funding, the specialty assessor should apply for RH4 funding next.

Similarly, if a client currently has RH4 funding, the next funding step after the exceptional RE1 funding should be RH6 (new). Do not start the funding cycle from the beginning.

For BPAP:

- Apply for short-term funding (SST, NST or PST).
- Please indicate the request is due to “Wildfire Evacuation.”
- Short-term funding is provided for three months.

Medical supplies

- Clients who need medical supplies such as briefs, catheters or ostomy supplies should contact their current vendor directly for replacements.
- If clients need additional quantities, authorizers may contact Alberta Blue Cross provider services at 1-888-828-8738 (toll-free) or at HealthServicesAADLInquiries@ab.bluecross.ca.

Mobility equipment

- Clients who need to replace lost or destroyed medical equipment provided by an AADL vendor, such as walkers, bathing and toileting aids or wheelchairs, should contact an AADL authorizer for assistance
- Short-term loan equipment may be available from the Red Cross Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP), with a referral from a healthcare provider. To locate a HELP depot, visit <https://www.redcross.ca/in-your-community/alberta/health-equipment-loans>.

Hearing aids, prosthetic and orthotic devices

Clients who need to replace equipment from an AADL specialty supplier, such as hearing aids, prosthetic and orthotic devices, should contact their specialty supplier for assistance.

For authorizers and specialty suppliers

If a client requires early replacement of equipment and supplies, please submit a quantity and frequency review (QFR) authorization in the Alberta Blue Cross online health portal. Enter “Wildfire Response 2024” in the QFR reason field, followed by an explanation of the reason for early replacement.

Please note QFR submissions take three to five business days to process. If the client has an immediate medical need, please contact Alberta Blue Cross provider services at 1-888-828-8738 (toll-free) or at HealthServicesAADLInquiries@ab.bluecross.ca to request an emergency review.

Authorizers are asked to consider the following before submitting a QFR:

- For consumable supplies, the client may have funding available without a QFR if they have not claimed the maximum quantity in the current replacement period.
- If equipment is needed on a temporary basis, clients should try to access a temporary loan program such as HELP before requesting replacement from AADL.
- When loaner equipment is not available, AADL will provide recycled equipment for short-term use on an emergency basis.
- If equipment is being replaced for long-term use, a full assessment is required, and the authorization must include an explanation of what happened to the current equipment.

For vendors

If a client urgently requires early replacement of AADL benefits, and an AADL authorizer is not available to submit a QFR authorization, please contact Alberta Blue Cross provider services by telephone to request an emergency authorization.

To assist with the wildfire response, the Alberta Blue Cross provider services line will temporarily be open weekends and statutory holidays.

Contact information

For assistance, questions or to request replacements of medical equipment and supplies, authorizers and vendors should contact Alberta Blue Cross provider services at 1-888-828-8738 (toll-free) or at HealthServicesAADLInquiries@ab.bluecross.ca.