

Alberta Aids to Daily Living

Bulletin #80

General Information on Coronavirus and Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)

AADL is providing this information as a guide to our stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

We are making every effort to maintain AADL operations as the situation evolves. However, access to benefits may be delayed by circumstances out of our control. Your patience is appreciated.

AADL will process authorizations required for palliative care or imminent hospital discharge on an urgent basis. All other requests will be processed as soon as possible with the resources available.

We kindly ask you to consider how urgently benefits are needed, explore alternate strategies, and postpone requests if they are not time-critical.

Please be aware that, during this pandemic, client assessments may be delayed or cancelled as AADL Authorizers are urgently required in other areas of healthcare. Delivery of benefits also may be disrupted as vendors and caretakers enact policies to protect staff and people in care.

AADL is not responsible for partner organizations' resource allocation or pandemic response policies.

If access issues arise, we encourage clients, clinicians, caretakers and vendors to communicate directly and find solutions.

Clients are encouraged to contact their vendors to confirm store hours and make arrangements for benefit delivery if required.

Currently, E-business is available, and claims will continue to be paid as usual. If this situation changes, we will provide updates via notification on E-business and follow up bulletins

To manage limited mail room capacity:

- **Please submit all documents via fax to 780-422-0968, including 1250 authorization forms, work orders and application forms.**
- **1251 Wheelchair Authorization Forms must be submitted by mail due to dimensions of the form.**
- **Please take special care that writing on faxes is legible**
- **Please send each document only once. Do not mail in copies of documents that were faxed.**

Please watch these bulletins for updates and contact AADL if you have any questions. Our contact list is available at <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/aadl/aadl-contact-list.pdf>

Respiratory benefits

An exceptional funding process is now in place for respiratory benefits, to reduce burden on the healthcare system and minimize delays in adjudication.

For respiratory funding authorizations where required testing is unavailable or delayed due to pandemic response measures:

- **Enter “COVID 19” and a brief summary of the issue in the Authorization Comments section.**
- **If this comment is not entered, the provider may be found non-compliant and subject to cost recovery.**

Providers will not be expected to have Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) assessments done within the current policy timelines.

RRT assessments conducted over the phone will be accepted.

This process is subject to change depending on ongoing consultation with Alberta Health, AHS and Alberta Blue Cross regarding COVID-19 precautions, etc. Any changes will be communicated in follow-up bulletins.

Safe use of oxygen and equipment instruction will continue to be required for new oxygen starts. If the RRT assessment cannot be done (phone or in person) within policy requirements (48 hours for new oxygen starts), enter the start date (when equipment was given to the client) for the RRT assessment date.

In the event that an Arterial Blood Gas (ABG) is unable to be obtained, please enter a PaO₂ value of 10. We will accept oximetry that documents the need for oxygen.

If a particular test is missing (other than ABG), enter an acceptable value as outlined in policy and select that you have the documentation to upload. In the comments section, enter “COVID 19” and a description of what is missing, as well as any information that has been used as a substitute.

Authorizations will be approved for exceptional funding for a period of time to allow for testing at a later date, based on the comments provided. Please note that these funding expiry dates may be different than anticipated.

Mobility and large equipment

We are providing guidance only on the cleaning and disinfection of AADL equipment to help break the cycle of infection and reduce risk of transmission.

For more information about COVID-19, please consult your employer, your professional organization and resources from public health authorities including the [Public Health Agency of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/public-health-agency-of-canada.html).

Disinfecting recyclable AADL equipment

- Use best practice hand washing hygiene before and after contact with any client and the equipment requested.
- Prepare equipment for use.
- Where possible, use pre-mixed disinfecting solution and or follow manufacturer instructions for cleaning.
- Spray equipment and wipe off as needed while wearing gloves.
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions to allow adequate contact time for disinfectant to kill the germs (see product label).
- Wear gloves when handling cleaning products, including wipes.
- Wear any other personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer.
- After cleaning equipment, use hand washing hygiene.

What you should know

- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.
- Frequently touched surfaces are most likely contaminated.
- Current evidence suggests that novel coronavirus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials.¹
- Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.
- Check the expiry date of products you use and always follow manufacturer's instructions.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html>

Medical-Surgical benefits

Vendors

Vendors may dispense products **for active authorizations** for May/June 2020 and invoice AADL at regular timelines. Vendors must not charge AADL for shipping or add an upcharge on products to cover shipping costs. Shipping costs are the responsibility of the vendor and/or client.

Clients who have authorizations that are not active must contact AADL directly regarding extension and short term reinstatement of authorizations.

Vendors must not advise clients that AADL will automatically extend or reinstate authorizations. It is the sole discretion of AADL to do so after reviewing the client's past usage.

Authorizers

(please note the following is at the discretion of the clinic or Authorizer)

Community Aids for Independent Living (CAIL - Edmonton) may contact AADL and request extensions for those who have booked appointments to reassess for incontinence products, catheters and ostomy products only.

Calgary Community Aids for Independent Living (CCAIL) may contact AADL and request extensions for those who have booked appointments for reassessments for incontinence products and catheters only.

Clients requiring reassessments for ostomy products in Calgary and area, must continue to contact the hospital in which they had surgery. Hospital Nurses Specialized in Wound, Ostomy and Continence Canada (NSWOCC) may contact AADL and request extensions for ostomy products if needed.

Provincially, Supportive Living and homecare staff may contact AADL and request extensions for their clients. Clients who are more independent can call AADL directly and request an extension or a reinstatement of their AADL authorization.

Authorizers must not communicate to clients that AADL will automatically extend or reinstate authorizations. It is the sole discretion of AADL to do so after reviewing the client's past usage.

Communication benefits

Voice Restoration and Electrolarynx Benefits (VRE)

Laryngectomy patients are considered high risk given their medical status with open airways to the larynx. This may result in a potential need for additional VRE supplies over AADL stated quantities (i.e., voice prosthesis, laryngectomy tubes, heat-moisture filters). Such requests from authorizers will be dealt with by AADL on a case-by-case basis for over quantity limits.

Speech Generating Communication Devices (SGCD)

Applications for new SGCDs will be dealt with as capacity allows.

SGCD recycle equipment: Service Centres will follow manufacturers' recommendations regarding cleaning outside surfaces of SGCD equipment.

Authorizers for SGCD Communication Benefits:

- School districts are currently closed for students. It is unknown what role school-based SGCD Service Centre authorizers (SLPs & OTs) will have during school closures.
- Alberta Health Service (AHS)-based authorizers for SGCD will advise on their capacity to meet with patients in the coming days as AHS priorities change.

Seating, prosthetic and orthotic (including ocular prosthetic and footwear) benefits

Seating Authorizers and Vendors, and Prosthetic, Orthotic and Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers, should follow their facility's Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) direction and best practices with respect to COVID-19, including but not limited to incorporating risk mitigation strategies and practices endorsed by:

Government of Alberta

- <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Alberta Health Services - IPC Resources

- *Emerging Issues (COVID-19):*
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page10531.aspx#ncov>.
- *General:*
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page6410.aspx>.

Where implications of COVID-19 may impact the aforementioned benefit-specific Authorizers', Vendors', and Specialty Assessors'/Suppliers' ability to operationalize associated AADL Program policies and procedures, they should notify **Stanley Kolodziej, AADL Program Manager, Assistive Devices and Equipment**, at:
Stanley.kolodziej@gov.ab.ca.