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EDUCATION AND LABOR CABINET

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SERVICE FEE MEMORANDUM

Open Fit/Receiver in the Ear/Post Auricle Hearing Aids

TO: Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Staff
Client Assistance Program Administrator

FROM: Executive Director
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

THROUGH: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Branch Manager
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

DATE: Effective 1-19-2024

Open fit, receiver in the ear, and post auricle hearing aids are considered typical hearing aid technologies. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) may assist with the cost so long as they are within OVR price guidelines. Exceptions to price guidelines must be made to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) Branch Manager.

Cost Participation

The first \$1,000.00 associated with the purchase of hearing aids is exempt from cost sharing. Any amount above \$1,000.00 will be subject to our current cost-sharing policies. This will apply to the purchase of hearing aids including binaural hearing aids (if recommended), ear molds (if applicable), and related shipping costs.

Here are some examples:

- a) A pair of hearing aids is priced at \$2,200.00: OVR will pay \$1,000.00. The remaining \$1,200.00 is subject to OVR's consumer cost sharing policies.
- b) A pair of hearing aids is priced at \$999.00: OVR will pay \$999.00. The consumer will not be asked to share in the cost of the hearing aids.

The **dispensing fee** (Expenditure Code 24F from the Consumer Services Budget) is a service under "**Diagnosis and Treatment**" and will be subject to cost participation.

This policy includes split billing the costs and requiring the vendor to collect the balance from the consumer. An authorization will be sent to Vendor for OVR's portion, and the consumer will make payment arrangements with Vendor. These services are typically provided after the development of the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and should be reflected on the IPE. There may be rare occasions where these services are provided prior to IPE development, to complete an assessment, which requires justification.

Hearing aids are considered a service under Rehabilitation Technology and come from the Consumer Services Budget. The consumer must purchase the hearing aid at their own cost and directly from Vendor if OVR is not participating in the cost.

Important Note: OVR will not purchase hearing aids from franchises where hearing aids are relabeled and locked. Hearing aids set in locked position do not allow OVR consumers the flexibility to have hearing aids serviced at their manufacturer's alternate locations, should the consumer need service while traveling on the job.

Hearing Aid Guidelines

Speech and/or hearing assessments or evaluations:

Use Expenditure Code 10C for speech and/or hearing assessments or evaluations.

A comprehensive audiometric evaluation (Current Procedural Terminology [CTP] code 92557) and hearing aid evaluation (CTP codes 92590 and 92591) must be provided by a licensed/board certified audiologist. Provision by a licensed professional other than an audiologist will require an exception. Only a board-certified audiologist may perform and bill for a comprehensive audiometric evaluation.

An outcome measurement must be performed to validate the purchase of technology (i.e., aided audiogram, real ear, aided speech, or the hearing aid diary, testing in noise, etc.). An evaluation of the auditory system from a physician skilled in the diseases of the ear (otolaryngologist) should be provided when symptoms of ear pathology and/or conductive hearing loss are present.

A communication assessment must be completed by a Communication Specialist before the purchase of hearing aids. The communication assessment should cover communication difficulties in basic areas such as face-to-face communications, telephone communications, environmental sounds and situations, small group and large group situations, and electronic media/special equipment in settings such as work, school/home, etc. This information is helpful to determine the appropriate hearing aid circuitry and assistive devices needed to meet the consumer's communication demands on the job.

Board certified audiologists working with OVR consumers who have insurance shall file a claim unless written notice can be obtained to verify the lack of coverage for the hearing aids. When insurance is available, OVR will process payment based on the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) and OVR reimbursement Policies and Procedures.

Hearing Aids

Use Expenditure Code 92G and the Consumer Services budget for hearing aids.

The Expenditure Code for hearing aid accessories is 92H (dry n' store, batteries, etc.). The following Expenditure Category Codes remain under Rehabilitation Technology and are also to be purchased out of the Consumer Services regular budget. Please use these codes when purchasing Rehabilitation Technology for deaf or hard of hearing consumers.

OVR will only purchase Behind-The-Ear or Full Shell In-The-Ear hearing aids that are Frequency Modulation/Assistive Listening Device ready or compatible (i.e., wireless connectivity or manual [not auto] telecoil). **The maximum allowable fee for a hearing aid (conventional, programmable, and digital) is \$1,200.00**, which shall include the cost of the hearing aid, any additional circuitry needed, and Frequency Modulation compatible option (wireless connectivity or telecoil).

Exceptions

Use code 00080 for exceptions. An exception form is needed for **amounts exceeding \$1,200.00**. Exceptions require approval from the DHHS Branch Manager prior to purchasing a hearing aid, cochlear implant, or bone anchored hearing system. To

request an exception, send the exception form, hearing test, and hearing aid recommendation, eligibility form, insurance verification, cost sharing form, and communication assessment to the DHHS Branch Manager in Central Office for approval.

Once approval is obtained, you must then indicate on the description line on the pay authorization the specific exception (i.e. InThe-Canal, Completely-In-The-Canal, or Behind-The-Ear/In-The-Ear hearing aid if provided by a vendor outside the vendor list).

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has price agreements with Oticon, Phonak, ReSound, Signia, Starkey, Unitron and Widex (includes hearing aid accessories and Frequency Modulation/Assistive Listening Devices). Please note that extended warranties are included in agreements. A hearing aid recommendation from any other manufacturer requires an exception to the DHHS Branch Manager. Vendor will attach a Vocational Rehabilitation authorization to hearing aid orders to verify the OVR discount to the manufacturer.

Expenditure Codes

Expenditure Code	Device
92D	<p>Telecommunication Devices (for deaf or hard of hearing individuals).</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunication Device for the Deaf, • Amplified telephones, • Telephone amplifiers.
92E	<p>Assistive Listening Devices (see separate Service Fee Memo)</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bluetooth device, • Significant other microphones.

92F	<p>Alerting Devices (for deaf or hard of hearing individuals).</p> <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flashing/vibrating alarm clocks, • Flashing vibrating phone • Door signalers.
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CTP Codes

CTP Code	Procedure	Rate
00073	<p>Conventional Hearing Aid Not to exceed \$1,200.00</p> <p>Use OVR Price list: Oticon, Phonak, Signia, Starkey, ReSound, Unitron, or Widex.</p>	<p>Enter OVR Price</p> <p>Expenditure Code: 92G</p> <p>Consumer Services Budget</p>
00074	<p>Programmable/Digital Behind-the-Ear/In-the-Ear Hearing Aid Not to exceed \$1,200.00</p> <p>Use OVR Price list: Oticon, Phonak, Signia, Starkey, ReSound, Unitron, or Widex.</p>	<p>Enter OVR Price</p> <p>Expenditure Code: 92G</p> <p>Consumer Services Budget</p>
00077	<p>Original Custom Earmold (Behind-the-Ear only)</p>	<p>\$75.00</p> <p>Expenditure Code: 92G</p> <p>Consumer Services Budget</p>
00078	<p>Dispensing Fee Per Standard Conventional Aid. Up to 6 visits during first year for adjustments</p>	<p>\$350.00</p> <p>Expenditure Code: 24F</p> <p>Consumer Services Budget</p>

00079	Dispensing Fee Per Programmable/Digital Aid. Up to 6 visits during first year for adjustments	\$500.00 Expenditure Code: 24F Consumer Services Budget
92590	Hearing Aid Test (one ear)	\$75.00 Consumer Services Budget
92591	Hearing Aid Test (both ears)	\$90.00 Consumer Services Budget
*0008	Hearing Aid Exceptions Require Deaf and Hard of Hearing Branch approval (i.e., items more than \$1,200.00 or that are not on the OVR price list).	By Report Expenditure Code 92G Consumer Services Budget