

Hearing Aids

Clinical Coverage Criteria for Hearing Aid Coverage in Children

The Maryland Medicaid Program considers bilateral or unilateral hearing aids medically necessary for participants up to age 21 years when the following criteria are met:

- The participant has a hearing loss of 25 dB or greater; AND
- Hearing aid(s) recommended and fitted by an audiologist; AND
- For initial hearing aid(s), written medical clearance is obtained from a physician who has performed a medical examination within the past 6 months

Clinical Coverage Criteria for Hearing Aids in Adults

Unilateral hearing aids are considered medically necessary for participants 21 years of age and older when the following criteria are met:

- The participant has a pure tone average threshold of 40 dB or greater at 500, 1000, 2000 and 3000 Hz in the better ear; AND
- Documentation that patient is alert and able to utilize their aid appropriately; AND
- Hearing aid is recommended and fitted by an audiologist; AND
- For initial hearing aid, written medical clearance from a physician who has performed a medical examination within the past 6 months.

Bilateral hearing aids are considered medically necessary in recipients 21 years of age and older who meet the criteria for unilateral hearing aids and when one of the following criteria is met:

- The participant has visual impairment meeting the definition of statutory blindness; OR
- The participant is a previous successful bilateral hearing aid user and meaningful objective benefit to the participant over unilateral amplification can be documented; OR
- The participant demonstrates significant hearing-related disability in educational, vocational, or community settings with a unilateral aid and meaningful objective benefit from bilateral aids can be documented.

Cochlear Implants

Clinical Coverage Criteria for Cochlear Implantation in Children

For children 12 months – 20 years, the Maryland Medicaid Program considers unilateral or bilateral implantation of a cochlear implant medically necessary when the following criteria are met:

A message from the Maryland Medicaid Program

- Bilateral severe to profound pre- or post-lingual sensorineural hearing loss, defined as a pure tone average threshold of 70 dB or greater at 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz; AND
- A minimum 3 to 6 month trial with appropriate binaural hearing aids has occurred if child is not previously experienced with hearing aids (radiologic evidence of cochlear ossification may justify a shorter trial with amplification); AND Limited or no benefit from appropriate binaural hearing aids, defined as:
 - In younger children, lack of progress in the development of simple auditory skills in conjunction with hearing aids over a 3 to 6 month period, quantified on a measure such as the Meaningful Auditory Integration Scale or the Early Speech Perception test.
 - In older children, < 30% correct on the Multisyllabic Lexical Neighborhood Test (MLNT) or Lexical Neighborhood Test (LNT) depending upon the child's cognitive ability and linguistic skills; AND
- Documentation that the child and parent/guardian are willing and able to participate in a post-cochlear implant rehabilitation program in order to achieve benefit from the cochlear implant device; AND
- Freedom from middle ear infection, an accessible cochlear lumen that is structurally suited to implantation, and freedom from lesions in the auditory nerve and acoustic areas of the central nervous system; AND No contraindications to surgery.

Clinical Coverage Criteria for Cochlear Implantation in Adults

For participants 21 years and older, unilateral implantation of a cochlear implant is considered medically necessary when the following criteria are met:

- Bilateral severe to profound pre- or post-lingual sensorineural hearing loss, defined as a pure tone average threshold of 70 dB or greater at 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, and 2000 Hz; AND
- Limited benefit from appropriate hearing aids, defined as scoring 50% or less in best-aided listening condition on a test of open-set sentence recognition (ex. HINT Sentences); AND
- The participant is willing and able to participate in a post-cochlear implant rehabilitation program in order to achieve benefit from the cochlear implant device; AND
- Freedom from middle ear infection, an accessible cochlear lumen that is structurally suited to implantation, and freedom from lesions in the auditory nerve and acoustic areas of the central nervous system; AND No contraindications to surgery.

Bilateral cochlear implants are considered medically necessary in recipients age 21 years and older who meet the criteria for unilateral cochlear implants and when one of the following criteria is met:

- The participant is a previous successful bilateral cochlear implant user; OR
- It has been determined that a unilateral cochlear implant plus a hearing aid in the contralateral ear will not result in adequate amplification

Bone-anchored Hearing Aids (Auditory Osseointegrated Devices)

Clinical Coverage Criteria for Bone-anchored Hearing Aids (BAHA) in Children and Adults

The Maryland Medicaid Program considers bone-anchored hearing aids medically necessary for participants 5 years and older (and nonimplantable or softband devices for participants less than 5 years or as clinically indicated) when the following criteria are met:

- Unilateral implant: conductive or mixed hearing loss with a pure tone average bone conduction threshold at 500, 1000, 2000, and 3000 Hz that is less than or equal to 45 dB (BAHA Attract, BAHA Divino, BAHA BP100, Baha 4 and Sophono Alpha System), 55 dB (BAHA 5 Power, BAHA Intenso, Ponto Plus Power) or 65 dB (BAHA Cordelle II); or
- Bilateral implants: moderate-to-severe bilateral symmetric conductive or mixed hearing loss, meeting above-listed bone conduction thresholds in both ears; symmetric bone conduction threshold is defined as less than:
 - 10 dB average difference between ears (measured at 500, 1000, 2000 and 4000 Hz) or less than 15 dB difference at individual frequencies (BAHA Divino, Ponto Plus, Ponto Plus Power, Ponto Pro, Sophono Alpha System); or
 - 10 dB average difference between ears (measured at 500, 1000, 2000 and 3000 Hz), or less than a 15 dB difference at individual frequencies (BAHA Attract, BAHA BP100, BAHA 4, BAHA 5 Power, BAHA Cordelle II, BAHA Intenso); AND
- For unilateral or bilateral implants, participant has one of the following medical conditions preventing use of a conventional air conduction hearing aid:
 - Congenital or surgically induced malformations (e.g., atresia) of the external or middle ear canal; or
 - Severe chronic external otitis or otitis media; or
 - Tumors of the external ear canal and/or tympanic cavity; or
 - Dermatitis of the external ear canal, including hypersensitivity to ear molds used in air conduction hearing aids; or
 - Other anatomic or medical conditions that contraindicate the use of an air conduction hearing aid.

The Maryland Medicaid Program considers a bone-anchored hearing aid medically necessary for participants 5 years and older with unilateral sensorineural hearing loss (single-sided deafness) and normal hearing (a pure tone average hearing threshold of <20 dB) in the other ear.