

**Obtaining Funding for AAC  
Equipment: The Report  
Writing Process**

Wisconsin Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology  
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**Principles of Report Writing**

- ▶ Third party funding programs are responsible for almost all purchases of speech generating devices (SGDs) in the United States. (Blackstone, S. (2006). Ten U.S. funding programs. *Augmentative Communication New*, 18(4).
- ▶ The format, style, scope and the degree of detail in a funding report is determined by the funding agency.
- ▶ The report should address the items that the funding agency deems as needed.

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**Speech Generating Device (SGD)  
Different Terminology Across  
Funding Programs**

- ▶ Medicare, Medicaid, Medical Assistance for SGD are referred to as **Durable Medical Equipment**.
- ▶ **Tricare, the Department of Veterans Affairs and some medical programs refer to SGDs as Prosthetic Devices.**
- ▶ Special education, early intervention and vocational rehabilitation programs refer to SGDs as **Assistive Technology Devices**

(Blackstone, S. (2006). Ten U.S. funding programs. *Augmentative Communication New*, 18(4).

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### Medicare and Medical Assistance Funding Report

- ▶ AAC-RERC Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center is a collaborative research group dedicated to the development of effective AAC technology.
- ▶ Websites- Report and AAC Resources
  - Web address: Both sites have examples of reports and even a "Report Coach"
    - [www.aac-rerc.psu.edu](http://www.aac-rerc.psu.edu)
    - [www.aacfundinghelp.com](http://www.aacfundinghelp.com)
- ▶ Eligibility
  - Medicare-65 years old or if individual younger than 65 who have paid Medicare taxes.
  - Medical Assistance- Qualifies under Wisconsin regulations

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### Medicare Assessment Protocol

(Blackstone, S. (2006). Ten U.S. funding programs. Augmentative Communication News, 18(4).

- ▶ Information
  - Demographics
  
  - Current Communication Impairment
    - Type and severity, e.g., Dysarthria
    - Anticipated Course of impairment

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### Medicare Assessment Protocol Cont'd

- Comprehensive Assessment
  - Hearing status of individual and primary communication partner
  - Visual Status
  - Physical Status
  - Language Status
  - Cognitive Status, e.g., statement regarding attention, memory, , non-verbal problem solving.

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### Medicare Assessment Protocol, Cont'd

- Daily Communication Needs
  - Specific daily functional communication needs
  
- Ability to meet communication needs with non-SGD treatment approaches, e.g., communication in emergency situations, directing behaviors of caregivers, etc.
  
- Functional Communication Goals
  - Example: within 4 months Mrs. X will independently engage in face-to-face communication exchanges with extended family members using the recommended Vmax

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### Medicare Assessment Protocol Cont'd

- Rationale for SGD Selection based on Feature Match
  - General Features of Recommended SGD and Accessories
    - Input features
    - Message characteristics
    - Output features
  - Recommended Medicare Device and Accessory Codes
    - Category E2510 Erica II
  - Description of Equipment and Procedures Used During Assessment Process
    - Example: In addition to the VMax, two other SGDs were considered (must list)

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### Medicare Assessment Protocol, Cont'd

- Recommended SGD and Accessories
  
- Patient/Family Support of SGD
  
- Physician Involvement Statement- The report is sent to the physician requesting a prescription be written for the recommended SGD and accessories. made for the equipment.
  
- Assurance of Financial Independence and Signature

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**Example of a Medicare Funding Report**

- ▶ Will be shown the time of the presentation.

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**Special Education Funding Program**  
(Blackstone, S. (2006). Ten U.S. funding programs. Augmentative Communication New, 18(4).

- ▶ IDEA– entitles every child age 3 to 21 with a disability to a free and appropriate education (FAPE).
- ▶ IEP process– Assistive Technology (AT) devices and services are among the wide range of assistance that comprise special education and related services and SGD fit within the definition of AT device.
  - Section 300.308 clarifies that on a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased AT devices in a student's home, or other settings, is required if the student's IEP team determines the student needs access in order to receive a FAPE.

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**Issue Associated With Educational Settings**

- ▶ **Staffing**- Who will identify the student's needs, recommended devices and development and implementation treatment plan?
- ▶ **Clarifying the purpose of an SGD**- Is it only to allow students to better communicate in the classroom, or is it to ensure students can meet all daily communication needs using the full range of communication methods that might be effective?
- ▶ **Funding**- Who pays for the SGD and accessories and related services?
- ▶ If the school purchases the device it is the school's property.
- (Blackstone, S. (2006). Ten U.S. funding programs. Augmentative Communication New, 18(4).

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### Assistive Technology Laws Affecting School Districts

Judi Cumley, Assistive Technology Consultant CSEA 5

- ▶ 300.5 Assistive Technology Device.
  - Assistive technology device means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device (Authority: 20U>S>C> 1401(1))

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### Assistive Technology Laws Affecting School Districts, Cont'd

- ▶ 300.6 assistive Technology Service
  - Assistive technology service means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. The term include-
    - (c) Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, **maintaining, repairing,** or replacing assistive technology devices.
    - Side Bar- Even if privately/MA purchased but used in the school and written in the IEP, then it is the school's responsibility to repair the device.

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### A Guide to Obtaining Augmentative Communication Devices and Accessories Through Wisconsin Medicaid

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid>

- ▶ Checklist for Obtaining Augmentative Communication Devices
  - The recipient must be Medicaid eligible
  - An augmentative communication assessment must be completed
  - A physician's prescription for the rental or purchase of the specific augmentative communication device and accessories is needed.

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**A Guide to Obtaining Augmentative Communication Devices and Accessories Through Wisconsin Medicaid**

- A recommended four-week to eight-week trial with the device (rental). Prior authorization is not required for the first 60 days of rental for most augmentative communication devices.
- A Medicaid-certified provider submits all documentation for the prior authorization request to Wisconsin Medicaid.

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**What is Included in the Augmentative Communication Assessment?**  
<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid>

- ▶ Receptive and expressive language skills
- ▶ Cognitive abilities
- ▶ Ability to initiate communication
- ▶ Ability to remember signs or pictures, attach meaning to them, and use them to communicate.
- ▶ Attention to task.

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**What is Included in the Augmentative Communication Assessment?, Cond't**

- ▶ Speed and accuracy of processing information
- ▶ Description of the rental period, if applicable
- ▶ Discussion regarding which equipment was considered.
- ▶ Justification and recommendation for equipment and that the equipment represents the least costly option, which meets the receipt's functional communication needs.
- ▶ Statement where the device will be used and remember that a statement regarding medical necessity.

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Example of a Wisconsin Medicaid  
Funding Report

▸ Will be shown the time of the presentation

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