

	<p>Hearing Device Guideline</p>	
<p>Guideline # 6186</p>	<p>Categories Clinical → Care Coordination, Care Coordination – Utilization management , TCHP Guidelines</p>	<p>This Guideline Applies To: Texas Children's Health Plan</p>
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GUIDELINE STATEMENT:

Texas Children's Health Plan (TCHP) performs authorization of all Implantable Hearing devices, including cochlear implants, auditory brainstem implants (ABI), and bone anchored hearing aids (BAHA) and any associated surgeries or accessories.

DEFINITIONS:

Decibel (dB): the unit used to measure the intensity of a sound, in this case to measure a hearing level at a certain frequency or frequencies

Pure Tone Average (PTA): the average of hearing levels from a set of specified frequencies

Degrees of hearing loss: Normal ≤ 20 dB, Mild 26-40 dB, Moderate 41-55 dB, Moderately Severe 56-69 dB, Severe 70-90 dB, Profound >90 dB

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION GUIDELINE

1. Non-implantable hearing devices and services require authorization when the request is over the limit of one (1) hearing device per 5 years in accordance with the current Texas Medicaid Provider Procedures Manual.
2. Replacement batteries for implantable hearing devices do not require prior authorization.
3. Requests for prior authorization are received by the Utilization Management Department and processed during normal business hours. Requests may be submitted via fax, mail, and electronically.
4. To request prior authorization for an implantable hearing device, the following documentation must be provided:
 - Complete Texas Standard Prior Authorization Request Form for Health Care Services.
 - Clinical documentation to support the medical necessity of the selected implantable hearing device or service must include an assessment by an audiologist AND an assessment from an otolaryngologist experienced in the procedure that indicates the likelihood of success with the device.

- Documentation of who will be providing the device or service (i.e. facility, DME or medical supplier along with their NPI number.)

Cochlear Implants for bilateral deafness or symmetric hearing loss:

5. Implantation of a U.S. Food and Drug administration (FDA) approved single or multi-channel monaural (unilateral) or binaural (bilateral) cochlear implant is considered medically necessary when all of the following criteria are met:

5.1 The member is 9 months of age or older (device must be FDA approved for age)

5.2 The member has bilateral severe-to-profound prelingual or postlingual hearing loss (sensorineural deafness), defined as a hearing threshold of average (PTA) of 70 decibels (dB) or greater and meets all of the following:

- The member has not benefitted from appropriately fitted hearing aid devices (If there is radiological evidence of cochlear ossification, this requirement may be waived at the TCHP Medical Director/Physician Reviewer's discretion); **And**
- The member has a cochlear lumen that is structurally suited; **And**
- The member is free from lesions in the auditory nerve and acoustic areas of the central nervous system; **And**
- The member is free from otitis media or other active middle ear infections; **And**
- The member is able to participate in a post-cochlear implant rehabilitation program in order to achieve benefit from the cochlear implant device as demonstrated by the cognitive ability to use auditory cues. Written documentation of agreement to participate in the rehabilitation program by the member or the member's parent or guardian is required.

5.3 Unilateral implantation of an FDA approved single or multi-channel cochlear implant is considered medically necessary for subsequent bilateral implantation (that is, sequential implantation) without retesting of hearing when the above criteria are met at the time of the initial (first) cochlear implantation.

5.4 Upgrade to or replacement of an existing external speech processor, controller or integrated system (speech processor and controller) is considered medically necessary for a member whose response to existing components is inadequate to the point of interfering with the activities of daily living or when components are no longer functional.

Cochlear Implants for single-sided deafness (SSD) or asymmetric hearing loss (AHL)

6. Implantation of a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved cochlear implant for single-sided deafness or asymmetric hearing loss is considered medically necessary for members 12 years old and younger when all of the following criteria are met:

- 6.1 Members with single-sided deafness (SSD) who have profound sensorineural hearing loss in one ear and normal hearing or mild sensorineural hearing loss in the other ear, who have demonstrated the inability to derive benefit from a minimum one month trial of an appropriately fitted unilateral hearing aid in the ear to be implanted; **OR**
- 6.2 Members with asymmetric hearing loss (AHL) who have profound sensorineural hearing loss in one ear and mild to moderately severe sensorineural hearing loss in the other ear, with a difference of at least 15 dB PTA between ears, who have demonstrated inability to derive benefit from a minimum one month trial of an appropriately fitted unilateral hearing aid in the ear to be implanted.
- 6.3 The member meets all of the following criteria:
- The member is free bilaterally from otitis media or other active middle ear infections; **AND**
 - The member is free from lesions in the unilaterally affected auditory nerve and acoustic areas of the central nervous system; **AND**
 - The member has a cochlear lumen that is structurally suited to implantation; **AND**
 - The member is current on age appropriate pneumococcal vaccination (two or more weeks before surgery when possible) in accordance with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Auditory Brainstem Implants

7. An FDA-approved auditory brainstem implant (ABI) is considered medically necessary in an individual when all of the following criteria are met:
- Member is 12 years of age or older; **And**
 - Diagnosed with neurofibromatosis type 2 or schwannomatosis; **And**
 - Upgrade to or replacement of an existing external sound processor, remote assistant or both components is considered medically necessary for an individual whose response to existing components is inadequate to the point of interfering with the activities of daily living or when components are no longer functional.

Bone Anchored Hearing Devices (BAHD)

8. An implantable bone-anchored hearing device is considered medically necessary for individuals 5 years of age and older who meet **ALL** of the following criteria:
- The member has an appropriate diagnosis of an eligible condition including, but not limited to:
 - Conductive hearing loss
 - Sensorineural hearing loss

- Anomalies of skull and facial bones or of the external ear with impairment in hearing
- Other anatomic or medical conditions with impairment of hearing and the use of an air conduction hearing aid is contraindicated, including but not limited to:
 - Congenital or surgically induced ear malformations of the external or middle ear canal (for example, atresia); **Or**
 - Severe chronic external otitis or otitis media; **Or**
 - Tumors of the external ear canal or tympanic cavity; **Or**
 - Dermatitis of the external ear canal, including reactions from ear molds used in air conduction hearing aid
- Request is within the limitations for hearing aid devices per Texas Medicaid Provider Procedures Manual, Vision And Hearing Services Handbook, Section 2.2.4 Hearing Aid Devices and Accessories (Nonimplantable)
- Documentation of previous attempts at hearing aid devices and why these devices did not meet the member's needs
- Documentation of scores on hearing tests for bone conduction thresholds and on maximum speech discrimination
- Documentation of audiological testing that shows good inner ear function
- Documentation of a multidisciplinary assessment that describes the member's auditory disability and the expected benefit with use of the BAHD implant

8.1 An implantable bone-anchored hearing aid is considered medically necessary to improve speech recognition in individuals 5 years of age and older with unilateral sensorineural hearing loss (single-sided deafness) and normal hearing in the other ear.

8.2 For members 5 years of age or younger, a transcutaneously worn, non-surgical application of an implantable bone-anchored hearing aid (bone conduction-type hearing aid) utilizing a headband or softband is considered medically necessary as an alternative to an implantable bone-anchored hearing aid or air conduction hearing aid in individuals who meet the criteria specified above.

9. Replacement parts or upgrades to existing bone-anchored hearing aid components (e.g., processor, headband or softband) are considered medically necessary for individuals whose response to existing components is inadequate to the point of interfering with activities of daily living or when components are no longer functional.

10. Requests that do not meet the criteria established by this guideline will be referred to a TCHP Medical Director/Physician Reviewer for review and the Denial Policy will be followed.
11. Preauthorization is based on medical necessity and not a guarantee of benefits or eligibility. Even if preauthorization is approved for treatment or a particular service, that authorization applies only to the medical necessity of treatment or service. All services are subject to benefit limitations and exclusions. Providers are subject to State and Federal Regulatory compliance and failure to comply may result in retrospective audit and potential financial recoupment.

REFERENCES:**Government Agency, Medical Society, and Other Publications:**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). ASHA Practice Policy. Available at: <http://www.asha.org/policy>, Accessed February 4, 2025

Texas Medicaid Provider Procedures Manual, Volume 2: Vision and Hearing Services Handbook, Accessed February 4, 2025
<https://www.tmhp.com/sites/default/files/file-library/resources/provider-manuals/tmppm/archives/2025-02-TMPPM.pdf>

Peer Reviewed Publications:

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Thomas, J.P., Neumann, K., Dazert, S., Voelter, C. (2017) Cochlear Implantation in Children with Single-Sided Deafness. *Otology & Neurotology* 38:496–503
Deep, N., Gordon, S., Shapiro, W., et.al. (2020) Cochlear Implantation in Children with Single-Sided Deafness. *Laryngoscope*, 00:1–7

Sangen, A., Royackers, L., Desloovere, C., Wouters, J., & van Wieringen, A. (2017). Single-sided deafness affects language and auditory development – A case-control study. *Clinical Otolaryngol*, 42: 979-987

Waltzman SB, Roland JT. Cochlear Implantation in Children Younger than 12 Months. *Pediatrics.* 2005; 116(4):e487-93.

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