



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor

Michael Wisehart
Director

September 9, 2020

Ms. Melanie L. Moore, Au.D., CCC-A
2020 - 2021 President
Arizona Speech-Language Hearing Association
700 McKnight Park Drive, Suite 708
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15237

Dear Ms. Moore:

The Arizona Department of Economic Security, Division of Developmental Disabilities (“Division” or “DDD”), has reviewed your letter dated July 13, 2020, and would like to thank you for your thoughtful insights and recommendations. DDD’s mission is to empower individuals with developmental disabilities to lead self-directed, healthy, and meaningful lives. It is for this reason that the Division supports the position that eligibility for communication services and supports should be based on individual communication needs.

DDD is committed to advancing its mission by engaging in continuous improvement processes as an ongoing effort to improve the policies, procedures, and services to provide the best quality of care to our members. More specifically, the Division in collaboration with its regulator, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, and external stakeholders including our member community, the provider community, the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest, the Arizona Center for Disability Law, and DDD Health Plans, are engaged in the process of ensuring the establishment of applicable and clear recommendations to guide clinical practice and coverage for Augmentative and Alternative Communications (AAC) services and equipment. Additionally, DDD has engaged the services of AArete Consulting to complete systematic literature research and a review of existing scientific evidence, in combination and consultation with the expertise of subject matter experts in federal and state coverage, and authorization requirements specific to AAC.

DDD will be transferring the administration of the AAC benefit currently administered by the Division to the Division’s sub-contracted DDD Health Plans (Managed Care Organizations), Mercy Care, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan on January 1, 2021.

The Division is working to consider the evidence, recommendations, and preferences identified from stakeholder input for this benefit, for the development of DDD’s oversight responsibilities and the Health Plans’ administration of this benefit to ensure the provision of medically necessary, cost-effective, and timely delivery of services and equipment.

DDD continues to be committed to ensuring that our members have access to the appropriate and medically necessary services required to achieve their potential, including AAC. It remains a core initiative that the AAC benefit be provided as expeditiously as possible to meet our member’s needs. We are committed to this initiative as the standard.

Sincerely,

Michael Wisehart
Director

