

Speech Generating Devices

Policy Number: MP.038.09
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[➔ Instructions for Use](#)

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Related Commercial/Individual Exchange Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable Medical Equipment, Orthotics, Medical Supplies, and Repairs/Replacements • Habilitation and Rehabilitation Therapy (Occupational, Physical, and Speech)

Application

UnitedHealthcare Commercial

This Medical Policy applies to all UnitedHealthcare Commercial benefit plans.

UnitedHealthcare Individual Exchange

This Medical Policy applies to Individual Exchange benefit plans in all states except for Colorado.

Coverage Rationale

[➔ See Benefit Considerations](#)

For medical necessity clinical coverage criteria, refer to the InterQual® CP: Durable Medical Equipment, Speech Generating Devices (SGD).

Click [here](#) to view the InterQual® criteria.

Documentation Requirements

Benefit coverage for health services is determined by the member specific benefit plan document and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The documentation requirements outlined below are used to assess whether the member meets the clinical criteria for coverage but do not guarantee coverage of the service requested.

HCPCS Codes*	Required Clinical Information
Speech Generating Devices	
E2502	Medical notes documenting the following, when applicable:
E2504	
E2506	

HCPCS Codes*	Required Clinical Information
Speech Generating Devices	
E2508 E2510 E2511 E2512 E2599	<p>including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Description of communication impairment (type, severity, language skills, cognition, anticipated course) ○ Description of cognitive and physical abilities as they relate to the use of the device ○ Rationale for selection of specific device and accessories ● Prior treatments tried, failed, or contraindicated; include the dates and reason for discontinuation ● Treating practitioner treatment plan and training schedule ● Documentation of face-to-face encounter, within six months prior to the prescription (written order), from the treating practitioner including date, when applicable ● Current prescription (written order) from treating physician consistent with and based upon the recommendation of a qualified speech and language pathologist, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initial or replacement ○ Rental or purchase ○ Specific HCPCS code(s) for item and each accessory requested ○ Equipment make, model, and price quotation ● If replacement, current device used, date of initial acquisition, status of warranty, and reason for replacement

*For code descriptions, refer to the [Applicable Codes](#) section.

Definitions

The following definitions may not apply to all plans. Refer to the member specific benefit plan document for applicable definitions.

Injury: Damage to the body, including all related conditions and symptoms.

Sickness: Physical illness, disease or Pregnancy. The term Sickness as used in this *Certificate* includes Mental Illness or substance-related and addictive disorders, regardless of the cause or origin of the Mental Illness or substance-related and addictive disorder.

Applicable Codes

The following list(s) of procedure and/or diagnosis codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. Listing of a code in this policy does not imply that the service described by the code is a covered or non-covered health service. Benefit coverage for health services is determined by the member specific benefit plan document and applicable laws that may require coverage for a specific service. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment. Other Policies and Guidelines may apply.

HCPCS Code	Description
E2500	Speech generating device, digitized speech, using prerecorded messages, less than or equal to eight minutes recording time
E2502	Speech generating device, digitized speech, using prerecorded messages, greater than eight minutes but less than or equal to 20 minutes recording time
E2504	Speech generating device, digitized speech, using prerecorded messages, greater than 20 minutes but less than or equal to 40 minutes recording time
E2506	Speech generating device, digitized speech, using prerecorded messages, greater than 40 minutes recording time
E2508	Speech generating device, synthesized speech, requiring message formulation by spelling and access by physical contact with the device

HCPCS Code	Description
E2510	Speech generating device, synthesized speech, permitting multiple methods of message formulation and multiple methods of device access
E2511	Speech generating software program, for personal computer or personal digital assistant
E2512	Accessory for speech generating device, mounting system
E2599	Accessory for speech generating device, not otherwise classified

Benefit Considerations

The following benefit considerations may not apply to all plans. Refer to the member specific benefit plan document for applicable benefit considerations.

Speech Generating Devices

Speech generating devices are covered as DME when:

- The device(s) are not explicitly excluded from coverage under the member specific benefit plan; and
- The treating physician determines that the member has either a severe speech impairment (impediment) or lack of speech resulting from a [Sickness](#) or [Injury](#); and
- The medical condition warrants the use of a device

The physician attestation must be consistent with and based upon the recommendation of a qualified speech and language pathologist. The speech and language pathology evaluation must reach all of the following conclusions:

- Other forms of treatment have been attempted or considered and ruled out. Examples of a speech generating device include but are not limited to:
 - Freedom
 - Prentke Romich (or PRC)
 - Say-it!™
 - Tobii Dynavox
- The member's medical condition is one resulting in a severe expressive speech impairment (impediment) or lack of speech directly related to [Sickness](#) or [Injury](#);
- The member's speaking needs cannot be met using natural communication methods

Repair, Replacement, and Upgrade

Refer to the Medical Policy titled [Durable Medical Equipment, Orthotics, Medical Supplies and Repairs/Replacements](#).

Coverage Limitations and Exclusions

- Routine periodic maintenance (e.g., testing, cleaning, regulating and checking of equipment) for which the owner or vendor is generally responsible

Note: Most benefit plans require a 3-month rental period before a purchase can be made.

References

UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company Generic Certificate of Coverage 2018.

Policy History/Revision Information

Date	Summary of Changes
10/01/2023	<p data-bbox="337 216 488 247">Application</p> <p data-bbox="337 254 678 285"><i>Individual Exchange Plans</i></p> <ul data-bbox="337 291 1459 352" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="337 291 1459 352">• Removed language indicating this Medical Policy does not apply to Individual Exchange benefit plans in the states of Massachusetts, Nevada, and New York <p data-bbox="337 359 643 390">Supporting Information</p> <ul data-bbox="337 396 878 428" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="337 396 878 428">• Archived previous policy version MP.038.08

Instructions for Use

This Medical Policy provides assistance in interpreting UnitedHealthcare standard benefit plans. When deciding coverage, the member specific benefit plan document must be referenced as the terms of the member specific benefit plan may differ from the standard plan. In the event of a conflict, the member specific benefit plan document governs. Before using this policy, please check the member specific benefit plan document and any applicable federal or state mandates. UnitedHealthcare reserves the right to modify its Policies and Guidelines as necessary. This Medical Policy is provided for informational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice.

This Medical Policy may also be applied to Medicare Advantage plans in certain instances. In the absence of a Medicare National Coverage Determination (NCD), Local Coverage Determination (LCD), or other Medicare coverage guidance, CMS allows a Medicare Advantage Organization (MAO) to create its own coverage determinations, using objective evidence-based rationale relying on authoritative evidence ([Medicare IOM Pub. No. 100-16, Ch. 4, §90.5](#)).

UnitedHealthcare may also use tools developed by third parties, such as the InterQual® Guidelines, to assist us in administering health benefits. UnitedHealthcare Medical Policies are intended to be used in connection with the independent professional medical judgment of a qualified health care provider and do not constitute the practice of medicine or medical advice.