



# Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Provider Training

# The Administration of the Augmentative & Alternative Communication Services Benefit

- Augmentative and Alternative Communications (AAC) also known as speech generating devices are systems that are used to establish functional communication when natural speech methods are insufficient to achieve daily communication goals and meet communication needs.
- AAC devices are an AHCCCS covered benefit for member's enrolled in a DDD health plan, Mercy Care and United Healthcare.
- Historically, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) manages all requests for AAC services and AAC devices.

# Augmentative & Alternative Communication Services Benefit

- Starting January 1, 2021, Mercy Care will be responsible for AAC services and AAC device requests.
- All requests for services and devices that are initiated ***before*** January 1, 2021 will be administered directly by DDD.
- All requests for services and devices that are initiated ***on and after*** January 1, 2021 will be administered directly by Mercy Care or the enrolled Health Plan.

# Transition timing – Roles and Responsibilities

Any requests received on or before 12/31/2020



Stay with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). Any questions or concerns should be directed to the DDD Aug Comm team.

Any requests received on or after 1/1/2021



Go to the health plan. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the health plan's member services department or DD liaisons.

# AAC Assessment Referral Process

How does the process work?

# AAC System Assessment and Trial process

- Member's physician writes a prescription/referral for an assessment from an in-network, licensed and registered speech-language pathologist (SLP). **Valid for 12 months.**
- Mercy Care will accept assessments completed by a school SLP. The School can work with MedOne on getting a device. The member still needs to get a prescription from the doctor for the device.
- Member contacts their DDD Support Coordinator, Mercy Care or DD Liaison for an in network, licensed and registered speech language pathologist (SLP) .

# In-network, licensed and registered speech language pathologist (SLP) point of contact

**Northern Arizona University -  
Institute for Human Development**  
Room 101 Bld 27A  
Flagstaff, AZ 856011  
828-523-5590  
Counties Served: Statewide

**Therapy one**  
108 W University Drive  
Mesa, AZ 85201  
480-668-1917  
Counties Served: Statewide

**Advanced Therapy Solutions**  
690 E Warner Rd #105  
Gilbert, AZ 85296  
480-820-6366  
Counties Served: Maricopa, Pinal, Gila,  
Yavapai, Cochise, Pima and Yuma

**District Medical Group CRS**  
3141 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Suite 100  
Phoenix, AZ 85013  
602-470-5532  
Counties Served: Maricopa

**Coming soon:  
Children's Clinic (Tucson)**

# In network Preferred Provider for AAC Management

To assist with the management of the AAC device systems Mercy Care has chosen MedOne as the preferred vendor for these devices.

**MedOne**

**2330 W. University Dr. Ste. 20**

**Tempe AZ 85281**

**Phone: 480-835-9100**

**Fax: 480-835-9104**

# AAC System Assessment and Trial process

- SLP receives request and coordinates assessment
  - SLP in conjunction with other health professionals such as a Physical Therapist (PT) and/or Occupational Therapist (OT) will conduct the assessment
  - Up to three devices can be reviewed/trial for up to 30 days
- When the formal assessment is completed, SLP will send all documents including Prior Authorization to Mercy Care for review

# AAC – Mercy Care Prior Authorization Process

- AAC Devices and accessories will need Prior Authorization
- Check ProPAT to see what items require Prior Authorization
- Please complete the prior authorization request form located on the Mercy Care website and fax to 800-217-9345.
- Documents needed:
  - Member's medical records
  - Practitioner's office records
  - Therapy service records
  - Other records from healthcare professionals
  - Test reports relevant to the request should be submitted or may be requested to support/demonstrate that the coverage criteria for an AAC device

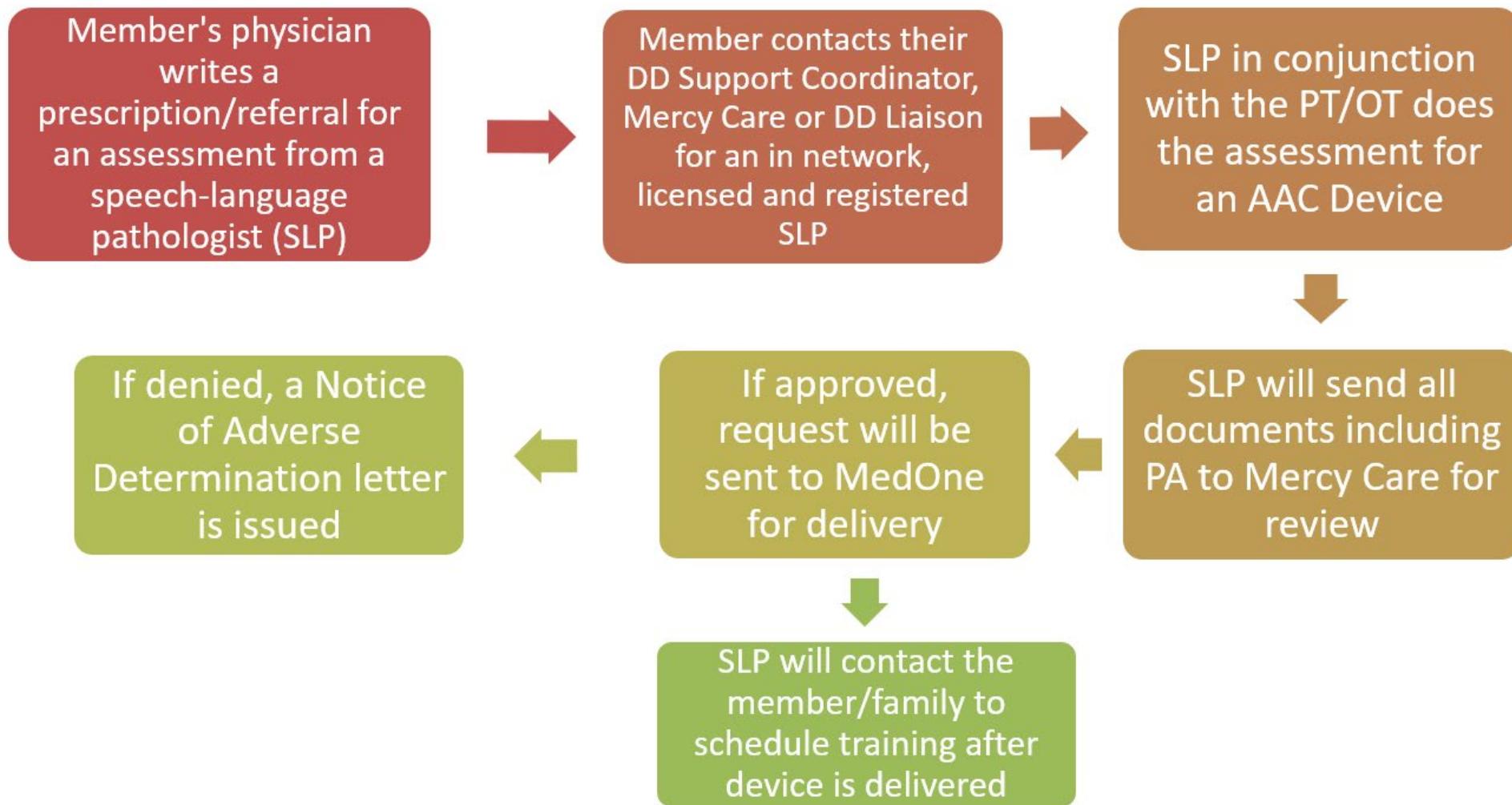
# AAC – Mercy Care Prior Authorization Process Cont'd

- Mercy Care has 14 days to review the request and may take an additional 14 days if they need additional information.
- If more time is needed, the member will receive a letter called Notice of Extension (NOE).
  - This will allow an additional 14 days for Mercy Care to review additional documents.
- Total time should not exceed 28 days.
- DDD Support Coordinator (SC) or Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) that need further assistance about authorizations, please contact our PA department at 800-624-3879.

# AAC – Mercy Care Prior Authorization Process

- If Mercy Care approves:
  - Mercy Care faxes out approval to MedOne, the SLP and the DDD Support Coordinator
  - DDD Support Coordinator notifies the member of the approval
  - MedOne will deliver to the member's home
  - SLP will coordinate the training hours with the member/family member, includes ongoing training if need be
  - No separate prior authorization required for training hours
- If Mercy Care denies, Notice of Adverse Determination letter is issued with instructions about the appeal process

# AAC Workflow

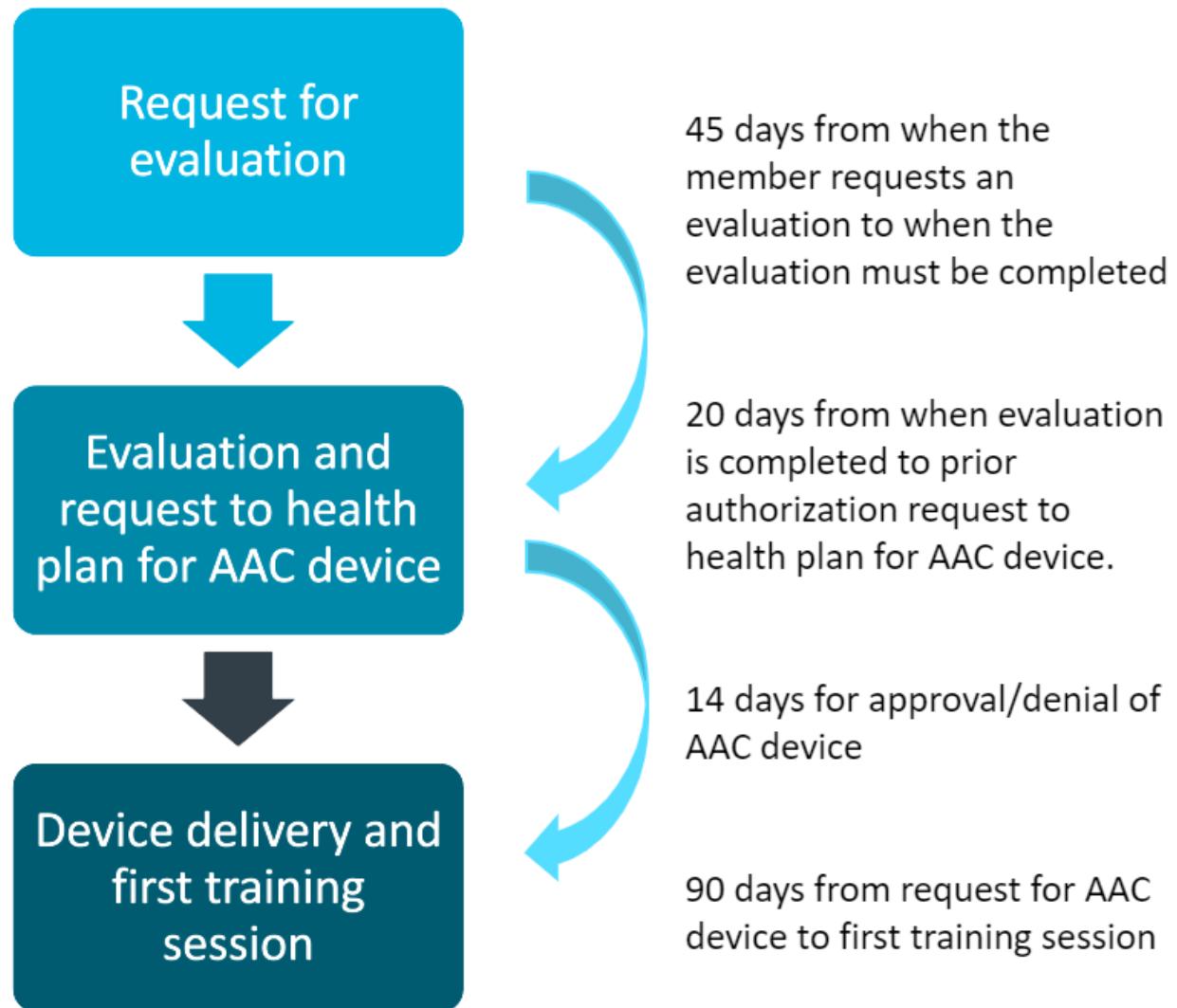


# AAC - Secondary Insurance Prior Authorization Process

## Members with other primary insurance

- Mercy Care is always the payer of last resort
- If the primary insurance requires authorization you will want to follow their authorization requirements
- If the primary insurance does not cover for these services or devices, then you will need to follow the Mercy Care authorization requirements and indicate this on the PA request for the ACC device system
- Please submit an EOB with your claim to Mercy Care

# Timeframe for AAC Device



# What if a School completed the assessment?

- Mercy Care will accept assessments completed by schools.
- No need to have a separate assessment.
- The School can work with MedOne on getting a device.
- The member will need to get a prescription from the doctor for the device.
- Training can also be completed by the member schools SLP.

# Appeal and an Expedited Appeal

- If member/caregiver does not agree with Mercy Care's PA decision, he/she can file an appeal
- Appeals must be filed within 10 calendar days from the date of the Notice of Adverse Benefits Determination letter
- Mercy Care has 30 calendar days to issue a resolution
- Expedited appeal decisions are issued by Mercy Care within 72 hours from the date the expedited appeal request is received

# Appeals and an Expedited Appeals

- To file an appeal, member/caregiver must mail, call or fax the request using the following:
  - **Mail:**
    - Mercy Care  
Appeals Department  
4755 S. 44th Place  
Phoenix, AZ 85040
  - **Phone: 602-453-6098 or 1-800-624-3879**
  - **Fax: 602-230-4503**

# How can members/caregivers file a Grievance?

- The fastest way to report a grievance is to call Member Services at **602-263-3000** or toll-free **1-800-624-3879** (TTY/TDD **711**).

# AAC device training

- Once the device has been received, the SLP will schedule time for the member and family to set up the device and train on the device, and mount the device, if appropriate.
- It can take up to 90 days from the request of the AAC device to when the 1<sup>st</sup> training is conducted.
- The family will be advised to outreach to the provider for training as soon as the device is delivered.

# Repairs for AAC System

- **All repairs require prior authorization.**
- Repairs may be covered if the device is the current medically necessary device.
- All repairs should go to our DME vendor, MedOne at **480-835-9100**.

Mercy Care will cover one device repair every 12 months per member due to normal wear and tear unless device is under warranty.

# Reasons for Replacement of an AAC System

- When loss or irreparable damage has occurred.
- It has been 3 years since the initial prescription, and the AAC system is no longer functional.
- There is a change in the member's condition that affects the use of the current AAC system.
- The current AAC system is not meeting the member's needs despite adequate training.
- There is documentation, from the manufacturer, that the SGD can no longer be repaired.

# Reasons for Replacement of an AAC System Cont'd

- If a replacement is needed, the member must reach out to their physician to obtain a prescription/referral. If the member needs assistance they can reach out to the DDD Support Coordinator.
- PA is needed for replacement devices.

## If device is sent for repairs or replacement, are there loaner devices available?

- There may be loaners available through MedOne. Please contact MedONE for more questions. 480-835-9100

# Thank you

