



Updated Hearing Aids and Devices Policy – UnitedHealthcare Community Plan in New Jersey

To help support quality patient care, we regularly evaluate our medical policies, clinical programs and health benefits. Based on a recent review, we've updated our policy on hearing aids and devices, including wearable bone-anchored and semi-implantable devices, for UnitedHealthcare Community Plan members in New Jersey, effective **January 1, 2021**.

What's New

For individuals ages 21 or older requiring air conduction devices, all of the following are required:

- An otologic examination and a hearing aid examination performed prior to prescribing a hearing aid
- Determination from the treating physician or advanced practice nurse performing the medical examination that an audiological examination is medically necessary
- Completion of audiological exam by the audiologist or otologist prior to prescribing a hearing aid

Air conduction hearing aid devices are considered proven and medically necessary for hearing impairment correction when the following criteria are met.

- Monaural hearing aid candidates must meet all of the following conditions related to treatment of a hearing loss:
 - 45 dB or worse hearing loss at 2000 Hz in the better ear
 - 40 dB or worse average hearing loss at 500, 1000, 2000 and 3000 Hz in the better ear
 - Asymmetrical hearing loss, in which there is:
 - Either 40 dB or worse hearing loss at 2000 Hz in the better ear, or a 35 dB or worse average hearing loss at 500, 1000, 2000 and 3000 Hz in the better ear
 - 60 dB or worse average hearing loss at 500, 1000, 2000 and 3000 Hz in the poorer ear
- Binaural hearing aid candidates and candidates with unilateral hearing loss who request coverage of a hearing aid device for their poorer ear shall have hearing loss that meets one of the following conditions.
 - 35 dB or worse hearing loss at 2000 Hz in the ear to be aided
 - 30 dB or worse average hearing loss at 500, 1000, 2000 and 3000 Hz in the ear to be aided

Note: If more than one type of hearing aid can meet the individual's functional needs, benefits are available only for the hearing aid that meets the minimum specifications for the individual's needs.

Repair/Replacement

The original hearing aid shall be replaced by a provider only under the following conditions:

- The aid is lost or stolen or broken. There is a reasonable expectation that a replacement aid is not likely to be lost, stolen or broken.
- Replacement of an aid within one year from date of original dispensing, if not covered by the manufacturer's warranty
- The aid is malfunctioning, and the cost of repairing the aid is 50 percent or more of its replacement cost to the Medicaid program.
- The hearing loss for which the original aid was prescribed has changed such that the original aid no longer is appropriate, and the examinations prescribed in N.J.A.C. 10:64-2.1(b) have determined that a new aid should be prescribed.
- Routine wear on the equipment renders it non-functional, and the individual still requires the equipment.

Vendors/manufacturers are responsible for repairs, replacements and maintenance for purchased equipment covered by warranty.

Repair or replacement of air conduction hearing aids is not covered:

- In situations where a replacement aid is repeatedly provided, and these services do not reflect the normal use of an aid
- Malicious damage, neglect or abuse

Documentation Requirements

Documentation of services for air conduction hearing aids performed by the hearing aid provider shall include, but may not be limited to:

- The date of service
- The name of beneficiary
- The reason for visit
- Evaluation findings
- The service(s) provided
- Follow-up procedures or visits, if required
- The signature of the dispensing provider rendering the service(s) and written records are required for the following:
 - Audiological examination results
 - Hearing aid examination results and documentation supporting the functional need for the hearing aid prescribed
 - Otologic examination results

The provider shall maintain copies of all records, including, but not limited to:

- Otologic reports

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- Documentation to support the need for replacement aids
- Repair invoices

Additional Information

You can find more information about the new hearing aids policy at

[UHCprovider.com/NJcommunityplan](https://uhcprovider.com/NJcommunityplan) > Current Policies and Clinical Guidelines >

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan Medical & Drug Policies and Coverage Determination Guidelines
> View Current Policies > Hearing Aids and Devices Including Wearable, Bone-Anchored and Semi-Implantable for New Jersey Policy.

We're Here to Help

If you have questions, please call **888-362-3368**, Monday – Friday, from 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. Eastern Time. You can also contact your Provider Advocate. Thank you.

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