

Medicaid... Steps to Follow to Request Assistive Technology

If you are on Medicaid and you need assistive technology, follow these steps:

1. **Selection:** Figure out what you want the assistive technology to do for you and what particular piece of equipment you need to do it. If your needs are complicated, it is likely that you will want to talk with both medical and technical people to help you select which device will best meet those needs. Your choice of assistive technology should help you do what you need it to do.
2. **Documentation of Medical Necessity:** Ask your doctor and other appropriate health professionals to explain in writing why the equipment you want is medically necessary for you. Other professionals who may be helpful in deciding what is best for you include occupational, physical, or speech therapists. You will need careful documentation from your doctor, and/or other health professionals, in order to justify to Medicaid that the device you request is one Medicaid should pay for.
3. **Purchase Through a Medicaid-Approved Provider:** After you know what equipment you need you will have to locate a vendor who will sell (or sometimes rent) the device to you. In order for Medicaid to pay the vendor for the device the supplier has to be enrolled as a Rhode Island Medicaid Provider. If there is no Rhode Island approved vendor who can sell you the equipment you need, a non-enrolled vendor may be willing to become an approved provider.

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➤ **What Will A Vendor/Provider Do?**

Before selling you a device many vendors provide technical assistance to help you make the decision about what specific piece of equipment will work best for you. For example, a wheelchair vendor may help you choose which chair and which seating system will best fit your size, comfort and particular functional needs.

It is usually the enrolled vendor who compiles the paperwork Medicaid requires including the Certificate of Medical Necessity (CMN) form which the doctor signs. For some devices, particularly customized devices, the vendor will complete and send to Medicaid the Rhode Island Medical Assistance Prior Authorization Request Form.

➤ **What Documents Does A Vendor Need To Submit?**

Your request to Medicaid, for payment for assistive technology, is more likely to be successful the first time it is submitted if the vendor attaches documentation, which clearly identifies the device and supports the reasons why it is medically necessary for you.

➤ **What If You Can't Find A Provider?**

Sometimes a particular supplier is reluctant to request payment from Medicaid because he believes Medicaid will not pay for the item. If one vendor cannot or will not respond to your request, there is no reason you cannot try a different vendor. (As a last resort you may try to process your request without an approved vendor. To do this you are going to need considerable assistance since the system is designed to handle requests only through approved vendors.)

4. What Can You Do If Your Request Is Denied? If your request is denied you have the right to appeal that denial. For more information about appealing denials and other Medicaid issues, call Rhode Island Disability Law Center at 401.831.3150 (V) or 401.831.5335 (TTY).

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