2022/02

Key Messages

Message One

Providers must comply with all program requirements, including the Services Schedule.

Message Two

Providers are required to comply with mandatory State and Territory Health Orders.

For further information

Visit our website at www.hearingservices.gov.auor

email us at

hearing@health.gov.au

Phone: 1800 500 726

Australian Government
Department of Health

Australian Government
Hearing Services Program

Contracted Service Provider Notice

Service Requirements in 2022

(CSPN – 2022/02)

The transition period following the changes to the Hearing Services Program (program) and COVID-19 special arrangements has ended. From 1 January 2022, providers are required to comply with all program requirements in line with The Schedule of Service Items and Fees 2021-22 (Services Schedule).

Claiming patterns monitored over 2020 and 2021 indicated a significant increase in fittings, maintenance, and replacement claims, in line with the relaxation of the requirement for client signatures and statutory declarations. This increase in claiming does not represent a cost-effective use of program funds, is not fiscally sustainable or aligned with optimal outcomes for clients.

The program has also received complaints from clients regarding automatic renewal of maintenance, including when clients were no longer using devices. Having the signed documents protects providers in cases of complaints and ensures clients are aware of their service entitlements.

Telehealth

Telehealth services can continue for initial fittings and refittings (including follow-ups), client reviews, replacements, spare aids and rehabilitation services where technology allows, and clinicians determine that the service outcomes are not compromised. The Services Schedule outlines which services can be delivered using telehealth and the requirements for each service.

Client Signatures

Forms requiring client signature, including client consent, Maintenance Agreements and device quotes must be signed and dated by the client or their Power of Attorney. Any documents which require signing can be sent to the client and returned to the provider by email, post or fax. Documents can also be signed electronically; this includes eSignatures and digital signatures.

Except Maintenance Agreements for initial fittings, all Maintenance Agreements can be sent to clients up to 45 days prior to the commencement date of the Agreement. If an initial fitting occurs by telehealth, the Maintenance Agreement can be sent to the client and returned prior to completing the follow-up and claiming for the service.

Correctly completed and signed Statutory Declarations are required for lost devices. If the client is unable to complete the Statutory Declaration, it can be completed by the client's representative. There are a broad range of people authorised to witness Statutory Declarations.

Any documents returned electronically, especially where scanned and emailed or sent by fax, must be checked for legibility. Only documents with all parts fully legible must be accepted.

Ambient Noise and Equipment Calibration

As per the 2021 Provider Self-Assessment (SAT), if your certification has expired or will expire in the coming months and you are unable to get qualified personnel to complete the testing please notify the program by emailing hearing@health.gov.au. If you have already done this via the SAT or more recently, you are not required to do this again. You are still required to manage ambient noise within requirements where assessments are undertaken.

Relocations

While there are temporary closures of some sites, there may be a temporary increase in client relocations. Providers are required to obtain consent from relocating clients before processing the relocation. Verbal consent is acceptable, however the client’s signed and dated written consent to relocate must still be obtained at the first physical appointment or can be sent by email or post.

Home Visits

Providers can charge clients for home visits as home visits are not an 'available' service covered by the program.

To ensure compliance with program requirements, the program will monitor claiming patterns and all claims will be subject to compliance activities. All related records must be held on the client record.

25 January 2022