

**CHECKLIST FOR GETTING AN AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION DEVICE
(SPEECH GENERATING DEVICE) IN A NURSING FACILITY**
Prepared by the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania

1. Get a doctor's written order or prescription for an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) evaluation by a licensed speech language pathologist.

The doctor can be the nursing facility doctor or another doctor.

Ask the social worker and nurse for help, or contact the doctor directly.

2. Get an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) evaluation by a licensed speech language pathologist for the individual.

The speech language pathologist should participate in Medical Assistance (Medicaid).

Call the Office of Long Term Living Helpline (telephone number below) for help finding a licensed speech language pathologist qualified in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Some nursing facilities bring an outside evaluator into the nursing facility. Be sure that the evaluator is a licensed speech language pathologist and qualified in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Ask the social worker to schedule the evaluation and, if necessary, arrange transportation. Ask the nurse or doctor for help if needed.

3. Get a copy of the evaluation report for the augmentative communication device.

Be sure to have the individual sign an authorization to release information form. Make a written request for a copy of the report if needed.

4. Advocate with the social worker, nurse, and doctor that the doctor immediately write an order or prescription for the augmentative communication device recommended by the evaluator.

Call the Office of Long Term Living or Department of Health (telephone numbers below) for help.

5. Advocate that the nursing facility immediately work with a device vendor to order the recommended augmentative communication device.

6. Advocate for the correct funding source for the augmentative communication device.

The nursing facility must pay for all necessary equipment for the individual out of its Medical Assistance (Medicaid) per diem rate.

However, an augmentative communication device can be funded by an Exceptional Durable Medical Equipment (DME) grant from Medical Assistance (Medicaid). The nursing facility must apply for this grant from the state.

If the individual has a discharge date, fee-for-service Medical Assistance (Medicaid) can be billed directly for the augmentative communication device.

The nursing facility is responsible to make sure that the individual promptly gets the new augmentative communication device, regardless of the funding source.

7. Advocate that the individual own and take the augmentative communication device with him or her when he or she moves to the community.

If the Exceptional DME grant or fee-for-service Medical Assistance (Medicaid) pays for the augmentative communication device, the individual owns the device.

Even if the nursing facility pays for the augmentative communication device, the device should go with the individual upon discharge as part of the nursing facility's obligation to provide a safe and orderly discharge.

Advocate so that the new augmentative communication device is part of the individual's discharge plan. The individual can invite you as his or her advocate to attend the discharge planning meeting.

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP

Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania
800-692-7443 (Voice), 877-375-7139 (TDD)
intake@drnpa.org (Email), <http://www.drnpa.org/> (Website)

Your Local Center for Independent Living
Pennsylvania Council of Independent Living, 717-920-0530 (Voice)
http://www.pcil.net/network_of_centers.htm (Website)

Pennsylvania Department of Health Nursing Facility Complaint Hotline
800-254-5164 (Voice), www.health.state.pa.us/ (Website)

Pennsylvania Office of Long Term Living Helpline
866-286-3636 (Voice), <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/About/OLTL/> (Website)

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PLEASE NOTE: For information in alternative formats or a language other than English, contact DRN at 800-692-7443 Ext. 400, TDD: 877-375-7139, or drnpa-hbg@drnpa.org.