# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual C-700: Medical Services and Equipment

Revised January 15, 2020

## C-703: Policies for Services, Procedures, and Programs with Special Requirements

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### C-703-33: Fractures

VR does not provide medical care to treat a fracture for an individual who requires immediate medical or emergency services. VR services cannot be used to treat fractures that have not healed because unhealed fractures are not considered stable per 34 CFR 361.5(39)(i).

VR services may be considered only for eligible customers with fractures that have healed but have healed improperly (malunion or nonunion) and when these services are necessary to help the customer to obtain or maintain competitive, integrated employment. State medical director review is required to confirm the type and stability of the fracture prior to eligibility, as outlined in B-300: Determining Eligibility are met.

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## C-704: Durable Medical Equipment

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### C-704-10: Hearing Aids

Hearing aids may be authorized when they are expected to improve the customer's ability to participate in employment and/or training that is required for a specific employment outcome. The VR counselor documents the expected outcomes in the case file as part of the assessing and planning process.

For customers ages 18 and younger, TWC must use comparable benefits when possible when planning services related to hearing aids, cochlear implants, and BAHA. To this extent, TWC may pay for any deductible, co-payments, and/or coinsurance for the provision of these goods and services if the total cost (insurance paid amount plus VR funds paid toward cost) does not exceed allowable VR contract rates. For more information on comparable benefits for customers with insurance, please refer to comparable benefits below.

The VR counselor develops the IPE to purchase hearing aids after receiving:

* an audiological assessment on the [VR3105C, Hearing Evaluation Report Audiometric Examination](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), completed by a licensed audiologist or hearing-aid specialist;
* the completed hearing evaluation form with hearing aid recommendation recorded on the [VR3105D, Hearing Evaluation Report Hearing Aid Recommendations](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html); and
* the medical clearance from an otologist or otolaryngologist on the [VR3105B, Hearing Evaluation Report Otological Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html).

When the VR counselor receives a recommendation for a complete-in-canal (CIC) hearing aid, he or she ensures that the audiologist sufficiently justifies the added benefits of a CIC aid when compared to an alternative style with the same capabilities.

It is recommended that the VR counselor consult with a Texas Health and Human Services Commission Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services [deaf and hard of hearing technology specialist (HLRS)](https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/deaf-hard-hearing#resource-specialist) for consideration of additional technology before purchasing the hearing aids.

For information on purchasing hearing aids, see [D-209-3: Contracted Goods and Services](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d209-3) and [D-210: Exceptions to Contracted Fees and MAPS Fees](https://twc.texas.gov/vr-services-manual/vrsm-d-200#d210).

When an audiologist or hearing-instrument specialist provides a vocational justification that warrants an aid without a manual telecoil, it is recommended that the VR counselor consult with a local deaf and hard of hearing technology specialist before purchasing the aid. The VR counselor may request a workplace or environmental assessment completed by the deaf and hard of hearing technology specialist to identify additional technology needs.

#### Hearing Aid Recommendations

The selected provider must complete the [VR3105D, Hearing Evaluation Report Hearing Aid Recommendations](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html) indicating the:

* brand name and model number (not serial number);
* type of hearing aid, such as:
  + behind-the-ear;
  + in-the-ear;
  + in-the-canal;
  + complete-in-canal; or
  + bilateral contralateral routing of signal;
* color selection;
* receiver information;
* earmold information;
* quantity of hearing aids;
* cost of hearing aids; and
* any required justifications.

#### Service Charge to the Hearing Aid Dispenser

The service charge is the dispenser's usual and customary charge, not to exceed MAPS, for:

* initial fitting, including activation of a telecoil;
* up to four follow-up visits for adjustments, including:
  + post fitting evaluation; and
  + report of hearing aid performance and customer level of satisfaction; and
* instructions in the care and use of the instrument.

#### MAPS Codes for Hearing Aid Service Charges

00075 - Unspecified service charge. Rate to be determined by PRS/CO Programs

00076 - Service Charge for Hearing Aid $0 - $1000 Manufacturer’s Lowest List Price

00077 - Service Charge for Hearing Aid $1001-$1500 Manufacturer’s Lowest List Price

00078 - Service Charge for Hearing Aid $1500+ Manufacturer’s Lowest List Price

#### The hearing aid dispenser must schedule an appointment with the customer to return for Post-Fitting no later than 14 days after the date the customer received the hearing aids. If the customer does not attend an appointment with the dispenser within 14 days of receiving the hearing aids, the dispenser must contact the VR staff to notify them the customer has not returned for the post-fitting appointment. If the customer does not keep the post fitting appointment, VR staff contacts the customer before the 30-day trial period ends to verify the customer has received and is satisfied with the hearing aids. When the hearing aids are returned within the 30-day trial period, the original service charge will cover any services for the replacement hearing aids.Earmolds and Canal Impressions

Earmolds and canal impressions may be:

* required for hearing aid purchases;
* purchased from the contracted hearing aid manufacturer, audiologist or hearing aid dispenser;
* paid for separately (not to exceed MAPS); and
* purchased for diagnostic purposes.

Custom-made ear plugs, which look like earmolds and are intended for sound protection, may be purchased to preserve the customer's residual hearing while performing work duties.

#### Binaural

Binaural aids may be purchased:

* when recommended by the audiologist or hearing aid service provider; and
* when a documented vocational benefit exists.

#### Hearing Accessories

An audiologist or hearing aid dispenser may recommend certain accessories and devices that work with the hearing aids to enhance the customer's ability to hear and understand conversational speech and environmental sounds. An example of such devices is one that streams sounds from the telephone, television, and music player, as well as a compatible microphone, directly to the hearing aids. These may be purchased when the VRC determines any of the recommended accessories are vocationally relevant. These accessories must be vocationally necessary and not solely used for personal purposes.

Another accessory that may be purchased is a hearing aid drying kit, which draws moisture from the hearing aids to prolong their life span. In the case of a drying kit, the audiologist or dispenser is not required to recommend the kit for VR staff to purchase this accessory.

MAPS Codes for Contracted Hearing Aids, Earmolds, and Accessories

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| Beltone | BELTO |
| Oticon | OTICO |
| Phonak | PHONA |
| GN Resound | GNRES |
| Siemens/Signia | SIEME |
| Sonic Innovations | SONIC |
| Starkey | STARK |
| Unitron | UNITR |
| Widex | WIDEX |

#### Repair

Payment for repair of a hearing aid, including labor, plus shipping and handling charges, must not exceed the cost of a new hearing aid.

#### Frequency Modulation System

The VR counselor may purchase a frequency modulation (FM) system directly from a manufacturer or an audiologist. However, the VR counselor may not pay a service fee, including any fitting and dispensing fees, when he or she purchases an FM system through an audiologist.

When additional training is needed for an FM system, the VR counselor contacts the deaf and hard of hearing technology specialist to request training for the customer on the use of the device and to perform troubleshooting of any issues with the device. Services provided by the deaf and hard of hearing technology specialist are free and may be used when available. If the necessary training is not available from the deaf and hard of hearing technology specialist, the VR counselor may negotiate payment with the provider for training the customer on the use of the device and for solving problems that arise with the device.

#### Comparable Benefits

VR is the payor of last resort. Hearing aids, accessories, and medical and audiological services may be covered by insurance. When applying health insurance benefits, verity the cost of the hearing aid that the insurance company is using to determine the amount insurance is paying as this will be different that the TWC contracted price and will affect the total of the customer’s out of pocket requirement. Refer to VRSM D-203-3 for more information on Comparable Benefits, including Insurance as a Comparable Benefit. Any time TWC does not pay the contracted amount to a hearing aid manufacturer. a contract exception will be required

#### Customer Participation in Cost of Services

Customers may be required to participate in the cost of services. Refer to VRSM D-203-4: Customer Participation in the Cost of Services for more information in applying BLR to contracted hearing aid and accessories.

#### Payment for Hearing Aids Service Charges to the Dispenser

Upon receipt of a completed and signed [VR3105E, Hearing Aid Fitting and Post-Fitting Report](https://twc.texas.gov/forms/index.html), in the Initial Fitting section of the form, payment is authorized for the service charge.

#### Payment for Hearing Aids to the Manufacturer

VR pays the hearing aid manufacturer for the hearing aids. The service authorization is forwarded to the dispenser so that it can be submitted to the manufacturer along with the hearing aid order. The service authorization (SA) must include the dispenser’s name and address in the SA delivery instructions. The receive date for the hearing aids is the date the customer signs the “Customer Acknowledgment Initial Fitting” section of the VR3105E indicating they have received the hearing aids.