

## VALLEY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL CENTER SERVICE STANDARD

### DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS/AUGMENTED COMMUNICATION DEVICES

**PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY:** Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC) is committed to providing Durable Medical Equipment, Environmental Modifications and Augmented Communication Devices to consumers who will benefit from these services as documented by the ID/Planning Team process. It is our commitment to insure the clinical appropriateness of each assessment before provision of equipment or environmental modifications is provided. To accomplish this, criteria have been established for the three above categories.

In keeping with state mandates, we first utilize the consumer's Medi-Cal, Medicare or private insurance to pay for these services. VMRC is the payer of last resort.

Early Start consumers whose families have private insurance are treated differently in terms of paying for these services. If the IFSP team has identified an early intervention service that is needed on the IFSP, and this service is paid for by the consumer's private insurance, the parent or guardian has to be given a choice to use the private insurance or request that it be funded by the Regional Center. This is in keeping with the law stating that early intervention services are free, as they are a part of the child's educational plan.

**I. ELIGIBILITY:** To be eligible for purchase of the above services by VMRC, the following criteria must be met:

1. Need for service is identified in the IPP or IFSP.
2. Services are not available through a generic resource (i.e., CCS).
3. Service is not the legal responsibility of another agency (i.e., Department of Rehabilitation, Public Schools).
4. A clinical assessment by a health care practitioner of the appropriate discipline (OT, SP, PT) has to be completed by a VMRC clinical specialist, who will determine the accuracy of the recommendations. If there is a disagreement by any member of the ID/Planning Team, a second opinion can be obtained.
5. Equipment vendors must provide a denial of payment from the consumer's Medi-Cal, Medicare or private insurance before VMRC will make payment.
6. For environmental modification, an estimate of cost must be obtained from a licensed building contractor or other appropriate service provider. VMRC must approve the choice of service provider. If there is a disagreement by any member of the ID/Planning Team, a second opinion can be obtained.
7. For VMRC to pay for a permanent modification to a consumer's residence the consumer and/or family must own the residence. If a consumer lives in a rental, a temporary modification may be made at times.
8. For provision of van lifts, the consumer and/or family have to provide the van. Generally, for VMRC to consider paying for a van lift the consumer and wheelchair must weigh 150 lbs. or more; however, a number of other factors will be considered. When appropriate, the care provider must have a physician's note why he cannot do

lifting or pushing and van ramps must have been ruled out and found to be inadequate.  
(See exception)

II. **SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS:** In choosing a piece of durable medical equipment or augmentive communication device, some issues to be considered are:

1. Is this equipment able to fit in the family's home, car, etc.?
2. Can the consumer and /or family cooperate in ongoing training to make using a communication device successful?
3. Is the vendor one that will bill all insurances and guarantee the quality of the equipment? Can the vendor provide repair as needed?

In providing an environmental modification, some issues to be considered are:

1. For a van lift, is the van in good shape and able to last at least 5 years?
2. For a home modification, will the consumer/family be staying in the home for the foreseeable future?

III. **EXCEPTIONS AND APPEALS PROCESS:** As with all VMRC purchased services, if the Planning Team determines that sufficient support exists to request an exception to these standards, a Purchase of Service Exceptions request should be submitted.

VMRC recognizes that there may be occasions when a decision is made by VMRC that may not satisfy the consumer or his/her legally authorized representative. When the consumer or is/her legally authorized representative believes a VMRC decision is illegal, discriminatory or not in the consumer's best interest, an appeal can be made to challenge that decision. All processes shall be in compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 4700-4730.