

## ***When and How to Contact MDLC***

If you have trouble getting an assessment or device or want more information, call MDLC's intake office, Monday-Friday, between 10am and noon.

**Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC)**  
**(410) 727-6352, press "0"**



**1800 N. Charles Street; Suite 400**  
**Baltimore, Maryland 21201**  
**410.727.6352 or 1.800.233.7201**  
**TTY: 410.727.6387**  
**[www.mdclaw.org](http://www.mdclaw.org)**

Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC) is the designated Protection and Advocacy agency for Maryland, mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. We are a non-profit organization providing free legal services to Marylanders with disabilities.

## **How to Obtain Communication Devices From Medical Assistance/Medicaid**



**Maryland Disability Law Center**

***Advocating to improve the lives of  
Marylanders with disabilities.***

***January 2011***

## ***Does Maryland Medical Assistance Pay For Communication Devices?***

Yes, Medical Assistance (also known as Medicaid) pays for communication devices if a treating professional recommends the device as medically necessary and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) approves the recommendation. Medical Assistance also pays for the assessment you need to determine if a device is medically necessary and the type of device that will best meet your needs.

## ***What is Medical Assistance?***

Medical Assistance is a health insurance program for people with low incomes and disabilities. Family income is counted until you turn 18, so many people with disabilities become eligible at that time. Ask a family member if you are on Medical Assistance.

## ***What If My Device Needs Repair?***

If Medical Assistance paid for your device, DHMH should cover all repairs. If you got your device through your IEP, contact your local school system for all repairs.

## ***How Much Does This Cost?***

If you follow the proper procedures, there should be no cost to you.

### **My Important Phone Numbers**

#### **DOCTOR:**

Name

Phone

#### **SERVICE or RESOURCE COORDINATOR:**

Name

Phone

#### **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST:**

Name

Phone

#### **OTHER SERVICE PROVIDER:**

Name

Phone

### ***Is There Any Additional Advice For Students?***

If you are a Maryland school student, you can get assessments and/or devices through your local school system if your Individual Education Program (IEP) team recommends them, regardless of whether or not you have Medical Assistance. Once the IEP team recommends an assessment, the school system must conduct the assessment to determine if you need any assistive technology devices and what devices or technology best meet your needs.

If the IEP team documents that you need to use your device at home in order to make meaningful educational progress, then the school system must let you take your device home with you.

If the school system has purchased the device, they will take back the device when you leave school. Therefore, it is very important that during your last year or two of school you get a new assessment and device through Medical Assistance so you can have a device with you when you leave school.

### ***Do I Have Fee-For-Service Medical Assistance Or Am I Covered By A Managed Care Organization Health Plan?***

Most people with Maryland Medical Assistance are in a health plan called a Managed Care Organization or MCO. Some others are in a Fee-For-Service program. Maryland has seven MCOs/health plans: Maryland Physicians Care, United HealthCare, Priority Partners, Jai Medical, Amerigroup, Coventry, and Medstar.

If you are in a health plan or MCO, your Medical Assistance card should have the name of one of the seven MCOs listed above. Otherwise, you are in Fee-For-Service Medical Assistance. If you are not sure, ask a family member, staff person, or service coordinator.

Even though anyone who receives Medical Assistance is able to get an assessment and if medically necessary, a device, whether you are in Fee-For-Service or a MCO determines where you can go for an assessment.

### ***What is the First Step If I Think I Need A Device?***

To determine if you need a device, and if so, which type of device will be right for you, you first need an assessment by a speech and language pathologist (SLP). See your doctor and ask for a referral to a SLP covered by your MCO or health plan. If your doctor does not know where to refer you, or you have trouble scheduling an appointment or getting an assessment with a qualified SLP, contact MDLC for assistance.

### ***What Should I Know About the Assessment?***

You should bring a family member, staff person, friend or someone else who knows you well to the assessment. At the assessment, ask if you can have a trial use period before the SLP makes a final recommendation about a device. If you receive an inappropriate device, it is often difficult to get another one through Medical Assistance.

### ***How Do I Get A Device?***

After determining if you need a device and which device is best, the speech and language pathologist submits the request to DHMH.

### ***What Can I Tell My SLP and Doctor About Requesting A Device From DHMH?***

**For SLPs and Physicians:** Requests for devices will be more successful if supported by a letter from an individual's primary care physician (PCP). SLPs should first send their recommendation to the PCP for review. If the PCP agrees with the recommendation, they should write a letter in support. Then, the SLP needs to send the recommendation, letter of support and any supporting documentation to DHMH Nursing and Community Programs Department, **not the MCO**. If you have any questions about this process, contact MDLC.