

Noise Induced Hearing Loss Program of Care (NIHL POC)

Questions & Answers For Audiologists



Question: At what point are my patients to be treated under the Program of Care?

Answer: Any patient for whom you have submitted a quotation for a new hearing after June 7, 2004 is eligible for the NIHL POC.

Question: Does a worker still require a prescription for a hearing aid from a regulated health professional?

Answer: WSIB requires a prescription from either an audiologist or a physician. Audiologists are expected to adhere to CASLPO guidelines for hearing aid prescription.

Question: Do workers have to have an ENT assessment? Is this a new requirement?

Answer: Workers have always required an assessment from an ENT as part of the NIHL claims approval process. This is not a new requirement. It is not expected that a worker with an approved NIHL claim, who is under the care of an audiologist, have an ENT assessment each time a new hearing aid is required.

Question: Does the WSIB allow all components of the POC be delivered by both an audiologist and hearing instrument practitioner?

Answer: Hearing aid prescription is integral to the NIHL POC and HIPs cannot prescribe hearing aids. HIPs are involved in the POC only at the specific direction of an audiologist or physician. Unlike audiologists, HIPs must obtain the prescribing physician's signature on the Assessment Summary & Treatment Plan Form before WSIB will pay for any of their services related to the provision of a hearing aid for a worker. All other components of the POC, such as, selection, verification, validation, and counseling, that are related to the provision of a hearing aid and hearing aid-related follow-up activities, can be delivered by both audiologists and HIPs.

legislated scope of practice. HIPs do not have the equivalent academic and clinical training of audiologists, and, since they are not a regulated health professional, are not accountable to a regulatory body defined in legislation.

Question: Within the Program of Care is there a separate fee for the prescription of hearing aids?

Answer: The POC does not have a separate fee for hearing aid prescriptions. The POC Fee covers elements of hearing aid prescriptions as defined by CASLPO, such as validation and verification.

Question: Within the POC is there a separate hearing aid dispensing fee?

Answer: The fee for dispensing activities is included in the POC Fees.

Question: Are hearing aid dispensing fees included in the POC or are they to be billed outside of the program along with the hearing aid fee?

Answer: Hearing aid dispensing fees are included in the POC fees and are not to be billed separately.

Question: If the services are delivered by more than one provider what happens?

Answer: Only one provider can bill WSIB for POC services. The providers involved in delivering services must reach an agreement as to how to allocate the fees from WSIB.

Question: Can audiologists who do not dispense a hearing aid to a worker bill for services under the POC?

Answer: Any audiologist treating a worker can bill for services under either Service Block 1 or Service Block 2. Payment for services will result through agreements between providers

WSIB acknowledges that audiologists are regulated healthcare professionals with a

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as explained earlier. For example, an audiologist that does not dispense may perform certain follow up activities in Service Block 2 and may agree to share NIHL POC fees with another provider also involved in Service Block 2.

Question: In practice, recorded voice is typically not used widely. Instead we use monitored live voice. Why does the POC specify recorded voice?

Answer: The Expert Translation Committee (which included representatives from four disciplines) drafted the Program of Care and decided to include live voice based on the review of the scientific evidence.

Question: Is RECD a required element of service?

Answer: The Expert Translation Committee included RECD as a required element of service in the Program of Care based on the review of the scientific evidence.

Question: Are hearing aid devices and assistive listening devices (ALDs) covered in the NIHL POC fees?

Answer: Providers should bill for hearing aid devices and ALDs separately from the NIHL POC. The existing process of billing for these items has not changed.

Question: What other services are excluded from the POC Fees?

Answer: Audiograms, earmolds, impressions and programming (with the exception of the first programming).

Question: Can hearing instrument practitioners perform audiograms for WSIB?

Answer: WSIB will accept audiograms only from audiologists or physicians.

Question: Do I charge separately for programming appointments in the first year?

Answer: The NIHL POC fees include fees for all appointment in the first year.

Question: What happens if workers drop out of the program (eg. do not attend follow-up appointments)?

Answer: At any point in time during the Program of Care, if there are difficulties with attendance at follow-up appointments for any reason, the provider should contact the WSIB. If the worker does not return for Trial Period Follow-up, providers should complete the Trial Period Follow-up Form noting that the WSIB has been contacted and the worker has not returned for follow-up. The provider should also submit a bill for Service Block 1.

If a worker has received services between the end of the trial period and the 6 month follow-up appointment but does not return for a scheduled 6-month follow-up, the provider should contact the WSIB and submit the Rehabilitation Follow-up Form and submit a bill for Service Block 2.

Question: My patient has recently received a new hearing aid and has come to me for hearing aid-related services. I was not the original service provider. What should I do?

Answer: The WSIB understands that workers may change providers for a variety of reasons. If you had no previous history with the worker as a Program of Care service provider for this hearing aid, you should contact the WSIB and explain the situation to the adjudicator. Arrangements will be made to ensure that you are paid for services to the worker.

Question: My patient has a hearing aid but is due for a new one. Does he/she go into the POC?

Answer: Anytime you provide a new hearing aid, the worker should be enrolled in the POC.

Question: Do we need to do something different for patients in the system now who are coming for annual visits or modifications?

Answer: Current patients in the system continue to be treated under the rules that existed prior to June 7, 2004. These patients will move to the POC when they require a new hearing aid.

Question: Does the billing take into account repeated visits by clients within the first year, especially when the problems are client-generated, e.g. inappropriate care of the hearing aid?

Answer: The POC fees move from visit-based fees to block fees. These block fees recognize the range and number of services that typically occur. Pricing reflects the 'average' case.

Question: The POC is for one year, if a person comes back two-years post-initial fitting, how and what do we bill?

Answer: After one year you are to bill for services on a fee-for-service basis as you have prior to June 7, 2004.

Question: Is authorization for a hearing aid from WSIB still required?

Answer: WSIB must authorize the purchase of a hearing aid for a worker.

Question: When can I submit the Assessment Summary & Treatment Plan Form?

Answer: Submit the Assessment Summary & Treatment Plan Form only for workers with APPROVED claims. You may submit the form when you submit a quote for a new hearing aid or you may wait for authorization of the hearing aid to submit the form. Please fax or mail the form separate from the quote or audiogram.

Question: How do I submit paper forms to the WSIB?

Answer: Paper forms can be submitted to WSIB by:
Fax: 1-888-313-7373 or 416-344-4684 or
by mail:
Workplace Safety & Insurance Board
200 Front Street West,
Toronto ON M5V 3J1

www.wsib.on.ca

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