OVERVIEW
Audiology is a specialty focusing on hearing impairment/loss through identification and evaluation, and the rehabilitation of persons with hearing impairment/loss. Audiological services are normally provided by a licensed audiologist who performs audiometric/diagnostic tests that evaluate both sensorineural and conductive hearing impairment/losses.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION
Prior authorization is not required.

POLICY STATEMENT
BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial

Evaluation of hearing impairment tests are considered medically necessary in illnesses or injuries including, but not limited to, the following: Hearing loss; Otitis media; Meniere’s disease; Labyrinthitis; Vertigo (dizziness); Tinnitus; Cochlear otosclerosis; Neoplasms of the auditory or central nervous system; Congenital anomalies; Surgery involving the auditory and/or central nervous system, e.g., skull-based tumors such as acoustic neuroma and meningioma; Facial nerve paralysis (Bell’s palsy); Bacterial meningitis; Exposure to intense noise; Ototoxic drugs; Fractures of the temporal bone or trauma affecting the central auditory pathways.

MEDICAL CRITERIA
None

BACKGROUND
Hearing impairment/loss is a reduction in the ability to perceive sound. The loss may range from slight to complete deafness caused by sensorineural and/or conductive hearing losses.

Audiology is a specialty focusing on hearing impairment/loss through identification and evaluation, and the rehabilitation of persons with hearing impairment/loss. Audiological services are normally provided by a licensed audiologist who performs audiometric/diagnostic tests that evaluate both sensorineural and conductive hearing impairment/losses.

The various audiometric/diagnostic tests can be subdivided into:
1. standard batteries that are typically used as part of the initial hearing impairment work-up; and
2. specialized tests that are typically used in specific clinical situations.

The standard batteries vary according to whether the patient is an adult, child, or infant. Tests identified as specialized would not be part of the initial hearing impairment work-up, but may be considered medically necessary when initial diagnostic tests are inconclusive or not appropriate to the specific condition.

The following tests identify standard and specialized audiology tests for adults, children, and infants:
Standard Battery of Tests for Adults and Children
1. Pure-tone audiometry, air and bone conduction
2. Speech audiometry
3. Word recognition tests
4. Acoustic reflex test and acoustic reflex decay
5. Tympanometry (impedance testing)

For Children only:
1. Select picture audiometry
2. Conditioning play audiometry

For Infants only:
1. Auditory evoked potential, aka Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR)
2. Visual reinforcement audiometry (VRA)
3. Evoked otoacoustic emissions (OAE)
4. Acoustic reflex test

Specialized Tests for Adults and Children:
1. Auditory Evoked Potential
2. Electrocochleography (ECochG)
3. Tone decay test
4. Stenger test, pure tone or speech
5. Sensorineural acuity level (SAL) test
6. Evoked otoacoustic emissions

The following audiometric tests are considered obsolete and thus are considered not medically necessary:
- Lombard test (replaced by the Stenger test and auditory evoked potential);
- Alternate binaural loudness balance test;
- Short increment sensitivity test (replaced by pure tone audiometry, auditory evoked potential);
- Bekesy audiometry.

The following audiometric tests are considered not medically necessary, as there is no scientific literature to support efficacy.
- Staggered spondaic word test;
- Synthetic sentence identification test.

COVERAGE
Benefits may vary between groups/contracts. Please refer to the appropriate Evidence of Coverage or Subscriber Agreement for applicable Hearing Services, Diagnostic Imaging, Lab and Machine Tests/Office Visit benefits/coverage.

CODING
BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial.

The following tests are covered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hearing Tests - Routine</th>
<th>92551</th>
<th>92552</th>
<th>V5008</th>
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The following code is covered under the members Diagnostic Imaging, Lab and Machine Tests benefit:

92577    92579    92582    92583
92584    92585    92586    92587
92588

The following codes follow the unlisted codes process and documentation must be submitted for review:

92700    V5299

The following code will be covered under the member's DME benefit and will apply to the hearing aid benefit maximum when the above guidelines are met:

V5020

The following codes are not medically necessary for all product lines:

92559    92560    92561    92562
92564    92572    92576

RELATED POLICIES
Hearing Aid Mandate
Cochlear Implants
Preventive Services for Commercial Member

PUBLISHED
Provider Update  Jan 2015
Provider Update  Jul 2013
Provider Update  Apr 2012
Provider Update  Jun 2011
Provider Update  Jul 2010
Policy Update    Dec 2009
Policy Update    Feb 2009

REFERENCES


This medical policy is made available to you for informational purposes only. It is not a guarantee of payment or a substitute for your medical judgment in the treatment of your patients. Benefits and eligibility are determined by the member’s subscriber agreement or member certificate and/or the employer agreement, and those documents will supersede the provisions of this medical policy. For information on member-specific benefits, call the provider call center. If you provide services to a member which are determined to not be medically necessary (or in some cases medically necessary services which are non-covered benefits), you may not charge the member for the services unless you have informed the member and they have agreed in writing in advance to continue with the treatment at their own expense. Please refer to your participation agreement(s) for the applicable provisions. This policy is current at the time of publication; however, medical practices, technology, and knowledge are constantly changing. BCBSRI reserves the right to review and revise this policy for any reason and at any time, with or without notice. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.