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# Alberta Health

## **Alberta Aids to Daily Living Custom Compression Garments Benefits** **Policy & Procedures Manual**

June 21, 2021

Classification: Public



## Revision History

Description	Date
Revised throughout to reflect transition to Alberta Blue Cross	June 21, 2021
Incorporated T-05 Insurance coverage into T-04 Removal of references to postage paid throughout T-02 Certification for fitter updated every three years T- 03 AADL will not accept lower leg assessments more than six months old	July 1, 2020
Updated links	April 1, 2019
Updated T-01 Eligibility Criteria – removed statement regarding postage	July 1, 2018
Updated T-07 Vendor and Trained Provider Qualifications	July 1, 2017
Updates throughout	November 15, 2015
General formatting updated.	May 6, 2015

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# Policy T – 01

## Eligibility Criteria – Custom Compression Garments

### Policy Statement

AADL assists with the cost of custom compression stockings for individuals who meet Clinical Etiology Anatomy Pathophysiology (CEAP) criteria C4 or C5, or who have Chronic Lymphedema (as assessed by a qualified authorizer). Clients with C6 (active ulceration) do not meet the criteria.

Client's eligibility for compression benefits is determined by an AADL Authorizer prior to authorization.

Clients must meet general eligibility requirements found in the AADL General Policies and Procedures on-line at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-gn>

For detailed information on Chronic Venous Insufficiency, please refer to Policy N-03, 04, 05 and 06 in Manual N- Compression Stockings and Lymphedema Sleeves online at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-n>.

**Note: Clients presenting with chronic lymphedema must be assessed by a qualified Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT) or Specialty Assessor (SA). If a CLT/SA is not accessible to the client, clients will be required to provide their AADL Authorizer with a prescription from a physician or nurse practitioner.**

### Procedure

#### Authorizers:

1. Confirm client meets AADL general eligibility for benefits.
2. Confirm clients' previous benefit consumption:
  - Refer to the Custom Compression Garments APL for quantity limits at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-t>
  - Refer to the patient inquiry screen on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal (OHP) and check product consumption.
  - Submit authorization on the OHP with any relevant documentation including the client declaration form.
    - Refer to Policy T-04 Quantity and Frequency Limits for clients who are over quantity/frequency limit.

3. Inform clients of their eligibility status.

**Clients:**

1. Confirm eligibility with authorizer.
2. Sign Client Declaration form

**Vendors:**

1. Check client's previous benefit consumption:
  1. Refer to the Custom Compression Garments Benefits APL to determine quantity limits at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-t>. Refer to the patient inquiry screen on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal (OHP) review client's benefit consumption history and confirm they are eligible for the benefit.
  2. Refer to Policy T-04 Quantity and Frequency Limits for clients who are over quantity/frequency limit.

**Alberta Blue Cross**

1. Responds to telephone or email requests for information on bathing and toileting benefits eligibility and provides reference to the AADL website for further information at:  
<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aadl-program-manual-t>
2. Adjudicates and audits authorizations submitted through the OHP for accuracy and completeness

# Policy T – 02

## Authorizer Qualifications

### Policy Statement

Existing AADL Authorizers who are PT, OT or RN's may apply to have compression garments added to their product range.

Authorizers must complete the Authorizer Application for Product Range: Compression Garments and submit to AADL.

Assessors and authorizers doing the actual fitting must:

- be a certified fitter by completing a manufacturer fitter course that is recognized by AADL; and
- renew the certification every three years; and
- provide certification to the AADL program manager.

### Procedure

#### AADL Authorizer applying for secondary product range:

1. Complete compression garment product range request form under Authorizer Application forms at: <https://www.alberta.ca/aadl-authorizer-information-and-training.aspx>
2. Complete compression on-line module under Videos at: <https://www.alberta.ca/aadl-authorizer-information-and-training.aspx>
1. Forward completed application with supporting documentation to AADL.

#### AADL:

1. Reviews application.
2. Advises Alberta Blue Cross to add the product range to eligible authorizers.
3. Monitors authorizer activities and determine compliance with policies and procedures.

# Policy T – 03

## Assessment and Authorization

### Policy Statement

The clinical assessment is the first step in the process to obtain compression garments.

The assessment determines eligibility, the benefit required to meet basic needs and the appropriate quantities.

Assessments must be completed and documented by a healthcare professional with the necessary competence and regulatory license to practice in Alberta.

The following is required to be kept on the clients file:

- clinical rationale for the benefit requested. If the garments are for the legs, leg measurement and shape of the leg must be included.
- A copy of the lower leg assessment if the garments are for the legs.

**Note:** One set of the following values are required in order to determine eligibility:

- Ankle Brachial Pressure Index (ABPI) values must be within the 0.8-1.3 range.
- Toe Brachial Pressure (TBPI) values of 07.mmHG or greater.
- Toe Pressures (PPG) values must be 50mmHG or greater.

A prescription from a vascular surgeon, physician or nurse practitioner with expertise in lower leg assessment must be submitted with the authorization on the Online Health Portal in the following circumstances:

- when the clients ranges are not within the values as per AADL Policy.
- for clients who have had recent surgery, including bypass surgery.
- when the garments are for lymphedema management, unless they have been authorized by a certified lymphedema therapist or an authorizer with a designation of S.A. (specialty authorizer).

**Note:** All clients with diabetes require a TBPI or PPG when the ABPI is below 1.0 or above 1.3.

Prescriptions are not required for clients receiving active treatment from Alberta Health Services cancer rehabilitation oncology departments.

The requirement for above knee stockings must be documented on the clients file and include:

- for thigh-high stockings, indication of hemosiderin staining and/ropey torturous veins above the knee.
- For panty hose, indication of hemosiderin staining and/ropey torturous veins into the groin if pantyhose are being requested.

Clients with a history of Deep Vein Thrombosis at or below the knee or who have tortuous veins in the area where a knee high would lie, may be eligible for thigh high stockings if knee high stockings present a clinical risk or are deemed ineffective. Clinical rationale must be documented on the clients file.

If a client wants thigh-high or pantyhose but only qualifies for below knee, the client may pay the up-charge to the longer length. The authorizer is required to advise the client of upgrade costs.

If a client requires two different styles and/or compression of stockings, the authorizer is required to document rationale on the clients file.

## **Procedure**

### **Clients:**

1. Fully participate in the assessment.

### **Authorizers:**

1. Assess client or review assessment if authorizer is not the assessor.
2. Document assessment details and clinical rationale to support the provision of benefits.
3. Determine benefit and quantity needed based on the client's final clinical assessment results.
4. File any supporting documentation to support the client's requirements for custom compression garments.
5. Refer to the patient inquiry screen on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal (OHP) and check product consumption to confirm eligibility for the benefit
6. Have client sign the client declaration form. .
7. Complete Authorization on OHP and upload client declaration form and prescription if required.

### **AADL:**

1. Provides direction to authorizers regarding eligibility criteria as needed.



## Policy T – 04

### Quantity and Frequency Limits for Custom Compression Garments

#### Policy Statement

The quantity and frequency of custom compression garments is a maximum of two garments per affected limb per 12-month period.

The AADL Program does not replace lost, stolen, or broken/damaged benefits. It is the client's financial responsibility to cover the cost of replacements in these instances.

**Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT) or Specialty Assessor (SA) may authorize for over the maximum quantity pending the provision of adequate clinical rationale to support the quantity increase without submitting a QFR.**

All other AADL Authorizers must submit a Quantity and Frequency Request (QFR) for benefit requests over the limit. A Quantity and Frequency Request (QFR) authorization is submitted on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal.

#### Procedure

##### Authorizers:

1. Advise clients of quantity and frequency limits.
2. Explain policy and process to client, ensuring client understands.
3. Enter QFR authorization on the OHP including the following documents:
  - QFR Request Form.
  - Other supporting documentation.
  - Client declaration.
4. CLTs or SAs can contact the Alberta Blue Cross provider contact center to request products over quantity without completing the QFR authorization.

##### Clients:

1. Pursue alternate funding sources prior to requesting additional benefits from AADL or if request falls outside the QFR process.

**Alberta Blue Cross:**

1. Receive and log QFR requests.
2. Forwards QFR requests to AADL for adjudication.
3. Updates QFR status on the OHP which can then be viewed on the provider portal.
4. Notification of the decision will be sent to the client and authorizer.

**AADL:**

1. Receives the QFR and supporting documentation from Alberta Blue Cross.
2. Adjudicates and provides decision to Alberta Blue Cross.

# Policy T – 05

## Authorizer Responsibilities

### Policy Statement

Authorizers must adhere to the general policies and procedures for authorizing AADL benefits.

In addition, authorizers for compression garments must ensure the client:

- meets the specific eligibility criteria outlined and authorized quantities based on the clinical assessment of the client’s needs;
- wounds are healed prior to authorization;
- is aware that they may receive reduced quantities if their clinical needs change; when this occurs, vendors must supply the reduced quantity;
- is aware that products authorized are only for the client that was assessed and authorized;
- is aware that quantities are based on their assessed clinical need;
- is aware that the authorizer may change products or change quantities based on their re-assessment.

### Authorizers:

- must document and keep on clients file the clinical details as to the type of custom vascular garments that are required for the client (for example, requires open toe stockings).
  - are accountable to ensure that the lower leg assessment, when warranted, meets AADL’s eligibility criteria prior to submitting the authorization.
  - must ensure that clients authorized based on the lower leg assessment (may not be applicable for clients with lymphedema) verifies that the client has signs and symptoms of CEAP 4.0, 5.0 or lymphedema and that the ABPI, TBPI or toe pressures is within therapeutic range as per AADL policy.
  - must ensure that edema is investigated and reduced prior to authorization.

Clinicians can only authorize clients who have an ankle brachial index of 0.8 to 1.3, Toe brachial index of 0.7 or greater or a toe pressure of 50mmHG or greater. A prescription from a physician or nurse practitioner with clinical expertise in assessment and management of lower extremity complications or a vascular surgeon is required and must include the amount

of compression that is safe to apply according to the lower leg assessment. This documentation must be kept on the clients file.

Clients with a diagnosis of diabetes or those that have an ankle brachial index below 1.0 or above 1.3 must have a toe pressure completed to ensure that it is safe to compress the limb, unless the authorizer has documentation from the client's physician.

A prescription from a vascular surgeon is required for clients who have had recent surgery, including bypass surgery and must be kept on the clients file.

It is recommended that clients receive one compression garment initially to ensure compliance and/or that length or degree of support is clinically appropriate.

**Authorizers must ensure that a compression is safe and appropriate for a client and must not order compression stockings until clients wounds are completely healed.**

### **Authorizations**

- It is the authorizer's clinical discretion to determine the period of time for an authorization; however authorizations cannot exceed two years.
- Authorizations for custom garments must have clear clinical rationale kept on the clients file.

# Policy T – 06

## Vendor and Trained Provider Qualifications Policy

### Policy Statement

AADL Approved Custom Compression Garments vendors must meet the following criteria:

- Meet AADL’s general vendor criteria as outlined in the General Policy and Procedures Manual
- Adhere to benchmark pricing as outlined in the General Policy and Procedures Manual.
- Employ at least one full-time certified fitter that is located on site.
- Ensure fitters have certification from each manufacturer brand sold by the vendor.
- Ensure certification is updated every three years and that a copy is provided to AADL.

### Product

- Provide a minimum of two different manufacturer’s brands

### Procedure

1. Document the client’s fitting and garment provided.
2. Provide the appropriate product as per the online authorization.
3. Inform the client and the authorizer if the vendor cannot provide a garment recommended by the authorizer.
  - Vendors cannot substitute garments without the authorizer’s approval.
4. Provide custom compression garments based on the clients measurements.
  - Vendors cannot provide larger sizes. If the client wants a “bigger” size due to tightness, the vendor must NOT provide the garments and notify the authorizer.
5. Have clients demonstrate to the vendor that they can don and doff the garments independently.
  - If there are concerns regarding the client’s ability to don and doff the garments the authorizer is to be contacted.

6. The vendor will provide one garment or pair of compression garments initially. The vendor must conduct a follow-up three to four weeks after the initial fitting to ensure the product is suitable for the client.
7. Invoice for garments that have been provided to the client NOT for the quantity that has been authorized.
8. If there is evidence of edema or any other concerns during the fitting, the vendor should not proceed and should contact the authorizer to ensure the product chosen is still appropriate.

Please be aware that AADL does not pay for brokerage fees incurred by the vendor.

AADL does not pay for “RUSH” deliveries.