

# Alberta Health

## Alberta Aids to Daily Living Custom Made Footwear Benefits

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### Policy & Procedures Manual

October 4, 2021

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## Revision History

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# Policy F – 01

## Custom Made Footwear Benefits Background

### Policy Statement

The provider of custom made footwear benefits (item specific device(s)/service(s)) must hold qualifications stipulated under policy F-09 and be employed by a facility that has an agreement with AADL to provide custom made footwear benefits (item specific device(s)/service(s)).

Clients must meet AADL general and benefit-specific eligibility criteria to qualify for AADL-funded custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s).

AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) that are available to eligible clients include:

- Custom made footwear for first (1o), second (2o), or third (3o) degree deformity including matching custom made footwear for the unaffected foot;
- Custom made footwear modifications; and
- Partial foot replacements.

The maximum funding amounts for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) is listed in the approved product lists for custom made footwear benefits.

Authorizations and claims for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) must be entered on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal (OHP).

# Policy F – 02

## Process for Obtaining Custom Made Footwear Benefits

### Policy Statement

Clients and custom made footwear providers must follow AADL general and benefit-specific policies and procedures for obtaining and providing custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s).

### Procedure

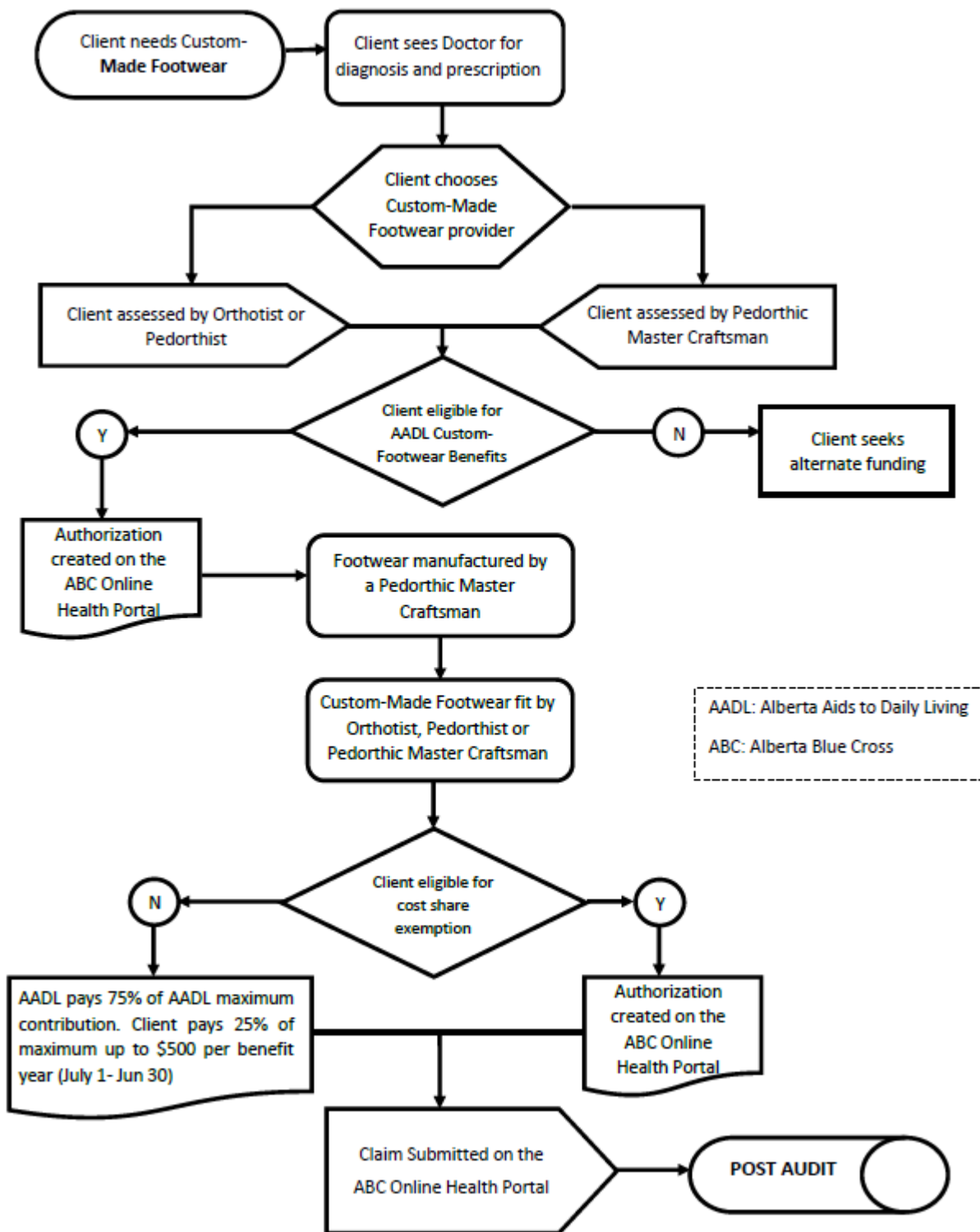
#### Clients:

1. Follow process for obtaining custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) as outlined on page 8 of this policy.

#### Custom Made Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:

1. Follow process for obtaining custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) as outlined on page 8 of this policy.

**Flowchart for Process for Obtaining Custom Made Footwear Benefits**





# Policy F – 03

## Eligibility Criteria for Custom Made Footwear Benefits

### Policy Statement

Clients must meet the general and benefits-specific eligibility criteria from the AADL policy and procedure manuals and approved product listing (APL), which includes the following:

- Clients must have a first (1o), second (2o), or third (3o) degree structural bony deformity of the foot or feet such as albeit not limited to talipes equinovarus, severe arthritis and resultant deformity, or neurological damage to the foot with resultant deformity or stabilized gross edema. If clients present with first (1o), second (2o), or third (3o) degree structural bony deformity of the foot or feet cannot wear a modified, or special off-the-shelf shoe for these reasons, they are eligible for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s).
- Clients must be ambulatory.
- Clients must obtain a generic prescription (free of any vendor advertising) for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) from a physician who is a member in good standing of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta. The generic prescription must state the:
  - a. Specific custom made footwear benefit that is being requested; and
  - b. Other information related to foot problems and/or specific instructions.

AADL does not provide custom made footwear benefits for:

- Non-ambulatory clients;
- Clients only able to pivot and/or stand for transfers;
- Clients who refuse to try off-the-shelf footwear;
- Clients presenting with first (1o), second (2o), or third (3o) degree structural bony deformity of the foot or feet who can wear a modified, or special off-the-shelf shoe(s);
- Edema management;
- Short-term post-operative healing or conditions;
- Exclusive use for sports, recreation or rehabilitation purposes; and
- Clients having problems finding the appropriate off-the-shelf footwear for any of the following reasons:
  - a. Oversized or undersized feet;
  - b. Requiring footwear with extra width/depth needs;
  - c. A split footwear size requirement;
  - d. Problems with edema and/or foot lesions;
  - e. Acute post-operative healing or conditions; or
  - f. A leg length discrepancy that warrants the need for a shoe elevation(s) and not custom made footwear.

It is recognized that some orthotic devices (such as Ankle Foot Orthoses) may cause fitting problems, but this does not indicate a need for custom made footwear nor does it qualify clients for custom made footwear benefits.

Clients are eligible for one pair of custom made footwear benefits every year based on clinical need.

## **Procedure**

### **Clients:**

1. Follow process for obtaining custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) as outlined on page 8 of this policy.
  - a. Obtain a prescription from a physician indicating clinical diagnosis and associated need for custom made footwear.
2. Select a Specialty Assessor/Supplier of custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) from the AADL approved vendor list, available on the [AADL website](#).
3. Provide prescription to and be assessed by an AADL custom made footwear Specialty Assessor/Supplier.
4. Sign the "Client Declaration" form.
5. Must try off-the-shelf footwear such as extra width or extra depth before being deemed eligible for custom made footwear.
6. Must seek alternative funding for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) if ineligible.

### **Custom Made Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:**

1. Determine if client meets AADL eligibility requirements, and verifies client cost share status and benefit consumption.
  - a. Submit a Quantity and Frequency Review (QFR) request on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal (OHP) if early replacement benefit is required.
2. Maintain accurate, up-to-date client files with clinical notes and required AADL and Alberta Blue Cross documentation including but not limited to prescription(s), original signed client declaration(s), validation certificate(s) and Patient Claim Statement(s).
  - a. Do not accept prescriptions greater than three months old or with vendor advertising.
3. Document any patient encounter, which includes initial assessment, dispensing of benefits, and follow-up with clients.
4. Complete authorization on the Alberta Blue Cross OHP and upload the client declaration form and any other required documentation.

# Policy F – 04

## Choice of Custom Made Footwear Provider

### Policy Statement

1. Clients have a choice of custom made footwear Specialty Assessor/Supplier.

### Procedure

#### Clients:

1. Select an AADL custom made footwear benefit Specialty Assessor/Supplier from the AADL approved custom made footwear benefit Vendor list.

#### AADL:

1. Maintain a list of AADL approved custom made footwear benefit Vendors comprised of AADL custom made footwear benefit Specialty Assessors/Suppliers that clients may access for custom made footwear benefit information and services.

# Policy F – 05

## Changing Custom Made Footwear Providers

### Policy Statement

- Clients have a choice of custom made footwear Specialty Assessor/Supplier.
- Clients must use only one custom made footwear Specialty Assessor/Supplier at a time.
- Clients must not switch custom made footwear Specialty Assessor/Supplier during the fabrication process of custom made footwear unless prior approval is given by AADL.

### Procedure

#### Clients:

1. Responsible for giving current AADL Specialty Assessor/Supplier the opportunity to provide custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) that meet their basic clinically assessment needs.
2. Contact the AADL Program Manager regarding concerns on service or device.
3. Submit a formal “AADL Complaint” if applicable, using the form available on the [AADL website](#).

#### Custom Made Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:

1. Check Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal (OHP) to verify if a client has an active authorization for AADL-funded custom made footwear or other competing benefits.
  - a. If no, may commence pertinent clinical and AADL eligibility assessment(s).
  - b. If yes, contact Alberta Blue Cross to identify the current custom made footwear Specialty Assessor/Supplier. Following discussion with the client, either:
    - i. Refer client back to original service Specialty Assessor/Supplier for ongoing service and follow up with custom made footwear benefits.
    - ii. If the client refuses to return to previous Specialty Assessor/Supplier, the provider must not provide service to the client unless the client is willing to fund the services privately.
    - iii. If the client agrees, contact previous Specialty Assessor/Supplier to discuss transferring care to the new custom made footwear Specialty Assessor/Supplier. Advise Alberta Blue Cross if agreement of a transfer of care is reached.
2. Do not submit a QFR for a request to switch Specialty Assessor/Supplier.
4. Advise the client to submit a formal “AADL Complaint” if applicable, using the form available on the [AADL website](#).
3. Contact Alberta Blue Cross for advice as required.

#### AADL:

1. Reviews client’s concerns via formal complaint process.
2. Refers client to a multidisciplinary team for assessment if available.
3. Recommends change of Specialty Assessor/Supplier if appropriate.

## Policy F – 06

### Custom Made Footwear Benefit Quantity and Frequency Limits

#### Policy Statement

Clients are eligible to receive custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) per the benefit-specific quantity and frequency limits listed on the AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) APL.

- Clients are eligible for one pair of custom made footwear every twelve months.

AADL recognizes that some clients may prefer to have two pairs of custom made footwear at one time to accommodate for different seasons or environments. As AADL does not provide duplicate benefits, clients may elect to receive a future pair of footwear early.

- Therefore, a client may receive two pairs of footwear in the first year and no additional pairs in the second year. This is not considered over-quantity and therefore a Quantity and Frequency Review request (QFR) is not necessary.
- For clients who have chosen the early second pair of footwear, further early replacement funding (third or fourth pair in the two-year period) will only be considered by a QFR Request that clearly demonstrates a significant and stabilized change in clinical condition.
- AADL will not provide additional footwear funding (third or fourth pair in the two-year period) if the original two pairs of footwear are worn out within the two-year period.

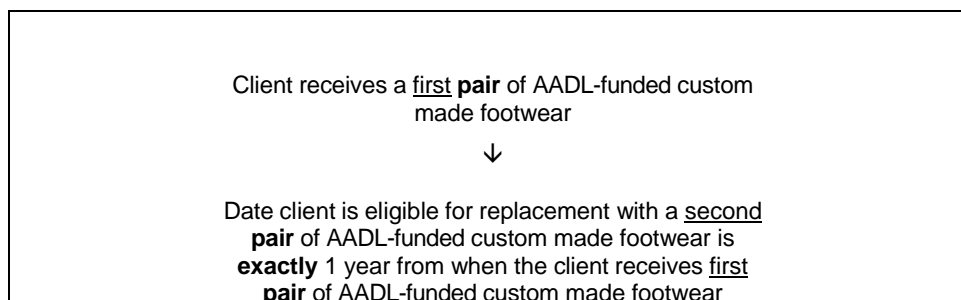
The AADL Program does not replace lost, stolen, or broken/damaged benefits. It is the client's financial responsibility to cover the cost of replacements in these instances.

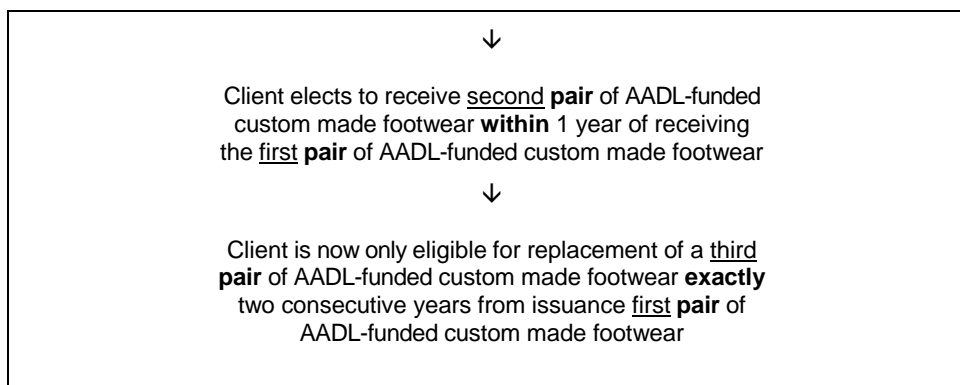
AADL providers of custom made footwear benefits must submit a QFR for benefits that are over the quantity and frequency limit. A QFR authorization is submitted on the Alberta Blue Cross OHP.

#### Procedure

##### Clients:

1. Follow the QFR process as outlined in the general AADL Program Manual for situations of significant and stabilized change in condition.
  - a. If clients elect to receive a second pair of AADL-funded custom made footwear early, they must contact their Specialty Assessor/Supplier. Do not submit a QFR as this is not considered additional quantity or frequency of the benefit.
  - b. The new eligibility date for replacement of the AADL-funded custom made footwear will be exactly two years from the service date of the first pair of AADL-funded custom made footwear.





- c. For a second pair of AADL-funded custom made footwear that is issued early, and when the client signs the third section of the custom made footwear Validation Certificate, "2 years" until eligibility for replacement must be specified on the custom made footwear Validation Certificate.
2. Pursue alternate funding sources prior to requesting additional funding via AADL or if request falls outside the QFR process.
3. Are responsible for the cost of the benefit if the QFR is denied.

**Custom made footwear Specialty Assessor(s)/Supplier(s):**

1. Advise clients of quantity and frequency limits.
2. Explain QFR policy and procedure to clients.
3. Enter QFR authorization on the Alberta Blue Cross OHP including the following documents:
  - a. QFR Request Form;
  - b. Other supporting documentation; and
  - c. Client declaration.

**Alberta Blue Cross:**

1. Receives and logs QFR requests.
2. Forwards QFR requests to AADL for adjudication.
3. Updates QFR status on the OHP, which can be viewed on the Alberta Blue Cross Online Health Portal (OHP).
4. Provides notification of QFR decisions as sent to the client and authorizer.

**AADL:**

1. Receives QFRs and supporting documentation from Alberta Blue Cross.

# Policy F – 07

## Custom Made Footwear Provider Qualifications

### Policy Statement

1. The provider of custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) must be one of the following:
  - a. a Certified Pedorthic Master Craftsman in good standing with the College of Pedorthics of Canada (includes the manufacturing of custom made footwear);
  - b. Certified Pedorthist in good standing with the College of Pedorthics of Canada (excludes the manufacturing of custom made footwear); or
  - c. Certified Orthotist in good standing with the Canadian Board for Certification of Prosthetists and Orthotists (excludes the manufacturing of custom made footwear).
2. The provider must be employed by a facility with a Specialty Assessor/Supplier agreement with AADL and Alberta Blue Cross to provide custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s).

### Procedure

#### **Custom Made Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:**

1. Notify Alberta Blue Cross when changing employment location.

#### **Alberta Blue Cross**

1. Updates employment location information of eligible providers.

# Policy F – 08

## Custom Made Footwear Provider Roles and Responsibilities

### Policy Statement

Custom made footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers are responsible for providing benefits and services to clients in accordance with the AADL policies and procedures.

Custom made footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers assess and fit clients for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s).

A Certified Pedorthist or a Certified Orthotist is able to provide the following for AADL clients:

- Assessing clients for custom made footwear;
- Casting and measuring for custom made footwear; and
- Fitting of custom made footwear.

A Certified Pedorthic Master Craftsman is able to provide the following for AADL clients:

- Assessment for custom made footwear;
- Casting and measuring for custom made footwear;
- Manufacturing custom made footwear, including:
  - a. Measuring, casting and making original shoe lasts;
  - b. Designing and making upper patterns;
  - c. Manufacturing fitting model of shoes; and
  - d. Lasting and finishing of custom shoes.
- Fitting of custom made footwear.

### Procedure

#### **Custom Made Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:**

1. Assess clients who have a first (1o), second (2o), or third (3o) degree structural bony deformity of the foot or feet such as albeit not limited to talipes equinovarus, severe arthritis and resultant deformity, or neurological damage to the foot with resultant deformity or stabilized gross edema.
2. Ensure:
  - a. Clients meet the general and specific custom made footwear benefit eligibility criteria;
  - b. Clients cannot wear a modified or special off-the-shelf shoe (clients must try off the shelf shoe such as an extra width, extra depth before being deemed eligible for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s). Clients must seek alternative funding for custom made footwear if ineligible);
  - c. Clients are ambulatory;
  - d. Clients are advised of their responsibilities related to program benefits especially concerning custom made footwear authorization(s);
  - e. Clients sign the Client Declaration form prior to provision of benefits; and



- f. Clients sign all sections of the custom made footwear Validation Certificate form prior to provision of benefits.
3. Obtain and accept an appropriate generic physician prescription(s).
  - a. Only accept a generic physician prescription. The prescription is valid for three months from the date on the prescription.
4. Provide clients with information and answers regarding AADL general and benefit-specific custom made footwear benefit eligibility criteria.
5. Contact the Alberta Blue Cross with concerns, questions, prior approvals, and unusual requests. If eligibility is questionable, an authorization is not to be completed.
6. Complete the authorization on the Alberta Blue Cross OHP within 20 business days of the assessment.
7. Retain on file:
  - a. Authorizations;
  - b. Assessments;
  - c. Physician's Generic Prescription;
  - d. Pedograph;
  - e. Photograph;
  - f. Custom-Made Footwear Criteria Document A and B; and
  - g. Documentation, including provider signature, of all AADL client encounters.
8. Adhere to the AADL Specialty Assessor/Supplier Agreement, Alberta Blue Cross Health Provider Agreement and both the AADL general and specific custom made footwear benefit policies and procedures.
9. Honour manufacturer warranties.
10. Ensure that a Certified Pedorthic Master Craftsman approves the end product of each stage of fabrication of custom made footwear:
  - a. Casting;
  - b. Last making;
  - c. Pattern making;
  - d. Upper making;
  - e. Lasting; and
  - f. Finishing.
11. Provide instructions to clients on the care, operation and maintenance of any custom made footwear
12. Use all reasonable efforts to supply the custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) at the lowest possible cost.
13. Provide clients with a Patient Claim Statement indicating AADL's portion and the client's portion if applicable.
14. Inform the client that they are responsible for all repairs to their custom made footwear.
15. Provide advice to clients and appropriate follow-up. Resolve promptly all errors relating to the provision of a client's benefits, e.g., duplication of benefits, client's eligibility status, assessment errors.

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#### **AADL:**

1. Maintains and updates the Approved Custom Made Footwear Provider List in accordance with AADL regulation, agreements, policies and procedures, and operational need and best practices.
2. Provides support to Alberta Blue Cross as it pertains to the approved custom made footwear provider list, and associated custom made footwear provider roles and responsibilities in accordance with AADL regulation, agreements, policies and procedures, and operational need and best practices.

# Policy F – 09

## Custom Made Footwear Client Roles and Responsibilities

### Policy Statement

Clients who receive custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) shall meet the current AADL custom made footwear eligibility criteria for the benefits they are receiving and must comply with AADL policies and procedures, and will acknowledge their roles and responsibilities.

Clients who receive custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) are required to adhere to the AADL's general client responsibilities as well as the following responsibilities specific to this program.

### Procedure

#### Clients:

1. Select custom made footwear Specialty Assessor/Supplier from the AADL custom made footwear Vendor List.
2. Provide the custom made footwear Specialty Assessor/Supplier with a generic physician's prescription for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s).
3. Sign AADL Client Declaration form.
4. Adhere to AADL client roles and responsibilities as stipulate in both the AADL general and specific custom made footwear benefit policies and procedures manuals.
5. Are aware that if off-the-shelf footwear such as extra width or extra depth will meet their clinical needs they are not eligible for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) via AADL, and thus are aware that off-the-shelf footwear must be trialed prior to Specialty Assessor/Supplier determining eligibility for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) via AADL.
6. Are aware that custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) provided by AADL is to serve basic needs, and specifically for "function" albeit not for "cosmetics."
7. Are aware that it is their responsibility to repair and maintain their AADL-funded custom made footwear. Clients are eligible for two pairs of custom made footwear per two-year period based on basic clinical and functional need. Replacement of AADL-funded custom made footwear is based on basic need as determined by the Specialty Assessor/Supplier in conjunction with AADL general and benefit-specific custom made footwear eligibility criteria.
8. Are aware that AADL does not provide early replacement of lost, stolen or damaged custom made footwear.
9. Are aware that AADL will not assist with replacement of worn custom made footwear unless no longer economically feasible or safe to repair, or when there is a significant change in associated clinical condition of their foot/feet. This requires a Quantity and Frequency Review (QFR) request.
10. Comply with Specialty Assessor/Supplier policies regarding abuse-free facility environments. Failure to comply may result in the Specialty Assessor/Supplier declining further services.

# Policy F – 10

## Approved Custom Made Footwear Provider List

### Policy Statement

AADL will only provide funding to eligible clients who receive their custom made footwear benefits from the “Approved List of Custom Made Footwear Vendors.”

### Procedure

#### Clients:

1. Select a Specialty Assessor/Supplier from the current custom made footwear Vendor list available on the Alberta Blue Cross website or upon request.

#### AADL:

1. Maintains and updates the Approved List of Custom Made Footwear Vendors in accordance with AADL regulation, agreements, policies and procedures, and operational need and best practices.
2. Provides support to Alberta Blue Cross as it pertains to the approved Custom Made Footwear Provider List, and associated Custom Made Footwear Provider roles and responsibilities in accordance with AADL regulation, agreements, policies and procedures, and operational need and best practices.

# Policy F – 11

## Custom Made Footwear Validation Certificate

### Policy Statement

The Custom Made Footwear Validation Certificate is a document intended to ensure accountability and clarify expectations for all parties involved in the provision of custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s).

The Validation Certificate is a two-part form, in that the client will sign this form on two separate occasions:

- At time of assessment for AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s), whereby eligible clients and Specialty Assessors/Suppliers acknowledge agreement to the type of AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) being provided.
- After final provision of AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s), whereby eligible clients and Specialty Assessors/Suppliers acknowledge agreement that pertinent fitting and trial associated with AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) has been completed.

Alberta Blue Cross should be contacted if the client is unable to complete the final fitting/trial, or is unable or refuses to sign the Validation Certificate form.

### Procedure

#### Clients:

1. Read the Validation Certificate fully prior to signing it.
2. Request clarification from the Specialty Assessor(s)/Suppliers(s), if needed, prior to signing it.
3. Sign all sections of the Validation Certificate.
  - a. Clients who are unable to return for follow up may sign and submit the final section of the Validation Certificate by alternate methods (i.e., fax or mail).
4. Obtain a copy (if requested) of the signed Validation Certificate.
5. Contact Alberta Blue Cross client contact centre if they:
  - a. Have any unresolved questions about the Validation Certificate; or
  - b. Are unable to sign the Validation Certificate.

#### Custom Made Footwear Specialty Suppliers/Assessors:

1. Provide all eligible clients with a copy of the required Validation Certificate form(s) to read/review.
2. Discuss/resolve all questions clients may have regarding eligible client roles and responsibilities pertaining to the provision of their AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) that are funded.
3. Ensure eligible clients sign all required section(s) of the Validation Certificate form.
  - a. The first section of Validation Certificate form must be signed by eligible clients prior to fabricating the AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s). Offer the client a copy of the Validation Certificate form and retain the original on the client's file.
  - b. The second section (i.e., final section) of the Validation Certificate form must be signed by eligible clients once the AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s) is fabricated, fitted and trialed. Offer the client a copy of the Validation Certificate form and retain the original on the client's file.
4. The Specialty Supplier must not submit a claim for the final components or procedures until all sections of the Validation Certificate form are signed by the client; this is considered the service date for associated AADL custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s).

- a. If the client is unable to complete the final fitting/trial, or is unable or refuses to sign the Validation Certificate form, AADL may consider a Specialty Supplier's request to claim a portion of the cost of the procedure and/or components, as follows:
  - i. Provide Alberta Blue Cross with a copy of the Client Declaration, Validation Certificate form, a valid prescription, and other supporting documentation. Provide evidence of attempts to contact client for follow up and/or resolve issue(s).
  - ii. Provide catalogue numbers and cost(s) for unclaimed items to Alberta Blue Cross. AADL will adjudicate in terms of potential billable amount.

**Alberta Blue Cross:**

1. Responds to questions from client and/or Specialty Assessor(s)/Supplier(s) regarding the Validation Certificate.
2. May request copies of the completed Validation Certificates.
3. In consultation with AADL, reviews cases and addresses client and/or Specialty Assessor(s)/Supplier(s) concerns pertaining to client inability to complete the final fitting/trial, or inability or refusal to sign the Validation Certificate form.

**AADL:**

1. Maintains and updates the Validation Certificates in accordance with AADL regulation, agreements, policies and procedures, and operational need and best practices.
2. Provides support and direction to Alberta Blue Cross as it pertains to the Validation Certificate.

# Policy F – 12

## Service Dates

### Policy Statement

The service date used for submitting claims for custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) is the date the client concurrently signs the final section of the custom made footwear Validation Certificate and thus actually receives the custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s).

### Procedure

#### **Custom Made Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:**

1. Submit claim to Alberta Blue Cross following the provision of custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) to the client.

# Policy F – 13

## Patient Claim Statement

### Policy Statement

Custom made footwear benefit providers must provide every client with a Patient Claim Statement for each custom made footwear benefit item specific device(s)/service(s) invoiced to the AADL Program. The Patient Claim Statement must include the AADL contribution and cost-share portion of each benefit (when applicable).

### Procedure

#### Custom Made Footwear Specialty Assessors/Suppliers:

1. Provide clients with a Patient Claim Statement for AADL benefits. The Patient Claim Statement must be printed from the Alberta Blue Cross OHP.
2. For cost-share clients, identify the AADL contribution and the client's cost-share contribution for each benefit.
3. For cost-share exempt clients, identify AADL's contribution for each benefit.
4. Retain a copy of Patient Claim Statement on client file.

#### Alberta Blue Cross:

1. Provide provider with a Patient Claim Statement.