

Clinical Policy: Bone-Anchored Hearing Aid

Reference Number: CP.MP.93

Last Review Date: 08/20

[Coding Implications](#)

[Revision Log](#)

See [Important Reminder](#) at the end of this policy for important regulatory and legal information.

Description

Bone-anchored hearing aids (BAHAs) are an alternative to conventional hearing aids when physical or medical complications prevent adequate functional improvement in hearing. Sound quality of BAHAs is superior to, and pain/discomfort is largely diminished, when compared to traditional air-conduction hearing aids.

Policy/Criteria

- I. It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation[®] that BAHAs are **medically necessary** for members with all of the following indications:
 - A. *Implantable device* for age ≥ 5 years; or *head band device* for age < 5 years or for members medically unable to have an implant;
 - B. Single sided or bilateral conductive hearing loss; or single sided or bilateral mixed conductive and sensorineural hearing loss; or single sided sensorineural hearing loss;
 - C. Pure tone average bone conduction threshold (measured at 0.5, 1, 2, and 3kHz) ≤ 70 dBHL (decibels hearing level) and an unaided speech discrimination score not worse than 60%;
 - D. For bilateral BAHA, there is a mean maximum difference <10 dB between the right bone conduction threshold and left bone conduction threshold;
 - E. For single sided deafness, the hearing ear should have a bone conduction threshold of 20dB;
 - F. One of the following indications:
 1. Congenital or surgically induced malformations of the ear canal such that it does not exist or cannot accommodate a standard air-conduction hearing aid,
 2. Chronic infection or dermatitis of the middle or outer ear that is exacerbated by a standard air-conduction hearing aid,
 3. Allergic reactions to standard air-conduction hearing aids,
 4. Single-sided deafness occurred after removal of an acoustic neuroma, from trauma, or from a viral or vascular insult,
 5. Tumors of the external canal and/or tympanic cavity,
 6. Air-conduction hearing aid ineffective due to large conductive hearing loss (inadequate gain, uncomfortable occlusion, and feedback effects).
- II. BAHAs for any other indication are considered **not medically necessary** because effectiveness has not been established.
- III. It is the policy of health plans affiliated with Centene Corporation[®] that **replacement** of a BAHA(s) and/or its external components (external sound processor) is considered **medically necessary** when any one of the following is present:
 - A. The existing device(s) is no longer functional and cannot be repaired; or
 - B. A change in the member's condition makes the existing unit(s) inadequate for the

CLINICAL POLICY

Bone-Anchored Hearing Aid

hearing-related activities of daily living and improvement is expected with a replacement unit(s);

C. A sound processor replacement if the current processor is at least five years old.

IV. It is the policy of Health Plans affiliated with Centene Corporation that **replacement or upgrade** of an existing, properly functioning BAHA and/or its external components (external sound processor) is considered **not medically necessary** when requested only for convenience or to simply upgrade to a newer technology before the timeframe noted in section III.

Background

Hearing loss affects up to 20 percent of the population in the United States (Lin, Niparko, and Ferrucci, 2011). According to Blanchfield, et al., as many as 738,000 people in the U.S. experience severe to profound hearing loss, with 8% of these under age 18 (2001). Although the reliability and effectiveness of hearing aids have improved over time, there are still limitations to conventional air-conduction hearing aids.

Physical and medical complications such as chronic ear infections and canal deformities can make it difficult to impossible for some to wear hearing aids. Poorly fitting ear molds can lead to bothersome feedback and inadequate functional gain. Implantable hearing devices can improve reliability and functional gain over the standard air-conduction hearing aids when some of these issues exist.

Bone-anchored hearing aids are indicated for people with conductive hearing loss, mixed hearing loss, or single sided profound sensorineural hearing loss to achieve improved auditory acuity by transmitting the sound directly through the bone into the inner ear. There are three devices currently available for use and the appropriate device is selected based upon the patient's hearing level.

A BAHA consists of a titanium implant surgically inserted into the skull attached to an abutment of which a small portion protrudes through the skin and forms a snap attachment point for a removable bone conduction hearing aid or processor. Children are typically about six years of age before an implantable BAHA is feasible because 3 to 4 mm of bone is needed to ensure osseointegration. The BAHA may be implanted either unilaterally or bilaterally.⁸ The processor is adjusted to the patient's level of hearing, much like in a traditional hearing aid fitting. When complications occur, the majority of them are related to skin issues around the implant. Proper skin care and hygiene at the surgical and abutment sites are essential to maintain good skin integrity.

Coding Implications

This clinical policy references Current Procedural Terminology (CPT[®]). CPT[®] is a registered trademark of the American Medical Association. All CPT codes and descriptions are copyrighted 2020, American Medical Association. All rights reserved. CPT codes and CPT descriptions are from the current manuals and those included herein are not intended to be all-inclusive and are included for informational purposes only. Codes referenced in this clinical policy are for informational purposes only. Inclusion or exclusion of any codes does not

CLINICAL POLICY

Bone-Anchored Hearing Aid

guarantee coverage. Providers should reference the most up-to-date sources of professional coding guidance prior to the submission of claims for reimbursement of covered services.

| CPT®* Codes | Description |
|-------------|--|
| 69710 | Implantation or replacement of electromagnetic bone conduction hearing device in temporal bone |
| 69711 | Removal or repair of electromagnetic bone conduction hearing device in temporal bone |
| 69714 | Implantation, osseointegrated implant, temporal bone, with percutaneous attachment to external speech processor/cochlear stimulator; without mastoidectomy |
| 69715 | Implantation, osseointegrated implant, temporal bone, with percutaneous attachment to external speech processor/cochlear stimulator; with mastoidectomy |
| 69717 | Replacement (including removal of existing device), osseointegrated implant, temporal bone, with percutaneous attachment to external speech processor/cochlear stimulator; without mastoidectomy |
| 69718 | Replacement (including removal of existing device), osseointegrated implant, temporal bone, with percutaneous attachment to external speech processor/cochlear stimulator; with mastoidectomy |

| HCPCS Code | Description |
|------------|--|
| L8690 | Auditory osseointegrated device, includes all internal and external components |
| L8691 | Auditory osseointegrated device, external sound processor, replacement |
| L8692 | Auditory osseointegrated device, external sound processor, used without osseointegration, body worn, includes headband or other means of external attachment |
| L8693 | Auditory osseointegrated device abutment, any length, replacement only |

ICD-10-CM Diagnosis Codes

| ICD-10-CM Code | Description |
|------------------|--|
| H60.00-H62.8X9 | Diseases of external ear |
| H61.001- H61.039 | Chondritis and perichondritis of external ear |
| H61.111- H61.119 | Acquired deformity of pinna |
| H65.20- H65.23 | Chronic serous otitis media |
| H65.30- H65.33 | Chronic mucoid otitis media |
| H65.411- H65.499 | Other chronic non-suppurative otitis media |
| H71.00- H71.93 | Cholesteatoma of middle ear |
| H80.00- H80.93 | Otosclerosis |
| H90.0-H90.8 | Conductive and sensorineural hearing loss |
| H91.01- H91.93 | Other and unspecified hearing loss |
| Q16.0- Q16.9 | Congenital malformation of ear causing impairment of hearing |

| Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals | Date | Approval Date |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---------------|
| Policy developed, specialist reviewed | 11/13 | 12/13 |

CLINICAL POLICY
Bone-Anchored Hearing Aid

| Reviews, Revisions, and Approvals | Date | Approval Date |
|--|-------|---------------|
| Added the indication for soft headbands for children <6 yrs and those unable to have an implant | 11/14 | 12/14 |
| Reworded policy/criteria for clarity Updated template | 12/15 | 12/15 |
| Updated template, added dermatitis to criteria I.D.2, added criteria I.D.5: “tumors of the external canal and/or tympanic cavity”. Updated hearing loss statistics in background. | 11/16 | 12/16 |
| References reviewed and updated. | 11/17 | 12/17 |
| Added criteria in III stating that BAHA or its components may be replaced if no longer functioning or if a change in the member’s condition necessitates it. Added criteria in IV that a replacement or upgrade simply for convenience or to upgrade to a newer technology is not medically necessary. Added indication for “Air-conduction hearing aid ineffective owing to large conductive hearing loss (inadequate gain, uncomfortable occlusion, and feedback effects).” Added specific dB threshold criteria for BAHA for single-sided deafness and bilateral hearing loss, per 2011 guidelines. | 09/18 | 09/18 |
| Added criteria for sound processor replacement if it is over 5 years old. | 10/18 | 10/18 |
| Annual review. Coding checked. Diagnosis code H90.0 added. References reviewed and updated. Specialty review completed. Changed “unilateral” to “single sided” throughout the policy. | 09/19 | 09/19 |
| References reviewed and updated. Removed HCPCS code L8613, added L8692. Added ICD-10 code H61.111-H61.119 | 07/20 | 08/20 |

References

1. Blanchfield BB, et al. (2001). The severely to profoundly hearing-impaired population in the United States: Prevalence estimates and demographics. *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology*, 12, 183-189.
2. Christensen L, et al. Comparison of traditional bone-conduction hearing aids with the BAHA system. *J Am Acad Audiol*. 2010 April;21(4):267-73.
3. Cass SP. Surgical Placement of Bone-anchored hearing systems. *Medscape*. Oct 29, 2019. <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1989565-overview>
4. Hagr A. BAHA: Bone-anchored hearing aid. *Int J Health Sci (Qassim)*, 2007 July; 1(2): 265-276.
5. Hol MK, et al. The BAHA Softband. A new treatment for young children with bilateral congenital aural atresia. *Int J Pediatr Otorhinolaryngol*, 2005 Jul;69(7):973-80.
6. Lin FR, Niparko JK, Ferrucci L. Hearing loss prevalence in the United States. *Arch Intern Med*. 2011 Nov 14; 171(20): 1851–1852. doi: 10.1001/archinternmed.2011.506
7. Shohet JA. Implantable hearing devices. *Medscape*, July 14, 2017.
8. Smith RJH, Gooi A. Hearing impairment in children: Treatment. In: UpToDate, Isaacson GC (Ed), UpToDate, Waltham, MA, 2015. Accessed July 22, 2020.
9. Weber PC. Hearing amplification in adults. In: UpToDate, Deschler DG (Ed), UpToDate, Waltham, MA, 2015. Accessed Jul 22, 2020.

CLINICAL POLICY

Bone-Anchored Hearing Aid

10. Roman S, Nicollas R, Triglia JM. Practice guidelines for bone-anchored hearing aids in children. Eur Ann Otorhinolaryngol Head Neck Dis. 2011 Nov;128(5):253-8. doi: 10.1016/j.anorl.2011.04.005. Epub 2011 Sep 28.

Important Reminder

This clinical policy has been developed by appropriately experienced and licensed health care professionals based on a review and consideration of currently available generally accepted standards of medical practice; peer-reviewed medical literature; government agency/program approval status; evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations; views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas affected by this clinical policy; and other available clinical information. The Health Plan makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information used or relied upon in developing this clinical policy. This clinical policy is consistent with standards of medical practice current at the time that this clinical policy was approved. "Health Plan" means a health plan that has adopted this clinical policy and that is operated or administered, in whole or in part, by Centene Management Company, LLC, or any of such health plan's affiliates, as applicable.

The purpose of this clinical policy is to provide a guide to medical necessity, which is a component of the guidelines used to assist in making coverage decisions and administering benefits. It does not constitute a contract or guarantee regarding payment or results. Coverage decisions and the administration of benefits are subject to all terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of the coverage documents (e.g., evidence of coverage, certificate of coverage, policy, contract of insurance, etc.), as well as to state and federal requirements and applicable Health Plan-level administrative policies and procedures.

This clinical policy is effective as of the date determined by the Health Plan. The date of posting may not be the effective date of this clinical policy. This clinical policy may be subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements relating to provider notification. If there is a discrepancy between the effective date of this clinical policy and any applicable legal or regulatory requirement, the requirements of law and regulation shall govern. The Health Plan retains the right to change, amend or withdraw this clinical policy, and additional clinical policies may be developed and adopted as needed, at any time.

This clinical policy does not constitute medical advice, medical treatment or medical care. It is not intended to dictate to providers how to practice medicine. Providers are expected to exercise professional medical judgment in providing the most appropriate care, and are solely responsible for the medical advice and treatment of members. This clinical policy is not intended to recommend treatment for members. Members should consult with their treating physician in connection with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Providers referred to in this clinical policy are independent contractors who exercise independent judgment and over whom the Health Plan has no control or right of control. Providers are not agents or employees of the Health Plan.

This clinical policy is the property of the Health Plan. Unauthorized copying, use, and distribution of this clinical policy or any information contained herein are strictly prohibited.

CLINICAL POLICY

Bone-Anchored Hearing Aid

Providers, members and their representatives are bound to the terms and conditions expressed herein through the terms of their contracts. Where no such contract exists, providers, members and their representatives agree to be bound by such terms and conditions by providing services to members and/or submitting claims for payment for such services.

Note: For Medicaid members, when state Medicaid coverage provisions conflict with the coverage provisions in this clinical policy, state Medicaid coverage provisions take precedence. Please refer to the state Medicaid manual for any coverage provisions pertaining to this clinical policy.

Note: For Medicare members, to ensure consistency with the Medicare National Coverage Determinations (NCD) and Local Coverage Determinations (LCD), all applicable NCDs, LCDs, and Medicare Coverage Articles should be reviewed prior to applying the criteria set forth in this clinical policy. Refer to the CMS website at <http://www.cms.gov> for additional information.

©2016 Centene Corporation. All rights reserved. All materials are exclusively owned by Centene Corporation and are protected by United States copyright law and international copyright law. No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied, modified, distributed, displayed, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means, or otherwise published without the prior written permission of Centene Corporation. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice contained herein. Centene® and Centene Corporation® are registered trademarks exclusively owned by Centene Corporation.