



Provider communication

General information and system updates

March 8, 2024

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices for members

Applicable to: Mercy Care Complete Care, Mercy Care Long Term Care, Mercy Care DD, Mercy Care DCS CHP, and Mercy Care RBHA

Members living with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) often use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices and/or applications on cell phones or tablets for communication. The access to this technology allows members to speak and to be heard, which helps to improve their health outcomes.

As a reminder, any practice of *routinely* confiscating any communication device *is not permitted*. It prevents them from being able to communicate effectively. It also denies members their legal and civil rights under state and federal law. This includes Title II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a reminder, compliance with ADA is contractually required and also required as part of AHCCCS provider participation agreement and Arizona Department of Health Services licensing requirements.

Removal of an AAC device or the technology that operates it should only occur on an individual basis. And it should only happen when an individual has demonstrated a risk of harm to self or others, e.g. the device has been used as a weapon. In these instances, the facility must demonstrate that reasonable modifications/accommodations to their policy (such as a modified behavioral plan) cannot mitigate such a risk.

As always, don't hesitate to contact your [Mercy Care Network Management Representative](#) with any questions or comments. You can find this [Notice](#) and all other provider notices on our Mercy Care website.

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