

Sample Appeal Letter: Medical Necessity of LAMP: Words for Life

(DATE)

(INSURANCE NAME)

(INSURANCE ADDRESS)

(INSURANCE CITY, STATE ZIP)

RE: (FULL NAME OF CLIENT)

DOB: (DATE OF BIRTH)

To whom it may concern:

I recently submitted a request for purchase of the (DEVICE NAME) for my client, (CLIENT's NAME), who has a medical diagnosis of (DIAGNOSIS) and a speech-language diagnosis of (DIAGNOSIS). These diagnoses have left (HIM/HER) functionally nonverbal and unable to adequately express (HIS/HER) medical needs in an effective way without the use of Augmentative-Alternative Communication (AAC). As outlined in the AAC Evaluation Reported dated (DATE OF YOUR ORIGINAL REPORT), it is medically necessary for (CLIENT) to have access to a speech-generating device (SGD) so that (HIS/HER) medical needs can be expressed and met. (DOCTOR's NAME) was in agreement with my recommendation for purchase of the (DEVICE NAME) as the most cost-effective solution for meeting (CLIENT's) current medical communication needs.

On DATE, I received notice that the E2510 (DEVICE NAME) was denied due to the following explanation:

*(*INSERT THE WORDING TO MATCH WHAT WAS SAID IN YOUR DENIAL DOCUMENT)*

My request for the (DEVICE) with LAMP: Words for Life is medically necessary for the following reasons:

- It will, or is reasonably expected to, reduce or ameliorate the mental and developmental effects of (CLIENT's) disability. (CLIENT) is unable to communicate verbally. The ability to communicate is essential to learning, working and social interaction as well as to achieve and maintain independence. When communication is impaired, it affects every aspect of a person's life. When communication is impaired, the individual is at risk medically as they are not able to express health concerns or report abuse. Lack of communication can lead to behavior problems limiting the individual's functional ability within the community.
- Communication is most effective when the individual can produce spontaneous novel utterances and therefore say whatever he wants to say at any time. For this to occur with use of an augmentative alternative communication (AAC) device, one must have access to a large single word vocabulary with an emphasis on the most frequently occurring words in speech along with other encoding methods such as spelling and word prediction. The motor patterns used to access these words must be consistent for speed of access and fluency of communication. Without consistent motor patterns to access words, the communicator must rely on picture recognition and screen navigation placing a greater cognitive load on the communicator and reducing communication rate.
- The (DEVICE) uses a unique language program, LAMP Words for Life, that utilizes a consistent motor pattern to access each of the over 4,000 pre-stored words. It provides three different vocabulary levels to meet the developmental needs of the nonverbal communicator; yet motor patterns for learned vocabulary do not change as access to vocabulary is increased. Words available at the beginning levels are based on research

on the most frequently used words of beginning communicators (Banajee, M., DiCarlo, C., & Stricklin, S. B., 2003). To promote learning and recall of motor patterns, similar words that are usually taught together are spaced apart and all words are accessed by three or less touches of the screen. (Dukhovny, E. & Gahl, Susanne, 2014). Also, the (DEVICE) has a unique feature, Vocabulary Builder, which allows for only targeted vocabulary to be visible while those motor patterns are learned while maintaining the integrity of all other motor patterns. This allows a communicator to utilize one language system throughout their language development.

- o Banajee, M., DiCarlo, C., & Buras-Stricklin, S. (2003). *Core Vocabulary Determination for Toddlers, Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 2, 67 - 73.
- o Dukhovny, E. and Gahl, S. (2014). *Manual motor-plan similarity affects lexical recall on a speech-generating device: implications for AAC users. Journal of Communication Disorders*, 48, 52-60.
- Alternative systems that do not incorporate consistent motor plans for vocabulary require significant relearning as language skills progress. Other systems do not provide a unique and consistent motor pattern for each word thereby increasing the cognitive skills needed to access the language in the system and decreasing fluency. Other systems incorporate several other features that do not promote spontaneous novel utterances such as visual scenes, stored phrases, and carrier phrases (the category name is spoken before the targeted word "I need HEALTH Band-Aid").
- (CLIENT) has trialed the (DEVICE) with LAMP: Words for Life and data was collected. (HE/SHE) demonstrated (DESCRIBE IMPROVEMENT) over the course of (TIME FRAME). With (HIS/HER) previous methods of communication, (HE/SHE) (DESCRIBE COMMUNICATION ABILITY WITH PREVIOUS METHODS OF COMMUNICATION).

It is therefore my clinical opinion that the (DEVICE) with LAMP: Words for Life is the most cost-effective and medically-necessary solution for increasing (CLIENT's) communication skills for increased function and independence.

If further information is needed to substantiate this request, please contact me. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

(YOUR NAME AND CREDENTIALS)

(TITLE)

(EMPLOYER NAME)

(EMPLOYER ADDRESS)

(EMPLOYER CITY, STATE, ZIP)

(PHONE)

(FAX)

(EMAIL)