

Funding to Assistive Technology Devices and Services

Many of the devices mentioned in this book are considered “low-tech,” that is, they may not be complex, electronic, or computer-operated items. These low-tech devices, such as reachers and jar openers, are usually fairly inexpensive and are available at local drug stores, through local vendors or through catalog orders. “High-tech” items can be costly, and it is good to know where you can turn for assistance to fund these devices, and the services, like assessment and training, that often accompany them.

Medicaid: The Medicaid program, established in 1965 when Title XIX was added to the Social Security Act, is a large source of public funding for assistive technology. Medicaid will not directly supply medical services (assistive technology) nor provide cash grants to its beneficiaries. Instead, it operates by providing reimbursement to providers of covered medical equipment, services and supplies for eligible persons.

In North Dakota, assistive technology is a covered expense under the following optional Medicaid services: prosthetic devices; speech/language/hearing services/ occupational therapy; physical therapy; rehabilitation services; preventive services; Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Mental Retardation; and nursing facility services under age 21.

For further information about eligibility and coverage, contact a local county social service office. Phone numbers and addresses for each may be found in the County Government section of local telephone directories.

Medicare: Also established under the Social Security Act of 1965, Medicare was established as a federal health insurance program for the aged. Later amendments extended the health care coverage to those under the age of 65 who have disabilities, and to those with end-stage kidney disease. The program was designed to reduce the out-of-pocket expenses for medically necessary health services. In addition to providing coverage for medical devices under certain conditions, Medicare will reimburse for various kinds of services and supplies (including assistive technology devices) as long as they are considered to be “medically necessary.”

Questions regarding Medicare eligibility and entitlement may be directed to your local social security office. The address and telephone number are listed in the telephone directory in the government sections under Social Security Administration.

Other Assistive Technology Funding Resources: The Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) and the North Dakota Association for the Disabled (NDAD) have established North Dakota’s Assistive Technology Financial Loan

Program. Interested individuals may contact one of the following to request initial loan application:

AT Help-Line 1-800-472-2911

NDAD (701) 775-5577

IPAT Office 1-800-265-IPAT