

Health Technology Clinical Committee Final Findings and Decision

Topic: Cochlear Implants: Bilateral versus Unilateral
Meeting Date: May 17, 2013
Final Adoption: September 20, 2013
Revised: September 20, 2024

Number and Coverage Topic:

20130517A – Cochlear Implants: Bilateral versus Unilateral

HTCC Coverage Determination:

Bilateral Cochlear Implants are a **covered benefit with conditions** consistent with the criteria identified in the reimbursement determination.

HTCC Reimbursement Determination:

Limitations of Coverage

- Bilateral severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss;
- Limited or no benefit from hearing aids;
- Cognitive ability and willingness to participate in an extensive auditory rehabilitation program;
- Freedom from middle ear infection, an accessible cochlear lumen that is structurally suited to implantation, and freedom from lesions in the auditory nerve and acoustic areas of the central nervous system;
- No other contraindications for surgery; and
- Device used in accordance with the FDA approved labeling.

Non-Covered Indicators

N/A

Agency Contact Information

Agency	Phone Number
Labor and Industries	1-800-547-8367
Public Employees Health Plan	1-800-200-1004
Washington State Medicaid	1-800-562-3022

HTCC Coverage Vote And Formal Action:

Committee Decision

Based on the deliberations of key health outcomes, the committee decided that it had the most complete information: a comprehensive and current evidence report, public comments, and agency

Revised Final

and state utilization information. The committee concluded that the current evidence on Bilateral Cochlear Implants demonstrates that there is sufficient evidence to cover with conditions. The committee considered all the evidence and gave greatest weight to the evidence it determined, based on objective factors, to be the most valid and reliable. Based on these findings, the committee voted to cover with conditions Bilateral Cochlear Implants.

Cochlear Implants: Bilateral versus Unilateral Vote

HTCC Committee Coverage Determination Vote			
	Not Covered	Covered Unconditionally	Covered Under Certain Conditions
Bilateral Cochlear Implants	0	0	9

Discussion

The Chair called for discussion on conditions for use of Bilateral Cochlear Implants due to the majority voting for coverage with conditions. The following conditions were discussed and approved by a majority:

Limitations of Coverage

Covered Conditions

- Bilateral severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss;
- Limited or no benefit from hearing aids;
- Cognitive ability and willingness to participate in an extensive auditory rehabilitation program;
- Freedom from middle ear infection, an accessible cochlear lumen that is structurally suited to implantation, and freedom from lesions in the auditory nerve and acoustic areas of the central nervous system;
- No other contraindications for surgery; and
- Device used in accordance with the FDA approved labeling

Non-Covered Indicators

N/A

Action

The committee reviewed the evidence report for existing clinical guidelines and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) decisions. CMS allows coverage of CI for the treatment of bilateral pre- or postlinguistic, sensorineural, moderate-to-profound hearing loss in individuals who demonstrate limited benefit from amplification.

The committee Chair directed HTA staff to prepare a Findings and Decision document on Bilateral Cochlear Implants reflective of the majority vote for final approval at the next public meeting.

Health Technology Clinical Committee Authority:

Washington State’s legislature believes it is important to use a science-based, clinician-centered approach for difficult and important health care benefit decisions. Pursuant to chapter 70.14 RCW, the legislature has directed the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA), through its Health Technology Assessment (HTA) program, to engage in an evaluation process that gathers and assesses the quality of the latest medical evidence using a scientific research company and that takes public input at all stages.

Pursuant to RCW 70.14.110 a Health Technology Clinical Committee (HTCC) composed of eleven independent health care professionals reviews all the information and renders a decision at an open public meeting. The Washington State HTCC determines how selected health technologies are covered by several state agencies (RCW 70.14.080-140). These technologies may include medical or surgical devices and procedures, medical equipment, and diagnostic tests. HTCC bases its decisions on evidence of the technology’s safety, efficacy, and cost effectiveness. Participating state agencies are required to comply with the decisions of the HTCC. HTCC decisions may be re-reviewed at the determination of the HCA Administrator.

Meeting materials and transcript are available on the HTA website at:
[Clinical committee meetings and materials | Washington State Health Care Authority](#)