

Date

Insurance Name and Contact

Client Name

Client ID #

Client Date of Birth:

Provider Name (Physician and SLP)

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to appeal Gateway's decision to deny coverage of the Accent 1000 with keyguard and mounting system originally recommended for client to meet his speech/language needs. Your company mentions that it is able to provide an equivalent device to the Accent 1000 from one of your participating providers, such as the Quick Talker Free Style from Ablenet. This therapist feels that the Quick Talker Free Style from Ablenet is not an equivalent device to the Accent 1000 from Prentke Romich Company and will not meet client's speech/language needs for the reasons noted below.

Client requires a language system that allows for spontaneous, generative language which he can access quickly. As client is an individual with cerebral palsy, he demonstrates some gross and fine motor concerns related to access. He requires a system in which he will not need to navigate far or press too many buttons in order to find his desired vocabulary. At the same time, he requires a vocabulary system that will allow him to build his own sentences and create his own novel utterances (a system with vocabulary to match his cognitive abilities). The combination of these two needs means that client requires a language system in which he will not need to make many device hits before being able to access a wide range of vocabulary. If client is forced to navigate several steps for each vocabulary item, he will (1) take a great deal of time to communicate one message and (2) have more chance for error in each keystroke due to his fine motor concerns possibly causing him to need to delete items and retrace steps, creating an even longer time for him to communicate messages. Client needs to have a system which will allow him to communicate novel, generative messages in a time-efficient manner that will not result in increased frustration and difficulty with fine-motor concerns. As client is young, any system that will not allow for this efficiency will likely lead to frustration and device abandonment. The efficiency of the language system is also essential for client to be able to communicate time-relevant information in safety/emergency situations, one of the important reasons we are exploring an augmentative communication device for client. At this time, the only pictorial language system that provides client access to large amounts of vocabulary while still requiring few key hits for each vocabulary item is the language system associated with Prentke Romich Company devices.

The Unity language system (available only with a PRC Accent device) contains up to 6000 core (the most common 400-500 words we use to communicate) and fringe (more specific and less frequently-used) vocabulary words. The most frequently used ones are always available on the first screen, and always in the same place, thereby minimizing the number of keys to select and making it easier to learn. Unity can be used for basic, functional communication and grow with client all the way to talking in complete sentences. It provides all the tools needed for learning language. Client has demonstrated the ability to learn this language system quickly and easily.

The original evaluation also found client to require a keyguard to accurately hit buttons in which there were more than 8 buttons on a page (please see original evaluation report, page 3). To meet the requirements of efficiency in accessing a large amount of vocabulary, client absolutely requires a device that has more than 8 buttons per page and, thus, requires a device that has a keyguard. As depicted, two essential elements to client being successful with an augmentative device include:

1. A pictorial language system that allows for quick access to a wide range of vocabulary and the ability to create novel, generative language in a time-efficient manner
2. A device with slightly larger buttons with the ability for a keyguard to attach to the device.

The Quick Talker Free Style, that your company suggested as meeting client's communication needs, is listed as a "customizable iPad-based speech generating device (SGD)" from the AbleNet website. While the Quick Talker Free Style does provide access to one of PRC's language formats, LAMP – Words for Life, the LAMP app only comes in an 84-button framework and does not have a keyguard. Client was working on a 60-button framework on the Accent 1000 and had several more mishits with more than 60 buttons per page. A trial of the Accent 1000 was conducted after the Accent 800 due to the fact that client needed a larger button size in order for him to be accurate in his button hits. The small size of the buttons on the LAMP program, especially without a keyguard, will not meet client's physical needs for accessing a device. There are no other PRC-supported language apps available for iPad devices. The other language systems available for iPads require more sophisticated navigation and many more keystrokes to allow a user access to a wide range of vocabulary. The nature of the iPad further does not work well for use with a keyguard. Client will not be able to attach his own keyguard and swiping actions that are typically required for iPads will not be possible with a keyguard already attached. Many of the other language programs that have greater vocabulary abilities for an iPad require swiping or scrolling abilities, which again do not allow client the physical access support (a keyguard) that he needs to be a successful augmentative communication user.

In summary, access to a wide range of vocabulary, the ability to create novel utterances, the ability to employ a keyguard, and the need for time-efficient communication through reduced number of key hits per vocabulary item are essential elements required in a communication device to allow client to be a successful augmentative communication user. The only device we have found that successfully meets these needs for client is the Accent 1000 with keyguard and

mounting system. We would appreciate your reconsideration of this matter. Please feel free to contact SLP with questions you may have regarding this matter.

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Name of SLP

Speech-Language Pathologist

*Assurance of Financial Independence*

The speech-language pathologist writing this letter is not an employee of nor has any financial relationship with the suppliers of speech-generating devices. All information conveyed in this letter was presented with the best interest of the client in mind. The professional interest of the speech language pathologist performing this evaluation is solely the communication success of the individual.