What’s New in Augmentative Communication?

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Objective:

Develop strategies to promote community inclusion in meeting the needs of persons with developmental disabilities

Notes:
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The presenters are employees of Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital and have no financial relationship with any of the other companies mentioned in this presentation. As clinicians, it is our responsibility to determine the least costly alternative that will meet our clients’ communicative needs.
Definitions

• AAC-Augmentative and Alternative Communication
• SGD-Speech Generating Device
• DME-Durable Medical Equipment

Questions? Discussion?

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• This is by no means meant to be an exhaustive list as the world of technology is expanding at a rapid rate
• At one point there were an average of 11 new AAC apps being published per week and over 250 AAC apps in the app store
• We will also provide a list of resources to track new technology
Our Clinic

- Most evaluations are completed by an OT/ATP and an SLP

- We have an engineer on call as needed for consults on complex switches, mounting and at times EADLS

- Can also have OTs consult on seating and positioning as needed

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- Most of our evaluation SGD are on loan from the major manufacturers. If we need a device that we do not have on hand, we borrow it from the manufacturer

- We will borrow a device in advance if the need is anticipated or see clients for further evaluation as needed

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New Speech Generating Devices
Important terms

**SGD**
- Speech Generating Device

**Dedicated**
- "Locked" into vocabulary, other features cannot be used. Most insurances will only fund dedicated devices

**Open**
- Other features of devices can be used, has access to internet programs/apps can be added

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**DynaVox T10**
- Tablet-style device
- Android operating system
- Features Compass App
  - Can edit from the cloud
  - Includes a copy that can be used on another Tablet

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**Tobii M8**
- Tablet-based (Windows 8)
- Wearable speaker
- Feature Tobii Communicator and Sono Suite
- Not covered by Michigan Medicaid at this time
PRC Accent 800-D

- Tablet-based
- Features Unity and NuVoice Software
- Can add WordPower
- Locked out of Windows 8, but technical support can be accessed via WI-FI

Saltillo

- Improvements on NOVA chat 5
- Slimmer
- Now features a stand
- NOVA 7 may be going through a similar change?

FRS-ComLink ProSlate 8

- iPad Mini is locked into communication app of your choice to convert to a dedicated device
- Features built in flexible stand and wearable sound pod
Lingraphica

- Overhauled entire line
- AllTalk-Convertible laptop
- TouchTalk-large tablet
- MiniTalk-small tablet
- Aimed at people with Aphasia

Access

AbleNet Blue 2 Switch

Provides single or dual switch access to:
- iDevices running iOS 7
- Apple desktop or laptop computers running OS X Mavericks
- all switch accessible apps or software on iOS, OS X, Windows, and Android via Bluetooth
Switch Access by Origin Instruments

Swifty
- Allows switch access via USB port
- Works with up to 2 wired or 3 wireless switch Via Beam
- Automatically detects stereo vs. mono plugs

Tapio
- iPad, iPhone and iPod touch Switch Interface
- Allows a single switch scanner to highlight to an app on the home screen, launch it, and scan to controls within the app
- Plug switch into Tapio and Tapio into an apple dock adaptor
Beam
• Wireless transmitter for HeadMouse extreme and Swifty
• Allows a user to actuate the left, right and middle mouse buttons using adaptive switches without a direct connection
• Sends up to three button events that Swifty interprets as mouse buttons, joystick buttons or keyboard keys based on configuration

Tecla Shield Dos
• Allows use of external switch or wheelchair access to iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch and Android devices
• By Komodo

Device Mounts
• Most of these mounts would be private pay
  • Consider durability, needs of client
  • “You get what you pay for”
Unite Wheelchair Mount

- Universal tablet mount
- Works with 7-12” tablets
- Features a C-clamp which mounts to flat or round surfaces
- Available from the Joy factory

Hover Mounting System (AbleNet)

- Super Clamp Allows for quick transfers between locations
- Wide selection of mounting plates available

Tablet Tube Mount

- Allows conversion of older mounts to mounts for tablets
- RJ Cooper
iPad/Tablet Combo Mount

- Fits a variety of different tablets and keyboards
- Encourages better positioning
- Decrease “head bobbing”
- RJ Cooper

Modular Hose Mount

- Features an Apple Mount Wizard as well as guides on how to build a mount to meet your desired specifications
- Will mount phones and tablets with or without cases
- Fixed or movable mounts

RAM Mounts
Cases

Many available commercially

RJ’s iPad Ultimate II Case
- Well padded
- Removable handle
- Available carrying strap
- Built-in stand
- Does not muffle sound

ChatWrap
- For iDevices
- Built-in Bluetooth amp
- Allows for iOS 7 switch control—single and dual (dual for TouchChat app only)
- Available from Silver Kite
SoundPOD

- Allows an iDevice to be wearable SGD
- Pod can be detached and worn around the neck for more natural communication

AnyGlove

- Turns Almost Any Fleece, Fabric or Synthetic Leather Gloves Into Touchscreen Compatible Gloves
Power Buddy Wheelchair Light/USB Charger

- Powers most portable electronic devices off wheelchair charging port
- Doubles as a headlight

iPad Accessibility Features

- VoiceOver
  - Gesture-based screen reader
  - Describes what is happening on the screen
  - Navigate with gestures
  - Allows for use of “curtain” for privacy
  - Can speak as you type
  - Corrects misspellings
  - The Rotor is a virtual control that allows you to change what is being voiced
  - Many apps are accessible
  - Compatible with many Braille Displays
Siri

- Allows for voice command
- Can provide reminder
- Can be used to turn many accessibility features on and off

Zoom

- Built-in magnification
- Works with VoiceOver for those with impaired coordination

Assistive Touch

- Allow adaptation of response of screen – i.e. Can change “Pinch” gesture to a tap
- Allows for creation of custom gestures
- Can access Home button with a tap of the screen
- Can rotate or “shake” when the device is mounted
Switch Control
• Allows for scanning and choice making using the screen as a switch or using an external Bluetooth enabled switch

Guided Access
• Allows the device to be locked into a specific app by disabling the home button
• Also allows touch to be restricted to certain areas of the screen

Speak Selection
• Allows users with good fine motor coordination to speak text on the screen
• Allow iPad to be used as simple speech generating device without additional apps
AAC Evaluation

• Inexpensive apps for iPad
  – AAC Evaluation Genie
  – ATEval2Go
  – Lingraphica Device Assessment Tool
  – Common Core Early Language Screener
• Web based
  – Communication Matrix

Implementation

• PRC Language Lab Apps
• Video modeling
  – Shadow Puppet
  – Learn by Video
  – iMovie
• Vendor Websites
• Manufacturer’s Representative

Resources for AAC

New AAC apps and products are coming out at a rapid rate. There were over 250 AAC apps in 2013. It is good to know where to look for ratings and comparisons instead of trying to keep track of them all on your own.
AAC TechConnect
• For a small subscription fee they have AAC Device Assistant and the AAC App Assistant
• Put in the features that are needed and it will provide you with a list of devices or apps to check out
• They research apps to assure good technical support
• Many other resources

PrAACtical AAC
• Reviews tools and teaching strategies
• Focus on children and adults
• Weekly blogs

Michigan’s Integrated Technology Supports (MITS)
• Lending library dedicated devices and iPads with apps
• Can be borrowed by schools for students
• Workshops
• Conferences
• Downloadable documents
Geek SLP
- Primary focus is on iDevices
- Owner of Smarty Ears
  - Feature many apps for speech, language, communication and assessment
- MANY handouts

Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT)
- Listserv
  - Good place to have questions answered and learn about new products
- Many documents featured on website

Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA)
- Webinars
- Listserves
- Offers variety of certifications including Assistive Technology Professional (ATP)
- Annual conference
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

- Special Interest Division
- ASHA Community
- Discussions can be digested and sent out daily
- Many articles
- Assistance with issues

AbleNet

- Webinars
- Online trainings
- Good technical support
  - Describe what you need, they will match you to the products

Social Media

- Facebook
- Pinterest
- Twitter
  - Once you start researching your area of interest, the sites will suggest related resources
Funding

Capped Rental
- For Medicare patients, though often other insurances follow
- SGDS are rent-to-own over 13 months
- Devices need to be returned if client is admitted to the hospital, Hospice or a skilled nursing facility or is not using it
- The DME provider owns the SGD until the final payment is made

Some Issues
- The SGD must last 5 years
- All fundable SGDs are included
- SGDs cannot be "unlocked" for other uses until ownership transfers to the user
- The rental term does not start over if a device is returned to the vendor so it will be difficult to switch manufacturers
- Equipment may be used
Some Benefits

• An easy out if the person changes their mind, does not end up using it or improves and no longer needs it
• All repair costs covered by manufacturer during rental period

ICD-10

• Delayed until at least next year

Face-to-Face

• Finding packets must include notes from the physician stating that they discussed the need for an SGD with the client
• Effective October 2014
• Most manufacturers are requiring this documentation now
Dedicated Device Definition?

- Currently devices being designed for other purposes are being “locked” into communication software, repackaged and being sold as dedicated devices fundable by most insurances
- These may be eliminated as options by pending legislation

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- Only products that can be billed to Medicare as SGDs are those for which written coding verification has been made by the PDAC (Pricing Data Analysis and Coding) contractor and are listed on the Product Classification List
- Administered by Noridian in Michigan

Research on PDAC

- E2500 (digitized, less than 8 minutes)-0
- E2502 (digitized, 8-20 minutes)-2
- E2504 (digitized, 20-40 minutes)-1
- E2506 (digitized, 40 minutes+)-4
- E2508 (Text-to-Speech)-3
- E2510 (Synthesized, robust)-many
*Some major manufacturers are not current