



## Frequently Asked Questions - Medicaid Reimbursement Rates

Any information contained in this document should not be construed as legal advice and is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter. All individuals who wish to verify legal requirements of license holders should consult the practice act and all relevant regulatory chapters for the practice of Speech-Language Pathology.

**Q: Why have rates been so low, for so long?**

A: Rates are set according to a formula in the SC Medicaid State Plan, which is on file with CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services). This formula is highly dependent on the conversion factor (CF) for Medicare, which continues to decrease each year. Medicaid rates were linked to the Medicare physician fee schedule around 2007-2008, at which time we were receiving more per unit for 92507 than we are in 2024. SCSHA has had limited opportunities to advocate for rate increases due to a variety of factors. The economy in SC is booming\* according to Governor McMaster, and SC DHHS recognizes that providers have had increasing costs with stagnant or reducing reimbursement rates, which puts access to quality care in jeopardy.

\*Article about SC Economy:

<https://businessfacilities.com/gov-henry-mcmaster-south-carolina-boasts-booming-economy/>

**Q: What will the reimbursement rate be for 92507?**

A: We don't know how the additional funds will impact each CPT code, yet. We will certainly update our members once we have that information. The fee schedules are updated on the SC DHHS website twice per month (usually the 1st and the 15th), so you are welcome to check those fee schedule tables once the budget passes in spring/summer 2024. The overall rate increase for SLP, PT, and OT services totals \$3.01 million, which is on top of the reimbursement we are already receiving for services.

**Q: What about 92526 (feeding/swallowing therapy)? Why is it lower than speech therapy if I spend 53 minutes or more with a patient?**

A: The state plan formula dictates that this code should have a higher reimbursement rate, so we are counting on continued advocacy in 2024 to ask SC DHHS to increase the payment rate for 92526. We recognize that feeding/swallowing therapy is reimbursed higher nationally (medicare physician fee schedule) than 92507, but that has not translated into SC Medicaid rates since the code was added to the SLP fee schedule. More to come!

**Q: What else can we do to ensure we don't experience years of reimbursement rate problems again?**

A: Several things can help advocate on multiple fronts to prevent these problems. Private practices can advocate for increases with commercial carriers (Aetna, BCBS, Cigna, UnitedHealthcare, etc.). A market rate analysis is referenced by commercial and state payers when they consider reimbursement rate increases. If practices are not asking for rate increases, it sends the message to the payers that the current rates are sustainable and appropriate. Practices can start tracking practice expenses to obtain data useful for advocating with commercial carriers and Medicaid (MCO) payers. .



## South Carolina Speech-Language Hearing Association

**Q: What is SCSHA doing to ensure they stay aware of problems affecting practices?**

Our SCSHA reimbursement committee is working on creating a tool to help you calculate practice expense data, that AND submit it to SCSHA so we can gain “global level” data each year. As an association, we need to hear from members who are experiencing problems related to payments from commercial carriers and medicaid payers. When we have a better “pulse check” on what’s going on in real time, we can be in *advocacy mode* rather than *crisis mode*. We have started doing monthly provider calls to check in with you, and we have an active SCSHA reimbursement committee that is passionate about helping SCSHA’s leaders to stay ahead. You can check out the calendar on [SCSHA.net](https://www.scscha.net) to see dates of future monthly provider calls and get engaged with SCSHA!

**Q: How can I find out what the CPT code use/limitations are, and the fee schedule for SC Medicaid?**

A: The SC DHHS website has been revamped in late 2023. If you previously saved these links, you may need to update them.

To access the SC Medicaid Fee Schedule: <https://www.scdhhs.gov/providers/fee-schedules>

To access the provider manual: <https://www.scdhhs.gov/provider-manual-list>

You will need to pull the updated version of the private rehabilitative and audiological services manual for SLP, Aud, PT, and OT services.

*If you are passionate about collecting data at the state level about reimbursement, we would love for you to join SCSHA’s Reimbursement Committee this year!*