Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC)
831-2526
People who have difficulty speaking may benefit from augmentative or alternative communication methods. A speech-language pathologist will assess communication needs and an occupational therapist will assess physical access needs and recommend equipment to trial. The therapists will also provide training to clients and caregivers on the use of the equipment. A large variety of equipment is available for assessment and trial, including alphabet boards, eye gaze systems, speech generating devices, laptop computers with speech software, voice amplifiers and switches.

Computer Access
787-1757
Individuals with disabilities can use the latest high-tech devices, for both work and leisure, including computers, PDAs, cell phones, and video game systems. The Computer Access Clinic assists clients in finding ways to use these complex devices. A multidisciplinary team, including an Occupational Therapist and a Computer Engineer, work to identify issues and find solutions.

The service maintains a supply of adaptive keyboards, mice, software, and personal electronics. These are available for clients to use in the clinic, or to borrow for trial at home or work. If a commercially available device will not meet the client’s needs, the staff can modify a device, create a new device, or create custom designed software.

AT Rental Program
831-2526
A variety of assistive devices including augmentative/alternative communication equipment, switches, environmental controls, and computer access equipment are available to rent through the AT Rental Program. Equipment may be rented at low monthly rates to clients on a short-term basis; long-term rentals may be negotiated in some situations. Rental fees are used to help maintain the program. A rent-to-own option is not available.

Assistive Technology
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

are offered out of Deer Lodge Centre and Health Sciences Centre. To obtain a referral form please call 831-2526

1 Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act, 1973
Mechanical
787-2370
Staff members working in a modern, well-equipped machine shop are able to meet the most challenging of needs. Many devices that are not commercially available are custom designed and fabricated. Custom modifications to wheelchairs, scooters, keys, cutlery, appliances and transfer aids are just a few of the many everyday items that are adapted for use in the home. Computers, office and industrial equipment can also be modified for the workplace.

Automotive
787-2370
Automotive Services can install a variety of modifications to a range of motorized vehicles to enable the driver to control the gas and brake pedals with their hands. A left-foot gas pedal allows the driver to use their left foot rather than their right. Special light-action controls and modified low-effort steering enables quadriplegic drivers to drive independently. Electronic modifications to a vehicle can put the dimmer, wipers, signals, and the horn within easy reach of the driver, while using hand controls.

An Occupational Therapist will assess a client’s strength, range of motion, cognitive and perceptual skills before any vehicle modifications take place. This will ensure the changes made will work effectively and safely for the client.

Wheelchair Controls
787-1757
The wheelchair program works to find solutions for people who are not able to drive their power wheelchairs with a regular joystick. A multidisciplinary team including an Occupational Therapist, the Electronics Department and Mechanical Services works with the client. Other healthcare professionals, vendors, and the Manitoba Wheelchair Program may also be consulted to find solutions that keep the client comfortable and mobile. After assessment, joystick modifications or alternative drive controls such as head control, chin control, sip and puff or other switch access methods may be recommended. Interventions can include commercially available components, as well as custom fabrication or modification to mounting hardware, lap trays, drive controls, seating systems, and switches. Wheelchairs can also be custom programmed to suit the individual client’s needs.

AT Products and Services:
- Provides clinical assessment and consultation for adult Manitobans with disabilities
- Provides training on the use of AT equipment
- Develops devices
- Is active in education and research

The AT multidisciplinary team works together on many referrals and projects. However, each area brings specific skills and expertise to find solutions for individuals. A brief description of each of the areas of Assistive Technology Products and Services is included below:

Electronics
787-2367
Computer-aided design techniques and microcontroller technology are used to design and construct equipment to help clients gain control over their environments. The Electronics Section staff can modify nurse call systems, apartment intercoms, door openers or locks. They also design environmental controls for accessing appliances such as the telephone, television, VCR, DVDs, lamps and others.

“Assistive Technology strives to maximize capabilities and opportunities for adults who are physically challenged due to injury or disease.”

“I have a question about the mechanical services. Can you tell me more about the modifications they perform?”

“Certainly! Our mechanical staff can work on a variety of projects to meet the needs of our clients. They can modify vehicles, wheelchairs, and other equipment to make it easier to use for those with disabilities.”

“What kind of modifications do they typically perform on vehicles?”

“They can install features like left-foot gas pedals, light-action controls, and modified low-effort steering. These modifications allow individuals with limited mobility to drive independently.”

“Can they also modify wheelchairs?”

“Yes, they can. Our wheelchair program works to find solutions for clients who are not able to drive their power wheelchairs with a regular joystick. They can install joystick modifications, alternative drive controls, and other features to make wheelchair use more comfortable and mobile.”

“I see. And what about the automotive services? What kind of modifications can they do?”

“The automotive services can install a variety of features for vehicles. They can install left-foot gas pedals, light-action controls, and modified low-effort steering. They can also modify the environment around the vehicle to make it easier for the driver to access controls.”

“What about the wheelchair controls? How do they work?”

“The wheelchair controls work similarly to the automotive services. They can install joystick modifications, alternative drive controls, and other features to make wheelchair use more comfortable and mobile.”

“Thank you for explaining all of this. It’s really helpful to have a clear understanding of what each team can do.”

“You’re welcome! If you have any more questions, feel free to ask.”