

The Provision of Assistive Devices in Selected Countries

Mariela Yabo Tom Einhorn

The study was funded with the assistance of the Mobility and
Rehabilitation Technology Unit, Medical Division, Ministry of Health

Editor: Revital Aviv Matok
English translation: Evelyn Abel
Graphic design: Efrat Speaker

Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute

P.O.B. 3886 Jerusalem 9103702, Israel

Tel: (02) 655-7400 Email: brook@jdc.org

Website: Brookdale.jdc.org.il

Jerusalem | February 2020

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Abstract

The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute and the Mobility and Rehabilitation Technology Unit of the Ministry of Health are conducting a study to examine the systems of funding and provision of assistive devices in Israel. As part of the study, we reviewed these systems in selected, developed countries in order to learn how they address populations with similar needs and to highlight prominent supply patterns as a basis for comparison with the Israeli system.

The review focused on four English-speaking countries: the US, Canada, England, and Australia. One Scandinavian country was also included – Denmark, as a leading model of welfare policy. The review focused on a number of principal aspects in the respective countries: policy and legislation; identification of the responsible authority and the major stakeholders; the main stages of the supply process in each country, from the initial request to the provision of the assistive device, and post-provision follow-up, as the case may be; available funding and purchase possibilities; and the main difficulties and the criticism of people with disabilities regarding the provision procedure, if any.

The countries reviewed operate diverse funding and supply systems. They differ, for example, in their focus of authority and authorization. Whereas in Australia, these are centralized, in Canada, they are local. The other countries employ centralized and local provisions to varying degrees. Variation was also found in the types of devices being supplied, conditions of eligibility, funding possibilities, mode of service management, and extent of reliance on external agencies to operate the service.

The differences between the countries reviewed make it possible to situate the Israeli mechanism for the provision of assistive devices along various axes. The comparison enables an examination of the aspects in which Israel operates similarly to other countries and those in which it operates differently from them. Thus, the review sheds light on existing means to improve the Israeli mechanism for the provision of assistive devices and to facilitate efficiency.