Bioimpedance Devices for Detection and Management of Lymphedema

Policy #  00780
Original Effective Date:  06/01/2022
Current Effective Date:  04/10/2023

Applies to all products administered or underwritten by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana and its subsidiary, HMO Louisiana, Inc. (collectively referred to as the “Company”), unless otherwise provided in the applicable contract. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and we reserve the right to review and update Medical Policy periodically.

Note: Surgical Treatments for Breast Cancer-Related Lymphedema is addressed separately in medical policy 00635.

Services Are Considered Investigational
Coverage is not available for investigational medical treatments or procedures, drugs, devices or biological products.

Based on review of available data, the Company considers devices using bioimpedance (bioelectrical impedance spectroscopy) for use in the diagnosis, surveillance, or treatment of individuals with lymphedema, including use in subclinical secondary lymphedema, to be investigational.*

Background/Overview
Lymphedema
Lymphedema is an accumulation of fluid due to disruption of lymphatic drainage. Lymphedema can be caused by congenital or inherited abnormalities in the lymphatic system (primary lymphedema) but is most often caused by acquired damage to the lymphatic system (secondary lymphedema). Breast cancer treatment is one of the most common causes of secondary lymphedema. Both the surgical removal of lymph nodes and radiotherapy are associated with development lymphedema in individuals with breast cancer. In a systematic review of 72 studies (N=29612 women), DiSipio et al (2013) reported that approximately 1 in 5 women who survive breast cancer will develop arm lymphedema. Risk factors for development of lymphedema that had a strong level of evidence were extensive surgery (ie, axillary-lymph-node dissection, greater number of lymph nodes dissected, mastectomy) and being overweight or obese.
Bioimpedance Devices for Detection and Management of Lymphedema

Policy # 00780
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Diagnosis and Staging
A diagnosis of secondary lymphedema is based on history (e.g., cancer treatment, trauma) and physical examination (localized, progressive edema and asymmetric limb measurements) when other causes of edema can be excluded. Imaging, such as MRI, computed tomography, ultrasound, or lymphoscintigraphy, may be used to differentiate lymphedema from other causes of edema in diagnostically challenging cases.

Table 1 lists International Society of Lymphology guidance for staging lymphedema based on "softness" or "firmness" of the limb and the changes with an elevation of the limb.

Table 1. Recommendations for Staging Lymphedema

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 0 (subclinical)</td>
<td>Swelling is not evident and most individuals are asymptomatic despite impaired lymphatic transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage I (mild)</td>
<td>Accumulation of fluid that subsides (usually within 24 hours) with limb elevation; soft edema that may pit, without evidence of dermal fibrosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage II (moderate)</td>
<td>Does not resolve with limb elevation alone; limb may no longer pit on examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage III (severe)</td>
<td>Lymphostatic elephantiasis; pitting can be absent; skin has trophic changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management and Treatment
Lymphedema is treated using elevation, compression, and exercise. Conservative therapy may consist of several features depending on the severity of the lymphedema. Individuals are educated on the importance of self-care including hygiene practices to prevent infection, maintaining ideal body weight through diet and exercise, and limb elevation. Compression therapy consists of repeatedly applying padding and bandages or compression garments. Manual lymphatic drainage is a light pressure massage performed by trained physical therapists or by affected individuals designed to move fluid from obstructed areas into functioning lymph vessels and lymph nodes. Complete
Bioimpedance Devices for Detection and Management of Lymphedema

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decongestive therapy is a multiphase treatment program involving all of the previously mentioned conservative treatment components at different intensities. Pneumatic compression pumps may also be considered as an adjunct to conservative therapy or as an alternative to self-manual lymphatic drainage in individuals who have difficulty performing self-manual lymphatic drainage. In individuals with more advanced lymphedema after fat deposition and tissue fibrosis has occurred, palliative surgery using reductive techniques such as liposuction may be performed.

Bioimpedance Spectroscopy
Bioimpedance spectroscopy is based on the theory that the level of opposition to the flow of electric current (impedance) through the body is inversely proportional to the volume of fluid in the tissue. In lymphedema, with the accumulation of excess interstitial fluid, tissue impedance decreases.

Bioimpedance has been proposed as a diagnostic test for this condition. In usual care, lymphedema is recognized clinically or via limb measurements. However, management via bioelectrical impedance spectroscopy has been proposed as a way to implement early treatment of subclinical lymphedema to potentially reduce its severity.

FDA or Other Governmental Regulatory Approval
U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
A selection of devices that have been cleared for marketing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) through the 510(k) process to aid in the assessment of lymphedema are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. FDA Cleared Bioimpedance Spectroscopy Devices for Lymphedema

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>510(k) Number</th>
<th>Indication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>SOZO</td>
<td>ImpediMed (Carlsbad, CA)</td>
<td>K180126</td>
<td>For adults at risk of lymphedema. Supports the measurement of extracellular fluid volume differences between the limbs and is presented to the clinician on an L-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bioimpedance Devices for Detection and Management of Lymphedema

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Dex scale as an aid to their clinical assessment of lymphedema. The device is only indicated for individuals who will have or who have had lymph nodes, from the axillary and/or pelvic regions, either removed, damaged or irradiated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Device Name</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>FDA Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>MoistureMeterD</td>
<td>Delfin Technologies (Stamford, CT)</td>
<td>K143310</td>
<td>Supports local assessment of tissue water differences between affected and contralateral non-affected arm tissues to aid in forming a clinical judgment of unilateral lymphedema in women. The device is not intended to make diagnosis or predict arm lymphedema.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>ImpediMed L-Dex™‡ U400</td>
<td>ImpediMed (Carlsbad, CA)</td>
<td>K050415</td>
<td>Supports the measurement of extracellular fluid volume differences between the arms to aid in the clinical assessment of unilateral lymphedema of the arm in women. This device is not intended to diagnose or predict lymphedema of an extremity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FDA product code: OBH.

Rationale/Source
This medical policy was developed through consideration of peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community, U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval status, nationally accepted standards of medical practice and accepted standards of medical practice in this community, technology evaluation centers, reference to federal regulations, other plan medical policies, and accredited national guidelines.
Bioimpedance Devices for Detection and Management of Lymphedema

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Secondary lymphedema may develop following treatment for breast cancer. Bioimpedance, which uses resistance to electrical current to compare the composition of fluid compartments, could be used as a tool to diagnose lymphedema.

Summary of Evidence
For individuals who have known or suspected lymphedema who receive bioimpedance spectroscopy, the evidence includes a systematic review, 1 RCT, 1 prospective comparative observational study, and multiple uncontrolled observational studies. Relevant outcomes are test validity, symptoms, and quality of life. Diagnostic accuracy studies have found a poor correlation between bioimpedance analysis and the reference standard (volume displacement or circumferential measurement). Interim results from an ongoing RCT comparing bioimpedance with standard tape measure following treatment for breast cancer have been published. Overall, 109 of 508 (21.5%) individuals received early treatment due to reaching a pre-determined threshold to trigger an intervention. A total of 12 triggering individuals progressed to clinical lymphedema (2 in the bioimpedance group [4.9%] and 10 in the tape measure group [14.7%]; P=0.130). The RCT was limited by its open-label design and lack of reporting of important health outcomes. The single prospective comparative study found a significantly lower rate of clinical lymphedema in individuals managed with bioimpedance devices but had several limitations, including nonrandomized design, lack of blinding, lack of complete data on a substantial proportion of enrolled individuals, and lack of a systematic method for diagnosing lymphedema in the control group. Retrospective studies suggested that postoperative bioimpedance monitoring is feasible but provide limited information about its efficacy. The evidence is insufficient to determine that the technology results in an improvement in the net health outcome.

Supplemental Information
The purpose of the remaining sections in Supplemental Information is to provide reference material regarding existing practice guidelines and position statements, U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Recommendations and Medicare National Coverage Decisions and registered, ongoing clinical trials. Inclusion in the Supplemental Information does not imply endorsement and information may not necessarily be used in formulating the evidence review conclusions.
Bioimpedance Devices for Detection and Management of Lymphedema

Policy #  00780
Original Effective Date: 06/01/2022
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Clinical Input From Physician Specialty Societies and Academic Medical Centers
While the various physician specialty societies and academic medical centers may collaborate and make recommendations during this process, through the provision of appropriate reviewers, input received does not represent an endorsement or position statement by the physician specialty societies or academic medical centers, unless otherwise noted.

In response to requests, input was received from 2 specialty societies and 2 academic medical centers while this policy was under review in 2011. Three of 4 reviewers agreed that bioimpedance devices are considered investigational for diagnosis, surveillance, and treatment of individuals with lymphedema. The fourth reviewer, from an academic medical center, considered the use of the technology a reasonable alternative, especially in situations in which minor lymphedema can have a large impact on an individual. One specialty society supported further research into the effectiveness of this technology and recommended reimbursement in the context of relevant clinical trials.

Practice Guidelines and Position Statements
Guidelines or position statements will be considered for inclusion in ‘Supplemental Information’ if they were issued by, or jointly by, a US professional society, an international society with US representation, or National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Priority will be given to guidelines that are informed by a systematic review, include strength of evidence ratings, and include a description of management of conflict of interest.

National Comprehensive Cancer Network Clinical Practice Guidelines on Survivorship (v.1.2022) and Breast Cancer (v.4.2022) recommend education, monitoring, and referral for lymphedema management as needed. Neither guideline mentions bioimpedance.

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Recommendations
Not applicable.

Medicare National Coverage
There is no national coverage determination. In the absence of a national coverage determination, coverage decisions are left to the discretion of local Medicare carriers.
Bioimpedance Devices for Detection and Management of Lymphedema

Policy # 00780
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Ongoing and Unpublished Clinical Trials
Some currently ongoing and unpublished trials that might influence this review are listed in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NCT No.</th>
<th>Trial Name</th>
<th>Planned Enrollment</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCT03978754</td>
<td>Assessment of Breast Cancer-Related Arm Lymphedema—Comparison of Traditional Measurement Methods and Indocyanine Green (ICG) Lymphography</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Jan 2022 (recruiting as of Dec 2021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCT02743858</td>
<td>A Prospective Surveillance Program for Assessment and Treatment of Breast Cancer-Related Lymphedema After Axillary Lymph Node Dissection</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>Apr 2023 (Recruiting as of Dec 2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unpublished</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCT01544335</td>
<td>Evaluation of the Validity of BIS as a Tool for Quantification of Lymphedema Through Comparison With Perometry and Self-Report</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>Sept 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIS: bioimpedance spectroscopy; NCT: national clinical trial.

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Policy History  
Original Effective Date:  06/01/2022  
Current Effective Date:  04/10/2023  
03/03/2022  Medical Policy Committee review  
03/09/2022  Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. New policy.  
03/02/2023  Medical Policy Committee review  
03/08/2023  Medical Policy Implementation Committee approval. No change to coverage.  
Next Scheduled Review Date:  03/2024

Coding  
The five character codes included in the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Medical Policy Coverage Guidelines are obtained from Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®)®, copyright 2022 by the American Medical Association (AMA). CPT is developed by the AMA as a listing of descriptive terms and five character identifying codes and modifiers for reporting medical services and procedures performed by physician.

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Codes used to identify services associated with this policy may include (but may not be limited to) the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Type</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPT</td>
<td>93702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCPCS</td>
<td>No codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICD-10 Diagnosis</td>
<td>All related diagnoses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Investigational – A medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational if the effectiveness has not been clearly tested and it has not been incorporated into standard medical practice. Any determination we make that a medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is Investigational will be based on a consideration of the following:

A. Whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product can be lawfully marketed without approval of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and whether such approval has been granted at the time the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product is sought to be furnished; or

B. Whether the medical treatment, procedure, drug, device, or biological product requires further studies or clinical trials to determine its maximum tolerated dose, toxicity, safety, effectiveness, or effectiveness as compared with the standard means of treatment or diagnosis, must improve health outcomes, according to the consensus of opinion among experts as shown by reliable evidence, including:

1. Consultation with technology evaluation center(s);
2. Credible scientific evidence published in peer-reviewed medical literature generally recognized by the relevant medical community; or
3. Reference to federal regulations.

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NOTICE: If the Patient’s health insurance contract contains language that differs from the BCBSLA Medical Policy definition noted above, the definition in the health insurance contract will be relied upon for specific coverage determinations.
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