National Imaging Associates, Inc.*	
Clinical guidelines **DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**	**Original Date: April 2016**
Physical Medicine – Clinical Decision Making	**Last Revised Date: ~~October~~ December 2021~~0~~**
Guideline Number: NIA_CG_609	**Implementation Date: July 2022~~1~~**

Policy Statement
This policy will be used to define Durable Medical Equipment (DME), as well as support the medical necessity of the ~~requested reviews for~~ **DME or for** prior authorization of ~~or billed~~ DME.

Scope
This policy applies to DME requests for adult and pediatric members in any setting, applicable to all physical medicine practitioners, including chiropractors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech language pathologists.

Medical Necessity
Durable Medical Equipment and services are medically necessary when the following criteria are met:

- The equipment is expected to provide improvement in specific~~,~~ measurable~~,~~ functional deficits related to a documented illness or injury; **AND**
- The DME is provided by a health care professional; **AND**
- The equipment does not have significant non-medical uses; **AND**
- Lesser or alternative options have been ruled out; **AND**
- The clinical records clearly establish the medical need for the DME

Clinical documentation must include the following elements:

- A diagnosis that justifies the equipment or supply being requested
- A treatment plan (anticipated start and end date) for the training and/or use of the DME
- Documented measurable functional deficit(s)
- Expected outcomes and benefit related to a measurable functional deficit
- Documentation of the healthcare providers training/education, supervision, and monitoring of the use of the DME, as evidenced by the identification of provider type and signature in the record
- Documentation of a trial of conservative services that failed to improve a measurable functional deficit unless contraindicated
- When appropriate, documentation of a trial of in-office use that provided improvement in a measurable functional deficit

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- When appropriate, documentation of home or vehicle assessment to ensure equipment could be utilized in the home or vehicle
- Documentation of prior equipment of a similar purpose and reasons **that** equipment no longer meets current needs
- If an insurance plan does not cover a DME, then any visit associated with instruction on the DME would not be covered

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BACKGROUND:

Definition

- DME is any equipment that provides therapeutic benefits to a patient for certain conditions and/or illnesses defined below.
- DME consist of items which:
  - Are used to treat a defined illness or injury
  - Are not useful to a person in the absence of illness or injury
  - Are reusable and durable enough for repeated use
  - Are appropriate for use outside of a medical setting such as home, at school, or ~~a~~ work
- DME includes but is not limited to: back**, knee, and ankle** supports/braces~~;~~ cervical collars~~;~~ foot orthotics~~;~~ electrical stimulation units **and supplies**~~;~~ traction devices~~;~~ hospital beds~~;~~ equipment to aid with bathing~~,~~ ~~and~~ toileting, **and dressing; splints/slings;** equipment to aid with seating and positioning~~;~~ and wheelchairs and assistive devices for gait.
- The use of any DME must have evidence of efficacy in the peer~~-~~reviewed guideline, systematic review, and/or randomized controlled trial medical literature. The use of these devices is not considered medically necessary in the absence of scientific evidence in peer~~-~~reviewed medical literature.[1-3]

POLICY HISTORY ~~SUMMARIES:~~

Date	Summary
December 2021	• Added "General Information" statement • Clarified Policy Statement • Expanded list of possible DME examples
October 2020	• Changes made to broaden the scope of the guideline and remove specific types of DME. Will utilize other guidelines for specific DME items. • Added documentation to show lesser or alternative equipment was not appropriate • Added documentation of home or vehicle assessment to ensure equipment could be used as intended • Expanded list of possible DME examples
January 2020	No edits made to guideline in response to the review of the evidence base

July 2019	• **Addition to assistive device section: spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, wheelchair user population, spinal muscular atrophy, brain injury, cerebral palsy, Rett Syndrome, and ASD.** • **Completed pulling of older references (10+ years) and replaced references that were appropriate to this guideline.** • **Moved definition section to background.**

~~July 2019~~

- ~~Addition to assistive device section: spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, wheelchair user population, spinal muscular atrophy, brain injury, cerebral palsy, Rett Syndrome, and ASD.~~
- ~~Completed pulling of older references (10+ years) and replaced references that were appropriate to this guideline.~~
- ~~Moved definition section to background.~~

~~January 2020~~

- ~~No edits made to guideline in response to the review of the evidence base~~

~~October 2020~~

- ~~Changes made to broaden the scope of the guideline and remove specific types of DME. Will utilize other guidelines for specific DME items.~~
- ~~Added documentation to show lesser or alternative equipment was not appropriate~~
- ~~Added documentation of home or vehicle assessment to ensure equipment could be used as intended~~
- ~~Expanded list of possible DME examples~~

~~REFERENCES~~REFERENCES

1. Sprouse RA, McLaughlin AM, Harris GD. Braces and Splints for Common Musculoskeletal Conditions. *Am Fam Physician*. Nov 15 2018;98(10):570-576.
2. Henderson S, Skelton H, Rosenbaum P. Assistive devices for children with functional impairments: impact on child and caregiver function. *Dev Med Child Neurol*. Feb 2008;50(2):89-98. doi:10.1111/j.1469-8749.2007.02021.x
3. Gabriner ML, Braun BA, Houston MN, Hoch MC. The effectiveness of foot orthotics in improving postural control in individuals with chronic ankle instability: a critically appraised topic. *J Sport Rehabil*. Feb 2015;24(1):68-71. doi:10.1123/jsr.2013-0036

~~Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy (APPT) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). Resources on reimbursement for pediatric physical therapy services and durable medical equipment. Available at: https://pediatricapta.org/includes/fact-sheets/pdfs/ReimbursementBrochure.pdf?v=1. Accessed August 19, 2020.~~

~~Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Durable medical equipment (DME) coverage. Available at: https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/durable-medical-equipment-dme-coverage#:~:text=%20DME%20meets%20these%20criteria%3A%20%201%20Durable,lifetime%20of%20at%20least%203%20years%20More%20. Accessed August 19, 2020.~~

~~Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Medicare claims processing manual. Chapter 20 – Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS). Revised July 31, 2020. Available at: https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/clm104c20.pdf. Accessed September 22, 2020.~~

~~Strategic Management Services (SMS). Durable medical equipment (DME) documentation required for Medicare payment. January 2009. Available at: https://www.compliance.com/resources/durable-medical-equipment-dme-documentation-required-for-medicare-payment/. Accessed August 21, 2020.~~

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. APPT. Resources on Reimbursement for Pediatric Physical Therapy Services and Durable Medical Equipment. Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy (APPT) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). Updated 2019. Accessed September 14, 2021. https://pediatricapta.org/includes/fact-sheets/pdfs/ReimbursementBrochure.pdf?v=1

2. CMS. Durable medical equipment (DME) coverage. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Accessed September 14, 2021. https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/durable-medical-equipment-dme-coverage#:~:text=%20DME%20meets%20these%20criteria%3A%20%201%20Durable,lifetime%20of%20at%20least%203%20years%20More%20

3. CMS. Medicare claims processing manual. Chapter 20 – Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS). Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Updated June

11, 2021. Accessed September 14, 2021. https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/clm104c20.pdf
4. Hermann T. Durable medical equipment (DME) documentation required for Medicare payment. Strategic Management Services (SMS). Updated January 2009. Accessed September 14, 2021. https://www.compliance.com/resources/durable-medical-equipment-dme-documentation-required-for-medicare-payment/

Reviewed/Approved by NIA Clinical Guideline Committee

~~Reviewed / Approved by~~  ~~Kathleen Norman, D.C., Medical Director, Physical Medicine~~

GENERAL INFORMATION

It is an expectation that all patients receive care/services from a licensed clinician. All appropriate supporting documentation, including recent pertinent office visit notes, laboratory data, and results of any special testing must be provided. If applicable: All prior relevant imaging results and the reason that alternative imaging cannot be performed must be included in the documentation submitted.