



IEHP UM Subcommittee Approved Authorization Guideline			
<b>Guideline</b>	Elastography	<b>Guideline #</b>	UM_DIA 08
		<b>Original Effective Date</b>	8/12/2015
<b>Section</b>	Diagnostic	<b>Revision Date</b>	8/12/20

### COVERAGE POLICY

Based on a review of the currently available literature, IEHP considers the use of Elastography (e.g. Fibroscan) medically necessary for distinguishing hepatic cirrhosis from non-cirrhosis in persons with hepatitis C or other chronic liver diseases.

### COVERAGE LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

Limitations:

1. Elastography done more than twice in one year is not considered medically necessary.
2. Performing elastography within 6 months of a liver biopsy is not considered medically necessary.
3. The IEHP UM Subcommittee considers this procedure experimental and investigational for any other condition.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Liver biopsy is considered the gold standard for diagnosis and management of chronic liver disease. It has been used to evaluate patients with viral hepatitis (particularly those with hepatitis B virus [HBV] or hepatitis C virus [HCV] infection), to stage disease, and to determine whether treatment should be pursued. However, it is an invasive procedure that may result in complications, such as possible pain and bleeding. A liver biopsy samples only a very small piece of the liver, which can lead to incorrect staging if this sample is not representative of the rest of the liver. Thus, liver biopsy can lead to sampling error, which may result in either over-staging or under-staging of fibrosis; sampling error may occur in up to 25-30% of liver biopsies. Non-invasive hepatic fibrosis tests have been introduced as an alternative.

Elastography offers several advantages compared to a liver biopsy. It is non-invasive, performed at the point of care, is painless and takes 5-7 minutes to perform. Results of the test are instantaneous and can be used to make decisions during the patient's visit.

### CLINICAL/REGULATORY RESOURCE

Medicare provides no specific policies addressing the use of elastography.

Medi-Cal Provider Manual provides policies and guidelines for billing but no clinical guidelines.

MCG addresses the use of vibration-controlled transient elastography (VCTE) ultrasound for chronic liver disease and the need to assess for advanced fibrosis or cirrhosis, but does not indicate if there is documented ascites.

Apollo states that evaluation but not monitoring of chronic liver disease is medically indicated.

The updated Treatment Policy for the Management of Chronic Hepatitis C from the California Department of Health Services (DHCS) does not address the use of elastography.

An Aetna Clinical Policy Bulletin contains frequency recommendations for this procedure. Performance of transient elastography more than twice per year is not considered medically necessary. Performance of transient elastography within 6 months following a liver biopsy is not considered medically necessary. Transient elastography is considered experimental and investigational for all other indications.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Elastography is a type of ultrasonography that takes advantage of the changed elasticity of soft tissues resulting from pathological or physiological processes. Fibrosis associated with chronic liver diseases causes the liver to become stiffer than normal tissues. Elastography can be used to differentiate affected from normal tissue (Sigrist, et al, 2017).

## REFERENCES

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3. California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). Medi-Cal Provider Manual- Radiology: Diagnostic Ultrasound <https://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/publications/masters-mtp/Part2/radidiault.pdf>
4. California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). Treatment Policy for the Management of Chronic Hepatitis C Updated and Effective March 30, 2020. Accessed 7/23/2020. <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Pages/HepatitisC.aspx>
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6. Sigrist RMS, Liao J, Kaffas AE, Chammas MC, Willmann JK. Ultrasound Elastography: Review of Techniques and Clinical Applications. *Theranostics*. 2017;7(5):1303-1329. Published 2017 Mar 7. doi:10.7150/thno.18650

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