Medica Coverage Policy

**Policy Name:** Upright Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) (Standing/Seated/Weight Bearing/Positional MRI)

**Effective Date:** 4/22/2019

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**Important Information – Please Read Before Using This Policy**

These services may or may not be covered by all Medica plans. Please refer to the member’s plan document for specific coverage information. If there is a difference between this general information and the member’s plan document, the member’s plan document will be used to determine coverage. With respect to Medicare and Minnesota Health Care Programs, this policy will apply unless those programs require different coverage. Members may contact Medica Customer Service at the phone number listed on their member identification card to discuss their benefits more specifically. Providers with questions about this Medica coverage policy may call the Medica Provider Service Center toll-free at 1-800-458-5512.

Medica coverage policies are not medical advice. Members should consult with appropriate health care providers to obtain needed medical advice, care and treatment.

**Coverage Policy**

Upright magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), also called standing, seated, weight bearing, vertical, or positional MRI, is investigative and therefore **NOT COVERED**.

Note: This policy is no longer scheduled for routine review of the scientific literature.

**Description**

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) traditionally involves imaging a patient who is lying down on an examination table that slides into the MRI unit. Upright MRI allows a patient to be imaged in various weight-bearing positions (sitting, standing, bending or twisting) that replicate axial loading of the spine during normal activities, including the position where the individual experiences the pain or symptoms. The upright MRI was not designed for claustrophobic individuals, but because there is no obstructing enclosure, it is also used for that reason. Most conventional MR scanners in clinical use have a magnetic field strength of 1.5-3.0 Tesla. Upright MRI scanners have a magnetic field strength of 0.35-0.6 Tesla, which produces a poorer-quality image compared to the conventional MRI scanners.

**FDA Approval**

The U.S. Food and Drug administration has approved upright MRI devices through a 510(k) process including the FONAR™ Upright™ MRI (FONAR Corp.) and the GE 0.35T Signa® Ovation with Excite Magnetic Resonance System (GE Medical Systems). Several low-field devices have been approved by the FDA for extremity MRI. These include the G-Scan and G-Scan Brio, Artoscan™-C; C-Scan™; and E-Scan™ XQ.

**Prior Authorization**

Prior authorization is not applicable. Claims for this service are subject to retrospective review and denial of coverage, as investigative services are not eligible for reimbursement.
Coding Considerations
Use the current applicable CPT/HCPCS code(s). The following codes are included below for informational purposes only, and are subject to change without notice. Inclusion or exclusion of a code does not constitute or imply member coverage or provider reimbursement.

CPT Codes
76498 - Unlisted magnetic resonance procedure (eg, diagnostic, interventional).

Original Effective Date: 5/1/2007

Re-Review Date(s): 1/26/2010
1/22/2013
2/17/2016
2/20/2019