

Policy Number: CP-MCD22-007A

Original Effective Date: October 1, 2022

Last Review Date: April 23, 2025

Bone Mineral Density Studies

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity and specificity for covered methods for measuring bone mineral density. Examples of covered methods for measuring bone mineral density include but are not limited to:

- Single energy x-ray absorptiometry (SEXA)
- Dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA or Dexa Scan)
- Quantitative computed tomography (QCT)
- Bone ultrasound densitometry (BUD)
- Photo densitometry
- Radiographic absorptiometry (RA)

DISCLAIMER

Coverage Policies are developed to assist in identifying coverage for UCare benefits under UCare's health plans. They are intended to serve only as a general reference regarding UCare's administration of health benefits and are not intended to address all issues related to coverage for health services provided to UCare members.

These services may or may not be covered by all UCare products (refer to product section of individual coverage policy for product-specific detail). Providers are encouraged to have their UCare patient refer to their UCare plan documents (Evidence of Coverage/Member Handbook/Member Contract) for specific coverage information. If there is a conflict between a coverage policy and the UCare plan document the UCare plan document is used to determine coverage.

Medical Assistance (Medicaid) products may provide different coverage for certain services, which may be addressed in different policies. For Minnesota Health Care Program (MHCP) policies, please consult the MHCP Provider Manual website.

Medicare products may provide different coverage for certain services, which may be addressed in different policies. For Medicare National Coverage Determinations (NCD), Local Coverage Determinations (LCD), and/or Local Coverage Articles, please consult CMS, National Government Services, or CGS websites.

Coverage Policies do not constitute medical advice. Providers are responsible for submission of accurate and compliant claims.

Product Summary

This coverage policy applies to the following UCare products:

UCare product	Applies to
UCare Individual & Family Plans (IFP), UCare IFP with M Health Fairview	
UCare Connect (SNBC)	✓
Prepaid Medical Assistance Program (PMAP), MinnesotaCare	✓
Minnesota Senior Care Plus (MSC+)	✓

Benefit category:

Radiology and Preventive Services

Definitions or summary

Bone (mineral) density studies are used to evaluate diseases of bone and/or the responses of bone diseases to treatment. Single or combined methods of measurement may be required to: (a) diagnose bone disease, (b) monitor the course of bone changes with disease progression, or (c) monitor the course of bone changes with therapy.

Bone Mineral Density Studies:

- Measures the amount of calcium and other minerals in a bone by passing x-rays with two different energy levels through the bone.
- Shows the strength and thickness of a bone and is usually done in the lower spine, hip, lower arm, wrist, fingers, and heel.
- Used to diagnose osteoporosis (a condition of lower bone density) and to see how well osteoporosis treatments are working.
- Also called BMD scan, bone densitometry, bone mineral density scan, dual energy x-ray absorptiometry, DXA and, DEXA Scan.

Risk Factors for fracture

- Menopausal status
- Low body weight
- Paternal history of hip fracture
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Cigarette smoking
- Long-term corticosteroid use
- History of previous fractures
- History of falls within the past year

Coverage policy

Covered

Preventive screening for osteoporosis:

- Women aged 65 and older.
- Postmenopausal women younger than 65 years at increased risk of osteoporosis risk as determined by clinical risk assessment tool.
- Targeted screening in select men at significant risk of osteoporosis

MSHO and Connect + Medicare: Medicare (Part B) covers this test *without cost share once every 2 years if one or more of these conditions are met:*

- Women whose physician or qualified practitioner determines them estrogen-deficient and at clinical osteoporosis risk
- Individuals with vertebral abnormalities
- Individuals getting (or expecting to get) glucocorticoid therapy for more than 3 months.
- Individuals with primary hyperparathyroidism
- Individuals monitored to assess FDA-approved osteoporosis drug therapy response.

Medicare may cover this screening more frequently than every 2 years when medically necessary. Examples of medical necessity include:

- Monitoring individuals on long-term glucocorticoid (steroid) therapy of more than 3 months. or
- Confirming baseline bone mass measurements of members in the future

Not Covered as preventive. Diagnostic services may be payable under other benefit categories.

- Tests in individuals without risk factors or a history of fractures
- Persons who take long-term medications that may cause secondary osteoporosis (e.g. glucocorticoids, aromatase inhibitors, or gonadotropin-releasing hormone agonists).
- Persons with medical conditions that may increase their risk of falls.
- Testing for secondary osteoporosis due to conditions related to metabolic bone disease or untreated hyperthyroidism.
- To monitor response to treatments for osteoporosis

CPT/ HCPCS/ICD-10 Codes

**Note: If available, codes are listed below for informational purposes only, and do not guarantee member coverage or provider reimbursement. This list may not be all-inclusive.*

CPT®, HCPCS or ICD-10 CODES	Modifier	Narrative Description
76977		Ultrasound bone density measurement and interpretation, peripheral site(s), any method
77078		Computed tomography, bone mineral density study, 1 or more sites; axial skeleton (eg, hips, pelvis, spine)
77080		Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA), bone density study, 1 or more sites; axial skeleton (eg, hips, pelvis, spine)
77081		Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA), bone density study, 1 or more sites; appendicular skeleton (peripheral) (eg, radius, wrist, heel)
77085		Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA), bone density study, 1 or more sites; axial skeleton (eg, hips, pelvis, spine), including vertebral fracture assessment
G0130		Single energy x-ray absorptiometry (SEXA) bone density study, 1 or more sites, appendicular skeleton (peripheral) (e.g., radius, wrist, heel)

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Prior authorization**Not required****Related policies and documentation**

References to other policies or documentation that may be relevant to this policy

Policy Number	Policy Description
CP-IFP21-013A	Preventive Services Adults/Women/Children

References and source documents

Links to the UCare contracts, Center for Medicare, and Medical Assistance (Medicaid) (CMS), MHCP, Minnesota statute and other relevant documents used to create this policy

[USPSTF Osteoporosis to Prevent Fractures: Screening](#)

[Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Chapter 15, section 80.5](#)

[UCare Plan Documents and Forms health plans](#)

[MLN Preventive Services Guide Bone Mass Measurement](#)

Coverage policy development and revision history

Version	Date	Note(s)
V1	Oct. 1, 2022	New policy
V2	Oct. 12, 2023	Annual Review, add benefit categories from the EOC's, update links
V3	Oct. 3, 2024	Annual Review, updated eff date, updated disclaimer, updated Not covered sentence to match the Medicare coverage policy, updated MLN in references, codes are all still active
	March 28, 2025	March 2025, DHS guideline requirement
V4	April 23, 2025	Additional risk factors from USPSTF, under coverage added bullets to the 3 rd paragraph to make easier to read. Add MSHO and Connect + Medicare to indicate information related to Medicare coverage