



## Custom Knee Orthotics DME-022

Iowa Medicaid Program	Prior Authorization	Effective Date	07/15/2022
Revision Number	4	Last Reviewed	07/18/2025
Reviewed By	Medicaid Medical Director	Next Review	07/17/2026
Approved By	Medicaid Clinical Advisory Committee	Approved Date	07/15/2022

### Descriptive Narrative

Custom-made (custom molded, custom fabricated) unloader knee braces are fabricated specifically for an individual. These braces generally use basic materials, including, but not limited to, plastic, metal, leather, or cloth in the form of sheets or bars. Fabrication involves substantial work such as cutting, bending, molding, or sewing and may involve the incorporation of some prefabricated components.

Constructing a custom-made knee brace involves much more work than a predominantly prefabricated item. A custom orthosis is fabricated for a specific individual based on clinically derived castings, tracings, molds, or images of the body part. It would only be appropriate when specific fit issues cannot be addressed by adjusting a prefabricated brace or orthosis (e.g., cutting, bending, adding extra straps).

If a brace is requested solely for use during athletic activities, the brace would not be considered necessary for the performance of activities of daily living and is, therefore, not medically necessary or covered by these criteria.

### Criteria

Custom-made (custom fabricated, custom molded) functional knee braces may be medically necessary as an alternative to a prefabricated (custom-fitted) knee brace when **ANY** of the following, but not limited to, are met:

1. Abnormal limb contour (disproportionate size of thigh and calf); **OR**
2. Knee deformity that interferes with fitting (valgus or varus limb); **OR**
3. Minimal muscle mass upon which to suspend an orthosis.

## Coding

The following list of codes is provided for reference purposes only and may not be all inclusive. The inclusion of a code does not imply any right to reimbursement or guarantee claim payment, nor does the exclusion of a code imply that its association to the HCPCS/CPT code is inappropriate.

HCPCS	Description
L1834	Knee orthosis; without knee joint, rigid, custom fabricated.
L1840	Knee orthosis; derotation, medial-lateral, anterior cruciate ligament, custom fabricated.
L1844	Knee orthosis, single upright, thigh, and calf, with adjustable flexion and extension joint (unicentric or polycentric), medial-lateral and rotation control, with or without varus/valgus adjustment; custom fabricate.
L1846	Knee orthosis; double upright, thigh and calf, with adjustable flexion and extension joint (unicentric or polycentric), medial-lateral and rotation control, with or without varus/valgus adjustment, custom fabricated.
L1860	Knee orthosis; modification of supracondylar prosthetic socket, custom fabricated (SK).
L2861	Addition to lower extremity joint, knee or ankle, concentric adjustable torsion style mechanism for custom fabricated orthotics only, each [when specified as knee].

## Compliance

1. Should conflict exist between this policy and applicable statute, the applicable statute shall supersede.
2. Federal and State law, as well as contract language, including definitions and specific contract provisions or exclusions, take precedence over medical policy and must be considered first in determining eligibility for coverage.
3. Medical technology is constantly evolving, and Iowa Medicaid reserves the right to review and update medical policy on an annual and as-needed basis.

Medical necessity guidelines have been developed for determining coverage for member benefits and are published to provide a better understanding of the basis upon which coverage decisions are made. They include concise clinical coverage criteria based on current literature review, consultation with practicing physicians in the service area who are medical experts in the particular field, FDA and other government agency policies, and standards adopted by national accreditation organizations. Criteria are revised and updated annually, or more frequently if new evidence becomes available that suggests needed revisions.

## References

Duivenvoorden T, Brouwer RW, van Raaij TM, et al. Braces and orthoses for treating osteoarthritis of the knee. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2015;(3):CD004020.

Knee Orthosis – Policy Article. Medicare Coverage Database. A52465. Revision effective date January 1, 2025.

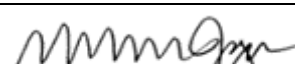
Development of utilization management criteria may also involve research into other state Medicaid programs, other payer policies, consultation with experts and review by the Medicaid Clinical Advisory Committee (CAC). These sources may not be referenced individually unless they are specifically published and are otherwise applicable to the criteria at issue.

## Criteria Change History

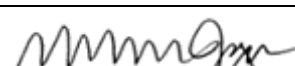
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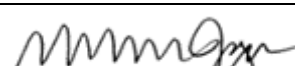
Change Date	Changed By	Description of Change	Version
07/18/2025	CAC	Annual Review. References updated.	4

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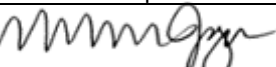
Change Date	Changed By	Description of Change	Version
07/19/2024	CAC	Annual Review.	3

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Change Date	Changed By	Description of Change	Version
07/21/2023	CAC	Annual Review.	2

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Change Date	Changed By	Description of Change	Version
07/15/2022	CAC	Criteria implementation.	1

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CAC = Medicaid Clinical Advisory Committee