

**XomeDx Medical Necessity Attestation Form  
The MassHealth (The Medicaid Benefit) EPSDT Program  
Whole Exome Sequencing (CPT 81415, 81416)**

<b>Date</b>	
<b>Patient name</b>	
<b>Date of birth</b>	
<b>Medicaid plan &amp; ID number</b>	

Coverage is requested for whole exome sequencing (WES) for this Medicaid beneficiary under the MassHealth Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) program. WES meets the MassHealth definition of medical necessity for this beneficiary, as defined by Massachusetts Administrative Code, Section 450.204.

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**I certify that the requested diagnostic service is medically necessary, as defined by the MassHealth EPSDT Program, is being ordered in accordance with generally accepted standards of medical practice, and the following are true:**

- The patient is under age 21
- The patient has undergone informed consent and counseling with a specialist with expertise in the conditions and/or relevant genes for which testing is being considered
- The patient's clinical presentation does not fit a well-described syndrome for which single-gene or single targeted panel test is available, but genetic etiology is the likely explanation
- The patient's clinical presentation is consistent with indications for which WES is recommended by professional society guidelines and/or peer-reviewed, published literature
- WES is more efficient or economical than the separate single-gene tests or panels that would be recommended based on the differential diagnosis.
- WES test results are expected to directly influence clinical decision-making and/or clinical outcome as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

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Ordering provider signature

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Ordering provider printed name

## **Background on whole exome sequencing:**

Most known genetic mutations that cause human disease occur in exons, which are individual pieces of DNA that provide instructions for making proteins. These protein-making pieces of DNA are collectively called the exome and comprise less than 2% of the human genome. WES is a highly efficient diagnostic test that identifies variations in the exons of all genes, rather than testing only one or a few genes at a time.<sup>1</sup>

WES has been available as a clinical diagnostic tool since 2011 and over the past decade, WES has increasingly been used as the single genetic test which can provide a timely diagnosis to inform appropriate care. Major insurers, including UnitedHealthcare, Cigna, and BCBS Texas, have covered WES since 2016 for patients with neurodevelopmental disorders suspected to be genetic in nature.<sup>2</sup> Today, over 90% of commercially insured lives in the US and Medicaid beneficiaries in 28 states have coverage for WES for suspected genetic disease when the clinical presentation is nonspecific and does not fit a well-defined syndrome for which a specific or targeted gene test is available.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, professional society guidelines from the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG), the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC), and the American Epilepsy Society (AES) all support the use of WES as a first-line diagnostic test for a variety of indications.

## **Medical Necessity as Defined by Massachusetts Administrative Code, Section 450.204:**

The following outlines the medical necessity of whole exome sequencing in alignment with the MassHealth EPSDT Program definition of medical necessity:

### ***Massachusetts definition of medical necessity:***

“(A) A service is medically necessary if:

(1) it is reasonably calculated to prevent, diagnose, prevent the worsening of, alleviate, correct, or cure conditions in the member that endanger life, cause suffering or pain, cause physical deformity or malfunction, threaten to cause or to aggravate a handicap, or result in illness or infirmity; and

(2) there is no other medical service or site of service, comparable in effect, available, and suitable for the member requesting the service, that is more conservative or less costly to the MassHealth agency. Services that are less costly to the MassHealth agency include, but are not limited to, health care reasonably known by the provider, or identified by the MassHealth agency pursuant to a prior-authorization request, to be available to the member through sources described in 130 CMR 450.317.”

WES is required for the care and well-being of this patient and is being ordered within generally accepted standards of medical or professional practice. Establishing a diagnosis based on clinical signs and symptoms is often challenging given the genetic and phenotypic heterogeneity associated with rare genetic disease. This patient’s clinical presentation is nonspecific and does not fit a well-defined syndrome for which a specific or targeted gene test is available. Without a definitive diagnosis, this patient’s care team cannot develop an optimal treatment plan. Earlier diagnosis and interventions provide improved outcomes and can avoid loss of function for many neurodevelopmental disorders.

Previous standard of care tests, including CMA, single gene, and multi-gene panel tests, provided substantially lower diagnostic yields and clinical utility at a typically much higher cumulative cost. Utilizing tests other than WES would only serve to extend the diagnostic odyssey, thereby delaying diagnosis and optimal treatment for this patient. Denying coverage for this test may expose the patient to ineffective therapies, irreversible deterioration of their condition, and unnecessary iterative testing and procedures.<sup>4</sup>

The use of WES is supported by the evidence-based clinical practice guidelines of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG), the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC), and the American Epilepsy Society (AES).

The American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) published evidence-based guidelines strongly recommending whole exome or genome (WGS) for patients with **(a)** one or more congenital anomalies (CA) with onset before age one year or **(b)** developmental delays (DD) or intellectual disability (ID) with onset before age 18 years in the peer-reviewed medical journal *Genetics in Medicine* on July 1, 2021.<sup>4</sup> This guideline is based on a comprehensive systematic review of published evidence, including an analytic framework for evaluating outcomes of WES for patients with CA/DD/ID.<sup>5</sup>

In October 2022, the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) released an evidence-based guideline strongly recommending WES as a first-tier test for individuals with unexplained epilepsy regardless of age. This guideline was based on a systematic evidence review of peer-reviewed literature which included 40 studies with over 3,000 patients who had ES and demonstrated a genetic diagnosis led to changes in clinical management.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the guideline discussed that expanding access to genetic testing may “lead to a decrease in existing health disparities;” but acknowledged insurance reimbursement remains a barrier.<sup>7</sup> Notably, the NSGC guideline was endorsed by the American Epilepsy Society (AES) in Sept 2022.

The *ACMG 2021 Guidelines* and the *NSGC 2022 Guidelines* powerfully demonstrate the medical necessity and clinical utility of WES in clinical scenarios like that of this patient. These guidelines are available for review online:

**ACMG 2021** – [https://www.gimjournal.org/article/S1098-3600\(21\)05168-6/fulltext](https://www.gimjournal.org/article/S1098-3600(21)05168-6/fulltext)

**NSGC 2022** – <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jgc4.1646>

WES has been available as a clinical diagnostic tool in the US since 2011 and has become standard of care in rare disease diagnosis. Major insurers, including UnitedHealthcare, Cigna, Aetna, and BCBS have covered WES since 2016 for patients with neurodevelopmental disorders suspected to be genetic in nature.<sup>2</sup> Today, over 80% of commercially insured lives in the US and Medicaid beneficiaries in 28 states have coverage for WES for suspected genetic disease when the clinical presentation is nonspecific and does not fit a well-defined syndrome for which a specific or targeted gene test is available.<sup>3</sup> Broad payer coverage further demonstrates that the medical necessity of WES is well established and is the standard of care.

1. MedlinePlus, National Library of Medicine, July 28, 2021.

2. Douglas MP, Parker SL, Trosman JR, Slavotinek AM, Phillips KA. Private payer coverage policies for exome sequencing (ES) in pediatric patients: trends over time and analysis of evidence cited. *Genet Med*. 2019 Jan;21(1):152-160. doi: 10.1038/s41436-018-0043-3. Epub 2018 Jul 12. PMID: 29997388; PMCID: PMC6329652.

3. Policy Reporter, 2023

4. Manickam, K., McClain, M.R., Demmer, L.A. et al. Exome and genome sequencing for pediatric patients with congenital anomalies or intellectual disability: an evidence-based clinical guideline of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG). *Genet Med* 23, 2029–2037 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41436-021-01242-6>

5. Malinowski, J., Miller, D.T., Demmer, L. et al. Systematic evidence-based review: outcomes from exome and genome sequencing for pediatric patients with congenital anomalies or intellectual disability. *Genet Med* 22, 986–1004 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41436-020-0771-z>

6. Sheidley, B. R., Malinowski, J., Bergner, A. L., Bier, L., Gloss, D. S., Mu, W., Mulhern, M. M., Partack, E. J., & Poduri, A. (2022). Genetic testing for the epilepsies: A systematic review. *Epilepsia*, 63(2), 375–387. <https://doi.org/10.1111/epi.17141>

7. Smith, L., Malinowski, J., Ceulemans, S., Peck, K., Walton, N., Sheidley, B. R., & Lippa, N. (2022). Genetic testing and counseling for the unexplained epilepsies: An evidence-based practice guideline of the National Society of Genetic Counselors. *J Genet Couns*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jgc4.1646>