

MEDICAL POLICY – 2.04.76

Quantitative Assay for Measurement of HER2 Total Protein Expression and HER2 Dimers

BCBSA Ref. Policy: 2.04.76

Effective Date: March 1, 2020

Last Revised: July 2, 2020


Replaces: N/A

RELATED MEDICAL POLICIES:

5.01.514 Herceptin® (trastuzumab) and Other HER2 Inhibitors

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Introduction

HER2 protein is a receptor that's found on all breast cells. HER2 is a growth-promoting protein. In about one quarter of all breast cancer cases, the HER2 gene makes too many copies. All of these extra copies of the HER2 gene mean a lot of extra HER2 protein receptors are on breast cells. The extra HER2 receptors lead to breast cells that uncontrollably grow and divide. Cancer cells with higher-than-normal levels of HER2 are called HER2-positive cancers. Knowing if breast cancer is HER2-positive guides specific treatment choices. There are standard ways of determining if breast cancer is HER2-positive. Newer lab tests have been developed that try to determine HER2 status. High quality medical studies don't show a clear connection between the information from these tests and overall health results. For this reason, these newer types of tests are considered investigational (unproven).

Note: The Introduction section is for your general knowledge and is not to be taken as policy coverage criteria. The rest of the policy uses specific words and concepts familiar to medical professionals. It is intended for providers. A provider can be a person, such as a doctor, nurse, psychologist, or dentist. A provider also can be a place where medical care is given, like a hospital, clinic, or lab. This policy informs them about when a service may be covered.

Policy Coverage Criteria

Assessment	Investigational
HER2 status (eg, HERmark® Breast Cancer Assay)	The assessment of human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2) status by quantitative total HER2 protein expression and HER2 homodimer measurement is considered investigational.

Coding

Code	Description
CPT	
81479	Unlisted molecular pathology procedure
84999	Unlisted chemistry procedure

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Related Information

Genetic Counseling

Experts recommend formal genetic counseling for patients who are at risk for inherited disorders and who wish to undergo genetic testing. Interpreting the results of genetic tests and understanding risk factors can be difficult for some patients. Genetic counseling helps individuals understand the impact of genetic testing, including the possible effects the test results could have on the individual or their family members. It should be noted that genetic counseling may substantially alter the utilization of genetic testing and may reduce inappropriate testing. Additionally, genetic counseling should be performed by an individual with experience and expertise in genetic medicine and genetic testing methods.



Description

Novel assays that quantitatively measure total human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2) protein expression and homodimers have been developed to improve the accuracy and consistency of HER2 testing.

Background

Human Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor 2

The human epidermal growth factor receptor (HER) family of receptor tyrosine kinases (EGFR/HER1, ErbB2/HER2, ErbB3/HER3, ErbB4/HER4) plays a major role in the pathogenesis of many solid tumors. In approximately 25% to 30% of breast cancers, overexpression of HER2 has been linked to shorter disease-free and overall survival, lack of responsiveness to tamoxifen antiestrogen therapy, and altered responsiveness to a variety of cytotoxic chemotherapy regimens.

Trastuzumab, a monoclonal antibody directed at the extracellular domain of HER2, has offered shorter disease-free and overall survival advantages in the metastatic and adjuvant settings in HER2-overexpressing patients, although not all patients respond. Fewer than 50% of patients with metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer show initial benefit from trastuzumab treatment, and many of those eventually develop resistance.^{1,2,3}

Current methodologies for the selection of HER2-positive patients include immunohistochemistry (IHC) to detect HER2 protein overexpression, and fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH) to detect HER2 gene amplification. However, controversy still exists regarding the accuracy, reliability, and interobserver variability of these assay methods. IHC provides a semiquantitative measure of protein levels (scored as 0, 1+, 2+, 3+) and the interpretation may be subjective. FISH is a quantitative measurement of gene amplification, in which the HER2 gene copy number is counted. However, FISH, which is considered to be more quantitative analytically, is not always representative of protein expression, and multiple studies have failed to demonstrate a relation between HER2 gene copy number and response to trastuzumab. Whereas patients who overexpress HER2 protein (IHC) or show evidence of HER2 gene amplification (FISH) have been shown to experience better outcomes on trastuzumab than

those scored negative by those assays, differences in the degree of expression or amplification by these methods have generally not been shown to discriminate between groups with different outcomes. IHC and FISH testing may be affected by interlaboratory variability, and neither test provides quantitative data that reflect the activation state of signaling pathways in tumors, which may limit their utility in patient selection.⁴ Most laboratories in North America and Europe use IHC to determine HER2 protein status, with equivocal category results (2+) confirmed by FISH (or more recently by chromogenic in situ hybridization).

Typically, HER2 activates signaling pathways by dimerizing with ligand-bound epidermal growth factor receptor family members such as HER1 and HER3. A HER2 ligand has not been identified, but overexpressed HER2 is constitutively active. When HER2 is pathologically overexpressed, the receptor may homodimerize and activate signaling cascades in the absence of the normal regulatory control imposed by the requirement for ligand binding of its heterodimerization partners.

A novel assay (HERmark® Breast Cancer Assay) was developed to quantify total HER2 protein expression and HER2 homodimers in formalin-fixed, paraffin-embedded tissue samples. . On the HERmark® website, the manufacturer describes the test as "a novel HER-2 testing alternative to identify candidates for HER2-targeted therapy," and does not clearly target use for any particular breast cancer subpopulations (e.g., those with equivocal and/or discordant IHC/FISH tests).⁵

Summary of Evidence

For individuals who have breast cancer and are undergoing assessment of HER2 status who receive quantitative total HER2 protein expression and HER2 homodimer measurement, the evidence includes validation studies and retrospective analysis of the association between levels and survival outcomes. The relevant outcomes are overall survival, disease-specific survival, test accuracy, and test validity. Retrospective analysis using HERmark® have shown that the assay may predict a worse response to trastuzumab in certain populations. However, findings have been inconsistent, and no clear association with clinical outcomes has been shown. Additionally, cut points for defining patient groups varied across studies. The clinical utility of the HERmark® assay has not been demonstrated. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.



Ongoing and Unpublished Clinical Trials

A search of [ClinicalTrials.gov](https://clinicaltrials.gov) in November 2019 did not identify any ongoing or unpublished trials that would likely influence this review.

Practice Guidelines and Position Statements

National Comprehensive Cancer Network guidelines on the treatment of breast cancer (v.3.2019) do not address the use of HERmark.²¹

Medicare National Coverage

There is no national coverage determination.

Palmetto GBA determines coverage and reimbursement for laboratories that perform molecular diagnostic testing and submit claims to Medicare in Medicare Jurisdiction E (California, Nevada, Hawaii). Palmetto GBA's decisions apply for all molecular diagnostic tests for Medicare.

Palmetto GBA has completed an assessment of HERmark® and determined that the test meets criteria for analytic and clinical validity, and clinical utility as a reasonable and necessary Medicare benefit.²² Effective December 9, 2011, Palmetto GBA will reimburse HERmark® services for patients with breast cancer.

Regulatory Status

Clinical laboratories may develop and validate tests in-house and market them as a laboratory service; laboratory-developed tests must meet the general regulatory standards of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments. HERmark® Breast Cancer Assay (Monogram Biosciences) is available under the auspices of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments. Laboratories that offer laboratory-developed tests must be licensed by Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments for high-complexity testing. To date, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has chosen not to require any regulatory review of this test.

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History

Date	Comments
12/13/11	New Policy – Add to Pathology/Laboratory Section. Policy created with literature search through September 2011; considered investigational.
12/19/12	Replace policy. Rationale updated based on a literature search through September 2012. Reference 9 added. Other references renumbered. Policy statement unchanged. Updated title in related policy 5.01.514 to include: “Other”.
12/09/13	Replace policy. Policy updated with a literature search through July 2013; references 3, 11, and 12 added. No change in policy statement. Reference 14 updated.
12/17/14	Annual Review. Policy updated with literature review through September 17, 2014; references 11, 14-16, and 18 added; references 3 and 17 updated. No change to policy statement.
12/08/15	Annual Review. Policy reviewed. References unchanged. Policy statement unchanged.
02/09/16	Annual Review. Policy updated with literature review through November 12, 2015; no references added; references 3 and 17 updated. No change to policy statement.
10/01/17	Coding update, added new CPT code 0009U. Combined both Coding sections into one under Policy Guidelines.
12/01/17	Annual Review, approved November 9, 2017. Policy updated with literature review through October 2017; Added reference 20. No change to policy statement.
03/01/18	Annual Review, approved February 6, 2018. Policy updated with literature review through October 2017; references 1-3, 5, 7, and 10 added; reference 22 updated. Policy statement unchanged.
03/01/19	Annual Review, approved February 5, 2019. Policy updated with literature review through October 2018; references 17-20 added. Policy statement unchanged.



Date	Comments
03/01/20	Annual Review, approved February 4, 2020. Policy updated with literature review through October 2019; no references added. Policy statement unchanged. Removed CPT code 84999.
07/02/2020	Coding update. Removed 0009U and added CPT 81479 and 84999.

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200 Independence Avenue SW, Room 509F, HHH Building
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본 통지서에는 중요한 정보가 들어 있습니다. 즉 이 통지서는 귀하의 신청에 관하여 그리고 Premera Blue Cross 를 통한 커버리지에 관한 정보를 포함하고 있을 수 있습니다. 본 통지서에는 핵심이 되는 날짜들이 있을 수 있습니다. 귀하의 건강 커버리지를 계속 유지하거나 비용을 절감하기 위해서 일정한 마감일까지 조치를 취해야 할 필요가 있을 수 있습니다. 귀하의 이러한 정보와 도움을 귀하의 언어로 비용 부담없이 얻을 수 있는 권리가 있습니다. 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357) 로 전화하십시오.

ລາວ (Lao):

ແຈ້ງການນີ້ມີຂໍ້ມູນສໍາຄັນ. ແຈ້ງການນີ້ອາດຈະມີຂໍ້ມູນສໍາຄັນກ່ຽວກັບຄໍາຮ້ອງສະໝັກ ຫຼື ຄວາມຄົມຄອງປະກັນໄພຂອງທ່ານຜ່ານ Premera Blue Cross. ອາດຈະມີວັນທີ່ສໍາຄັນໃນແຈ້ງການນີ້. ທ່ານອາດຈະຈໍາເປັນຕ້ອງດໍາເນີນການຕາມກຳນົດ ເວລາສະເພາະເພື່ອຮັກສາຄວາມຄົມຄອງປະກັນສະພາບ ຫຼື ຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອເວັ້ນເວີ້ ຄ່າໃຊ້ຈ່າຍຂອງທ່ານໄດ້. ທ່ານມີສິດໄດ້ຮັບຂໍ້ມູນນີ້ ແລະ ຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອເປັນພາສາຂອງທ່ານໂດຍບໍ່ເສຍຄ່າ. ໃຫ້ໃບທາ 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

ភាសាខ្មែរ (Khmer):

សេចក្តីជូនដំណឹងនេះមានព័ត៌មានយ៉ាងសំខាន់។ សេចក្តីជូនដំណឹងនេះប្រហែលជាមានព័ត៌មានយ៉ាងសំខាន់អំពីទម្រង់បែបបទ ឬការរៀបចំរបស់អ្នកកាមរយ: Premera Blue Cross ។ ប្រហែលជាមាន កាលបរិច្ឆេទសំខាន់នៅក្នុងសេចក្តីជូនដំណឹងនេះ។ អ្នកប្រហែលជាត្រូវការបញ្ជាក់សមត្ថភាព ដល់កំណត់ថ្លៃជាតំបន់នានា ដើម្បីនឹងរក្សាទុកការធានារ៉ាប់រងអន្តរជាតិរបស់អ្នក ឬប្រាក់ដុល្លារចេញថ្លៃ។ អ្នកមានសិទ្ធិទទួលបានព័ត៌មាននេះ និងដុល្លារនៅក្នុងភាសារបស់អ្នកដោយមិនអស់លុយឡើយ។ សូមទូរស័ព្ទ 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357)។

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi):

ਇਸ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਖਾਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੈ. ਇਸ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਵਿਚ Premera Blue Cross ਵਲੋਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਕਵਰੇਜ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਜੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ . ਇਸ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਨਵ ਖਾਸ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ. ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਜਸਰਤ ਕਵਰੇਜ ਰਿੱਖਣੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਓਸ ਦੀ ਲਾਗਤ ਜਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਦੇ ਇਛੁੱਕ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਮ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਢੁੱਝ ਖਾਸ ਕਰਮ ਚੁੱਕਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ,ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਮੁਫਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੋਂ ਅਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਦਦ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹੈ ,ਕਾਲ 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

فارسی (Farsi):

این اعلامیه حاوی اطلاعات مهم میباشد. این اعلامیه ممکن است حاوی اطلاعات مهم درباره فرم تقاضا و یا پوشش بیمه ای شما از طریق Premera Blue Cross باشد. به تاریخ های مهم در این اعلامیه توجه نمایید. شما ممکن است برای حفظ پوشش بیمه تان یا کمک در پرداخت هزینه های درمانی تان، به تاریخ های مشخصی برای انجام کارهای خاصی احتیاج داشته باشید. شما حق این را دارید که این اطلاعات و کمک را به زبان خود به طور رایگان دریافت نمایید. برای کسب اطلاعات با شماره 800-722-1471 (کلیر بران TTY تماس باشماره 800-842-5357) تماس برقرار نمایید.

Polskie (Polish):

To ogłoszenie może zawierać ważne informacje. To ogłoszenie może zawierać ważne informacje odnośnie Państwa wniosku lub zakresu świadczeń poprzez Premera Blue Cross. Prosimy zwrócić uwagę na kluczowe daty, które mogą być zawarte w tym ogłoszeniu aby nie przekroczyć terminów w przypadku utrzymania polisy ubezpieczeniowej lub pomocy związanej z kosztami. Macie Państwo prawo do bezpłatnej informacji we własnym języku. Zadzwońcie pod 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

Português (Portuguese):

Este aviso contém informações importantes. Este aviso poderá conter informações importantes a respeito de sua aplicação ou cobertura por meio do Premera Blue Cross. Poderão existir datas importantes neste aviso. Talvez seja necessário que você tome providências dentro de determinados prazos para manter sua cobertura de saúde ou ajuda de custos. Você tem o direito de obter esta informação e ajuda em seu idioma e sem custos. Ligue para 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

Română (Romanian):

Prezenta notificare conține informații importante. Această notificare poate conține informații importante privind cererea sau acoperirea asigurării dumneavoastră de sănătate prin Premera Blue Cross. Pot exista date cheie în această notificare. Este posibil să fie nevoie să acționați până la anumite termene limită pentru a vă menține acoperirea asigurării de sănătate sau asistența provizorie la costuri. Aveți dreptul de a obține gratuit aceste informații și ajutor în limba dumneavoastră. Sunați la 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

Русский (Russian):

Настоящее уведомление содержит важную информацию. Это уведомление может содержать важную информацию о вашем заявлении или страховом покрытии через Premera Blue Cross. В настоящем уведомлении могут быть указаны ключевые даты. Вам, возможно, потребуется принять меры к определенным предельным срокам для сохранения страхового покрытия или помощи с расходами. Вы имеете право на бесплатное получение этой информации и помощь на вашем языке. Звоните по телефону 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

Fa'asamoa (Samoan):

Atonu ua iai i lenei fa'asilasilaga ni fa'amatalaga e sili ona taua e tatau ona e malamalama i ai. O lenei fa'asilasilaga o se fesoasoani e fa'amatala atili i ai i le tulaga o le polokalame, Premera Blue Cross, ua e tau fia maua atu i ai. Fa'amolemole, ia e iloilo fa'alelei i aso fa'apitoa olo'o iai i lenei fa'asilasilaga taua. Masalo o le'a iai ni feau e tatau ona e faia ao le'i aulia le aso ua ta'ua i lenei fa'asilasilaga ina ia e iai pea ma maua fesoasoani mai ai i le polokalame a le Malo olo'o e iai i ai. Olo'o iai iate oe le aia tatau e maua atu i lenei fa'asilasilaga ma lenei fa'matalaga i legagana e te malamalama i ai aunoa ma se togiga tupe. Vili atu i le telefoni 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

Español (Spanish):

Este Aviso contiene información importante. Es posible que este aviso contenga información importante acerca de su solicitud o cobertura a través de Premera Blue Cross. Es posible que haya fechas clave en este aviso. Es posible que deba tomar alguna medida antes de determinadas fechas para mantener su cobertura médica o ayuda con los costos. Usted tiene derecho a recibir esta información y ayuda en su idioma sin costo alguno. Llame al 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

Tagalog (Tagalog):

Ang Paunawa na ito ay naglalaman ng mahalagang impormasyon tungkol sa iyong aplikasyon o pagsakop sa pamamagitan ng Premera Blue Cross. Maaaring may mga mahalagang petsa dito sa paunawa. Maaring mangailangan ka na magsagawa ng hakbang sa ilang mga itinakdang panahon upang mapanatili ang iyong pagsakop sa kalusugan o tulong na walang gastos. May karapatan ka na makakuha ng ganiitong impormasyon at tulong sa iyong wika ng walang gastos. Tumawag sa 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

ไทย (Thai):

ประกาศนี้มีข้อมูลสำคัญ ประกาศนี้อาจมีข้อมูลที่สำคัญเกี่ยวกับกาการสมัครหรือขอบเขตประกันสุขภาพของคุณผ่าน Premera Blue Cross และอาจมีกำหนดการในประกาศนี้ คุณอาจจะต้องดำเนินการภายในกำหนดระยะเวลาที่แน่นอนเพื่อจะรักษาการประกันสุขภาพของคุณหรือการช่วยเหลือที่มีค่าใช้จ่าย คุณมีสิทธิที่จะได้รับข้อมูลและความช่วยเหลือนี้ในภาษาของคุณโดยไม่มีค่าใช้จ่าย โทร 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357)

Український (Ukrainian):

Це повідомлення містить важливу інформацію. Це повідомлення може містити важливу інформацію про Ваше звернення щодо страховального покриття через Premera Blue Cross. Зверніть увагу на ключові дати, які можуть бути вказані у цьому повідомленні. Існує імовірність того, що Вам треба буде здійснити певні кроки у конкретні кінцеві строки для того, щоб зберегти Ваше медичне страхування або отримати фінансову допомогу. У Вас є право на отримання цієї інформації та допомоги безкоштовно на Вашій рідній мові. Дзвоніть за номером телефону 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).

Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese):

Thông báo này cung cấp thông tin quan trọng. Thông báo này có thông tin quan trọng về đơn xin tham gia hoặc hợp đồng bảo hiểm của quý vị qua chương trình Premera Blue Cross. Xin xem ngày quan trọng trong thông báo này. Quý vị có thể phải thực hiện theo thông báo đúng trong thời hạn để duy trì bảo hiểm sức khỏe hoặc được trợ giúp thêm về chi phí. Quý vị có quyền được biết thông tin này và được trợ giúp bằng ngôn ngữ của mình miễn phí. Xin gọi số 800-722-1471 (TTY: 800-842-5357).