



IEHP UM Subcommittee Approved Authorization Guideline			
Guideline	Hair Removal	Guideline #	UM_OTH_17
		Original Effective Date	3/28/2019
Section	Other	Revision Date	11/10/2025
		Committee Approval Date	11/17/2025
		Effective Date	12/1/2025

COVERAGE POLICY

- I. IEHP considers hair removal medically necessary for the following:
 - A. As part of gender-affirming treatments and procedures.
 - B. Hirsutism associated with endocrinopathies, neoplasm and/or medication. Treatment of hirsutism is subject to Medical Director review.

II. Hair Removal

A. Hair Reduction Consultation:

- 1. Hair removal consultation is covered for the following body areas:
 - a. Genital area when authorization is in place for gender affirming surgery
 - i. For genital area hair removal, requests require the following:
 - A. Authorization for genital area gender affirming surgery has been obtained
 - B. Surgeon indicates Member is an appropriate surgical candidate and that hair removal is a requirement in preparation for surgery;
 - b. Face and neck, back, chest, and abdomen requests require the following:
 - i. Member has diagnosis of persistent gender dysphoria or there is significant disruption of professional and/or social life because of hirsutism.
 - ii. A PCP/Dermatologist must perform an evaluation of the Member for psychological distress related to the presence of unwanted hair and justification of medical necessity of services must be clearly documented.
 - c. Hair removal for extremities and buttocks are not covered benefits.

B. Hair Reduction Procedure authorization requests require that Hair Reduction Consultation

requirements have been met and one of the following:

- 1. Laser Hair Removal Requests
 - a. Procedures are to be provided by a physician, PA, NP, or RN (RN requires physician supervision);
 - b. Informed consent has been obtained;
 - c. Documentation justifying laser hair removal services and the area(s) to be treated;
 - d. Laser hair removal is to use CPT procedure code 17999 indicating daily treatment per body area (face/neck or back or chest or abdomen or genitalia [each representing 1 body area]);
- 2. Electrolysis Hair Removal Requests

- a. Procedures are to be provided by a physician, PA, NP, or RN (RN requires physician supervision);
 - b. Informed consent has been obtained;
 - c. Documentation to include justification of why a trial of laser hair removal should not precede electrolysis;
 - d. Electrolysis will be provided by licensed electrologist;
 - e. Electrolysis hair removal is to use CPT procedure code 17380 indicating 30 minutes of treatment, all inclusive, regardless of body area being treated;
3. Please refer to Hair Removal Worksheet (Appendix A) for an example of procedure documentation.

COVERAGE LIMITATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

I. IEHP quantity limits for laser hair removal include:

- A. Maximum 1 (one) CPT 17999 units per day per body area; 6 (six) units CPT 17999 in 6-month period per body area;
- B. Frequency of treatment visits is to be no more frequent than every 4 weeks;
- C. If treatments are to continue after 6 months, a follow up with PCP or dermatologist is required to obtain an updated treatment plan.
 1. The updated treatment plan must include the medical necessity for continued hair removal services, documentation of the body areas to be treated, adherence to the frequency limits mentioned above and an evaluation of the Member for psychological distress related to the presence of unwanted hair.

II. IEHP quantity limits for electrolysis include:

- A. Requests are to have a maximum 4 (four) CPT 17380 units per day; 96 (ninety-six) CPT 17380 units in 6 (six) months;
- B. If treatments are to continue after 6 months a follow up with PCP or dermatologist is required to obtain an updated treatment plan.
 1. The updated treatment plan should include the medical necessity for continued hair removal services, documentation of the body areas to be treated, adherence to the frequency limits mentioned above and an evaluation of the Member for psychological distress related to the presence of unwanted hair and justification of medical necessity of services must be clearly documented.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hirsutism affects 5-10% of women of reproductive age. The most common cause of hirsutism in polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). It may be the initial and possibly only sign of an underlying androgen disorder. Regardless of the etiology, hirsutism is often associated with significant emotional distress. The major objective in the management of hirsutism are rule out a serious underlying medical condition and to devise a plan of treatment.

CLINICAL/REGULATORY RESOURCE

Medi-Cal Provider Manual- Benefits: Clinical Services Overview, Transgender and Gender Diverse Services (May 2022): “In all sections of this manual, regardless of the gender stated, the benefit or policy applies to individuals of all gender identities as long as the procedure/benefit is medically necessary and meets all other requirements.”

Department of Health Care Services, All Plan Letter- Ensuring Access to Transgender Services 20-018 (2020): The purpose of this All-Plan Letter (APL) is to remind Medi-Cal managed care health plans (MCPs) of their obligations to provide transgender services to members.

Apollo (2024): Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (PRS) 117B Hair – Transplantation or Removal; Hirsutism.

World Professional Association for Transgender Health Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming People, Version 8 - WPATH (2022): The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) is an international, multidisciplinary, professional association whose mission is to promote evidence-based care, education, research, advocacy, public policy, and respect in transsexual and transgender health.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Gender dysphoria: Discomfort or distress that is caused by a discrepancy between a person’s gender identity and that person’s sex assigned at birth.

Hirsutism: Excess terminal hair growth (dark coarse hairs) in androgen-dependent areas (upper lip, chin, mid-sternum, upper abdomen, back and buttocks) in which women typically have little or no hair.

REFERENCES

1. American Academy of Dermatology, “7 Ways to Remove Unwanted Hair.” Accessed November 10, 2025.
<https://www.aad.org/public/everyday-care/skin-care-basics/hair/remove-unwanted-hair>
2. Apollo Managed Care, Medical Review Criteria Guidelines for Managing Care 24th edition, 12th Online Edition, 2025. PRS 117B: Hair-Transplantation or Removal; Hirsutism. Accessed November 10, 2025.
3. Barbieri Robert L MD, Ehrman David A MD, October 2025. Evaluation of premenopausal women with hirsutism. UpToDate. Accessed November 10, 2025.
https://www.uptodate.com/contents/evaluation-of-premenopausal-women-with-hirsutism?search=evaluation%20of%20premenopausal%20women%20with%20hirsutism&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1~150&usage_type=default&display_rank=1
4. Battle, E, Jr and LM Hobbs- 2004. Laser-assisted hair removal for darker skin types, *Dermatologic Therapy* 17: 177-183. Laser-assisted hair removal for darker skin types - PubMed. Accessed November 10, 2025.
5. California Department of Health Care Services, All Plan Letter 20-018 Ensuring Access to Transgender Services. Accessed November 25, 2024.
<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL2020/APL20-018.pdf>. Accessed November 10, 2025.
6. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2016. National Coverage Determination (NCD) for Gender Dysphoria and Gender Reassignment Surgery (140.9). Accessed November 25, 2024. NCD - Gender Dysphoria and Gender Reassignment Surgery (140.9). Accessed November 10, 2025.
7. Coleman, E., Radix, A. E, et. al. “Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual,

- Transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming People, Version 8.” International Journal of Transgender Health, 23:sup1, S1-S259, Co.2022: World Professional Association for Transgender Health. Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse People, Version 8. Accessed November 10, 2025.
8. Fitzpatrick TB, 1988. The validity and practicality of skin types I through VI. Arch Dermatol 124: 869-871. The Validity and Practicality of Sun-Reactive Skin Types I Through VI | JAMA Dermatology | JAMA Network. Accessed November 10, 2025.
 9. Hussain M, Polnikorn, N, DJ Goldberg. 2003. “Laser-assisted hair removal in Asian skin: efficacy, complications, and the effect of single versus multiple treatments”, Dermatol Surg., 29(3):249. Laser-assisted hair removal in Asian skin: efficacy, complications, and the effect of single versus multiple treatments - PubMed. Accessed November 10, 2025.
 10. Medi-Cal Provider Manual- Benefits” Clinical Services Overview, Transgender and Gender Diverse Services.” Accessed November 25, 2024.
https://meweb.apps.prd.cammis.medi-cal.ca.gov/assets/F81D2354-BA35-4415-9B82-8B2DF9A505FA/transgender.pdf?access_token=6UyVkRRfByXTZEWIh8j8QaYyIPyP5U LO. Accessed November 10, 2025.

DISCLAIMER

IEHP Clinical Authorization Guidelines (CAG) are developed to assist in administering plan benefits, they do not constitute a description of plan benefits. The Clinical Authorization Guidelines (CAG) express IEHP's determination of whether certain services or supplies are medically necessary, experimental and investigational, or cosmetic. IEHP has reached these conclusions based upon a review of currently available clinical information (including clinical outcome studies in the peer-reviewed published medical literature, regulatory status of the technology, evidence-based guidelines of public health and health research agencies, evidence-based guidelines and positions of leading national health professional organizations, views of physicians practicing in relevant clinical areas, and other relevant factors). IEHP makes no representations and accepts no liability with respect to the content of any external information cited or relied upon in the Clinical Authorization Guidelines (CAG). IEHP expressly and solely reserves the right to revise the Clinical Authorization Guidelines (CAG), as clinical information changes.

Hair Removal Worksheet

Appendix A

1. Type of Excess Hair

- a. Hirsutism (see section 2)
- b. Lanugo hair: soft, vellus, androgen-independent unpigmented hair that covers the entire body of a newborn. It may also be seen in women with anorexia nervosa
- c. Hypertrichosis: excessive growth of androgen-independent hair that is vellus, prominent in nonsexual areas and most commonly familial, caused by systemic disorders such as hypothyroidism, anorexia nervosa, malnutrition, porphyria or dermatomyositis, or oral medications such as phenytoin, penicillamine, diazoxide, minoxidil, or cyclosporine.

2. Quantification of Hair Growth: Ferriman-Gallwey Score- Attachment 1

- a. Refer to the scoring chart. Each of nine androgen-sensitive body areas is assigned a score from 0 (no hair) to 4 (frankly masculine). These scores are summed to provide a hirsutism score. Expression of generalized hirsutism varies with racial ethnic groups:
 - i. Black or white women: >8 is considered abnormal. 8-15= mild hirsutism, 16-25 moderate, >25 severe
 - ii. Mediterranean, Hispanic, Middle Eastern women: \geq 9-10 is considered abnormal
 - iii. Asian women: \geq 2 is abnormal
- b. Scores may not be an accurate reflection of the severity of distribution of hair growth because women may be using shaving, plucking, waxing or chemical depilatories, especially on the face.

3. Quantification of Skin Pigmentation (Fitzpatrick skin type) - Attachment 2

4. Patient History

- a. History of hypertrophic scarring or keloid formation ____yes ____no
- b. Medications prescribed:
____Accutane (current use) ____Accutane (used > 6 months ago)
____Phenytoin ____Penicillamine ____Diazoxide ____Minoxidil ____Cyclosporine
- c. History of chronic or current herpes infection (consider prophylactic antiviral medication)

5. Treatment

- a. Estimated number of visits: _____
- b. Frequency of visits: _____
- c. Test Spot

- i. Area tested: _____
- ii. Fluence levels delivered (J/cm²) _____
- iii. Pulse durations used: _____
- iv. Results:

Pain _____ Perifollicular edema _____ Erythema _____ Other (specify) _____

6. Informed Consent, Including Discussion of:

- a. Possible laser-induced side effects caused by thermal epidermal damage: crusting, scabbing, blistering, pigmentary alterations, scarring. Also folliculitis-type reaction or herpes reactivation
- b. Pain

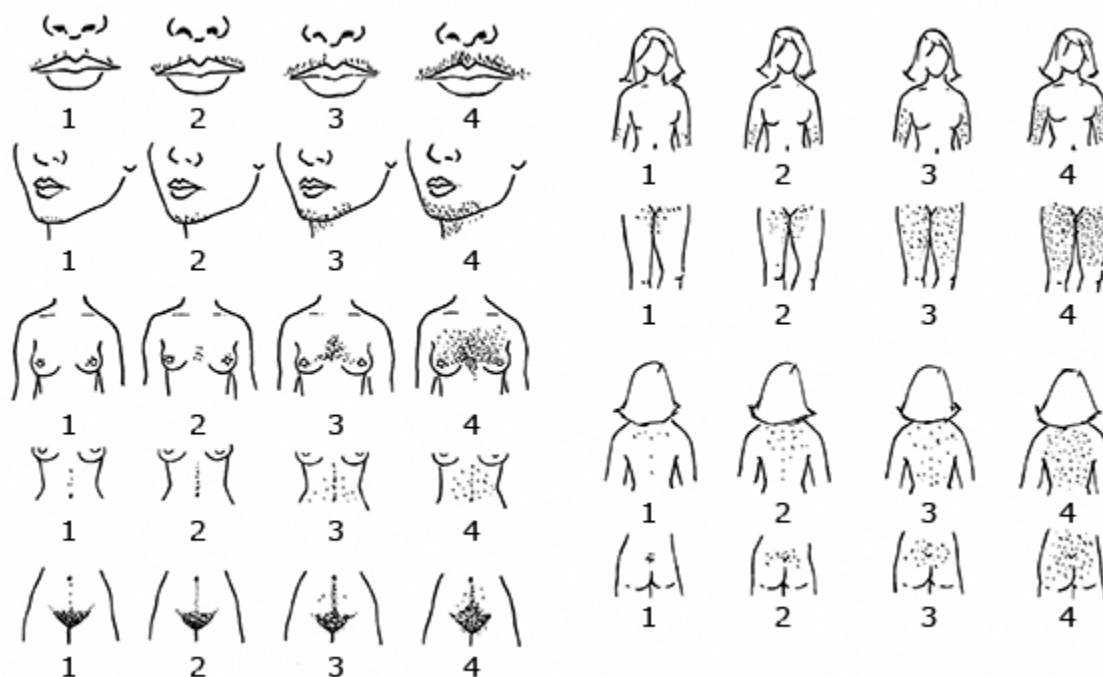
7. Signed Informed Consent in Chart and Copy to Patient

8. Patient Post-Treatment Instructions

- a. What to expect in the next 24-48 hours
- b. When to call the Laser Treatment Center
- c. When to go to Urgent Care or the Emergency Room

9. Next Appointment Date

Grading of severity of hirsutism in women



Ferriman-Gallwey hirsutism scoring system. Each of the nine body areas that is most sensitive to androgen is assigned a score from 0 (no hair) to 4 (frankly virile), and these are summed to provide a hormonal hirsutism score. "Focal" hirsutism (score 1 to 7) is a common normal variant, whereas generalized hirsutism (score of 8 or more) is abnormal in the general United States population. The normal score is lower in Asian populations and higher in Mediterranean populations.

Reproduced with permission from: Hatch R, Rosenfield RS, Kim MH, Tredway D. Hirsutism: implications, etiology, and management. Am J Obstet Gynecol 1981; 140:815. Copyright © 1981

Elsevier.

Graphic 66629 Version 8.0

Fitzpatrick Skin Typing Worksheet

Attachment 2

Name:		Date:				
Score		0	1	2	3	4
	What is the natural color of your eyes?	Light Blue, Gray or Green	Blue, Gray, or Green	Blue	Dark Brown	Brownish Black
	What is your natural hair color? (Prior to gray or white)	Sandy Red	Blond	Chestnut, Dark Blond	Dark Brown	Black
	What is the color of your unexposed skin? (stomach, thighs)	Reddish	Very Pale	Pale with Beige Tint	Light Brown, Olive	Dark Brown
	Do you have freckles on sun exposed areas? (lower arms, face)	Many	Several	Few	Incidental	None
	What happens when you stay in the sun too long?	Painful Redness, Blistering, Peeling	Blistering Followed by peeling	Burns sometimes followed by some Peeling	Rare Burns	Never Burns
	How easily do you turn brown or tan?	Hardly or Not at all	Light color Tan	Reasonable/moderate Tan	Tan Very Easily	Turn Dark Brown
	Do you turn brown or tan easily several hours after sun exposure?	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
	How does your face react to the sun?	Very Sensitive	Sensitive	Normal	Very Resistant	Never had a Problem
	When did you last expose your skin to the sun? (tanning bed, use of self-tanning creams, or sun-bathing)	More than 3 Months ago	2-3 Months ago	1-2 Months ago	Less Than 1 Month ago	Less than 2 Weeks ago
	Do you intentionally expose the area to be treated to the sun?(tanning bed, use of self-tanning creams, or sun-	Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Always

Total Score: _____

Fitzpatrick Skin Type: _____

Score 0-7 8-16 17-25 26-30 Over 30	Fitzpatrick Skin Type: I (Always burns, Extremely pale and Never tans, Red or blonde hair, light colored eyes) II (Pale but somewhat tans and burns fairly easily) III (Sometimes burns, mostly tans, has more of an "Light Olive" complexion) IV (Rarely burns, almost always tans, has "dark olive" complexion) V (Moderately pigmented (Indian, Hispanic, etc.) VI (African American)
---	--