



February 2019

NOTICES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leverage the Availity® Provider Portal for Efficiencies and Cost Savings

Back to Basics: 'Availity 101'

This general webinar is offered on an ongoing basis. Join us to learn how to use the Availity Portal to help verify patient information and check claim status. You'll also get an overview of advanced tools, such as the Medical Attachments application for quality and risk adjustment, Claim Encounter Reconciliation Application (CERA) and the Clinical Quality Validation (CQV) tool. To register to attend an upcoming Availity 101 session, refer to the [Educational Webinar/Workshop Sessions](#) page on the provider website.

In-depth Training for New Data-Sharing Tools on the Availity Portal

To help you navigate more advanced tools, such as the new data-sharing tools listed below, helpful tip sheets and other information are available in the [Provider Tools](#) section of our website.

Medical Attachments for Quality and Risk Adjustment Purposes

You can now receive and respond to quality and risk adjustment medical record requests electronically via Availity's Medical Attachments tool. [Learn more about Electronic Quality and Risk Adjustment Medical Records Requests.](#)

Clinical Quality Validation (CQV) Tool

Comply with Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) measures using Availity's new Clinical Quality Validation Tool. By using CQV you may document your patients' care and assessments electronically, while closing quality HEDIS gaps. CQV also helps support the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) STAR rating for Blue Cross Medicare Advantage HMOSM and Blue Cross Medicare Advantage PPOS plans. [Learn more about CQV.](#)

Claim Encounter Reconciliation Application (CERA)

CERA helps you respond to BCBSTX if potential risk adjustment gaps are identified, based on claims data for members with commercial and on/off-exchange health plans. [Learn more about CERA.](#)

Join us for an Online Clinical Data Exchange for Quality and Risk Adjustment webinar:

Use the links below to register for sessions covering the Medical Attachments, CQV and CERA tools. Select a session date and time:

[Feb. 5, 2019 – 2 to 3 p.m.](#) (CT)

[Feb. 6, 2019 – 10 to 11 a.m.](#) (CT)

[Feb. 7, 2019 – 3 to 4 p.m.](#) (CT)

Registered Availity users have access to many other tools and resources. Visit availity.com for more information, including an online application to become an Availity registered user, at no charge.

At this time, electronic medical record request and submission process are not available for medical record requests resulting from utilization review activities or the claims adjudication process.

Beginning Feb.1, 2019, Representatives Begin Collecting Annual Medical Record Data for Quality Reporting

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) collects performance data using specifications published by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) and by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for the Quality Rating System (QRS). HEDIS is the most widely used and nationally accepted effectiveness of care measurement available. Additionally, HHS requires reporting of QRS measures for accredited Qualified Health Plans. These activities are considered health care operations under the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule and patient authorization for release of information is not required. Texas state law (Chapter 108 of the Texas Health and Safety Code) requires Health Maintenance Organizations in Texas to report HEDIS data, by service area to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) on an annual basis.

To meet these requirements, BCBSTX will be collecting medical records using internal resources and leveraging an independent contracted third-party vendor, CIOX. If you receive a request for medical records, we encourage you to reply within 3 to 5 business days. Cooperation with the collection of HEDIS and QRS data or any quality improvement activities are required under the providers' contractual obligation at no cost to BCBSTX or as stated within the provider's individual contract.

A BCBSTX representative or a representative from CIOX, our contracted vendor, may be contacting your office or facility anytime between February 2018 through May 2018 to set up appointments for onsite visits or to set up an expected delivery date via fax, provider portal and if necessary U.S. Mail. As a part of the request, you will receive a letter introducing the background and authorizing agencies for the HEDIS and QRS data request, a medical record request list with members' names and other identifying demographics, and the medical record information needed for identified measures. If you have any questions about medical record requests, please contact a representative that will be listed on the provider letter requesting the medical record information.

It's here! Online Provider Onboarding Form for Joining Our Networks

Effective January 1, 2019, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) will only be accepting the new [Provider Onboarding Form electronically](#). The previous paper forms will no longer be accepted. The change will streamline the application process and lessen the amount of time it takes to get a response. The Provider Onboarding Form is used by BCBSTX to set up a provider record number and send contracts for network participation. Providers can locate the new electronic Provider Onboarding Form on the [provider website](#) under [Network Participation/ How to Join / Provider Onboarding Request](#).

The form should be filled out by:

- Individual providers new to our networks
- Groups and clinics new to our networks
- Individual or Group/Clinic providers who already have a Provider Record ID and want to join our networks now or add any additional network contracts
- Existing contracted groups or clinics who are adding a new provider

Note: Facility/Hospital Based providers, be sure to include the name of each Hospital or Ambulatory Surgery Center that the provider services in the Comments section of the Provider Onboarding Form when adding new individual providers or in the comments field of the Provider Roster template when adding providers to an existing contracted group/clinic.

If you have any questions, or if you need additional information, please go to our [provider website](#) or contact your local BCBSTX [Network Management Representative](#).

Fast and Easy Way to Respond to Electronic Quality and Risk Adjustment Medical Record Requests via Availity®

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) is committed to making it easier for providers to do business with us. Coming soon, providers will be able to receive electronic quality and risk adjustment medical record requests from BCBSTX. The necessary documentation can be submitted electronically through the Availity® Provider Portal.

Submitting requested records is easy. Once users have logged into the Availity Provider Portal, requests for these medical records from BCBSTX will display in the Notification Center. Providers may then upload and submit medical record documentation using the "Medical Attachments" application. Providers can track and audit their submissions.

To receive and respond to these medical records requests, you must be registered with Availity. To enable this feature, administrators must log in and select Enrollment Center >> Medical Attachments Setup, then enter the required data.

BCBSTX is aiming to integrate payer/provider transactions and processes within providers' daily Availity workflow. We anticipate this new electronic quality and risk adjustment medical records submission capability has the potential to:

- Lessen the administrative burden and inconveniences associated with mailing or faxing medical records
- Reduce delays and frustrations associated with paper submissions
- Lessen in-person visits to retrieve medical records

Mailing and faxing medical records remain options for all participating providers. Providers who are not Availity users are encouraged to register with Availity.com and complete the online application, at no charge.

Becoming a registered Availity user grants access to many other tools and resources, while also allowing you to begin using new payer/provider business solutions immediately upon launch.

Check for [News and Updates](#) on the [BCBSTX provider website](#) for scheduling of online training sessions and additional information including Tip Sheets on this tool.

At this time, electronic medical record request and submission process are not available for medical record requests resulting from utilization review activities or the claims adjudication process.

New Availity Capability! Close HEDIS® Gaps Easily through the Availity Provider Portal

Providers may now **quickly comply with Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measures using Availity's new Clinical Quality Validation (CQV)**. CQV will allow providers to electronically document their patient's care and assessments to close quality HEDIS gaps for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) members. Additionally, CQV helps support BCBSTX's Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) star rating for Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)SM and Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM plans.

This new validation process will also verify that the data submitted by the provider is supported in the medical record.

CQV Functionality

- Captures quality-related medical documentation to close quality HEDIS gaps
- Ensures quality measures documented in medical records are captured accurately for submission to CMS for HEDIS Stars ratings
- Will display care gaps that BCBSTX provides to Availity

- Provides alerts of care gaps, directing providers to access their work queue

Existing Availity users do not have to complete an additional registration to access CQV. However, Availity administrators need to ensure their users are assigned the Medical Staff and Office Staff roles.

CQV Benefits

- Improved engagement, health outcomes
- Offers an easy, consistent completion process
- Improves quality of information collected
- Maintains document integrity and security
- Reduces manual processes, decreases medical requests during HEDIS seasonal reporting

Learn More About CQV

- A [CQV tip sheet](#) is available on our Provider website for quick reference and navigational assistance.
- Refer to Availity's [Quick Start Guide for Clinical Quality Validation](#).
- Registered users may log on to the [Availity Provider Portal](#) for an on-demand webinar. Once you log on, select "Help & Training," then "Get Trained" and search for the Clinical Quality Validation recording.

Note: This new feature is offered as an added service and may not completely replace manual processes such as in-person visits to request medical records.

Not yet registered with Availity? Visit availity.com to get started. If you need assistance, you may contact Availity Client Services at 800-282-4548.

At this time, electronic medical record request and submission process through CQV are only available for closing quality HEDIS care gaps and are not available for medical record requests resulting from utilization review activities or the claims adjudication process.

Annual Reminder: Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice Required

As of March 8, 2017, hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) must give the standardized Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice (MOON) to people who receive Medicare benefits and are observed as outpatients for more than 24 hours. This includes people with Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM, Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)SM and Blue Cross Medicare Advantage Dual Care (HMO SNP)SM health plans.

This notice lets people know why they are not inpatients, and what their cost sharing and hospital coverage will be. It must be explained verbally and signed no later than 36 hours after observation begins or sooner if patients are admitted, transferred or released. Patients must sign to confirm they received and understand the notice. If they say no, the staff member who gave the notice must certify that it was presented.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) developed a standardized notice along with instructions on how to complete and they are available on the CMS website: [Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice](#).

The finalized, OMB-approved Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice (MOON)/CMS-10611 and form instructions are now available. They can be found at [Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice form and instructions](#).

Thank you for your continued participation. If you have any questions or if you need additional information, please contact your BCBSTX [Network Management Representative](#).

The information provided here is only intended to be a summary of the law that has been enacted and is not intended to be an exhaustive description of the law or a legal opinion of such law. If you have any questions regarding the law mentioned here, you should consult with your legal advisor.

Federal Employee Program® (FEP®) Introduces FEP Blue Focus

Starting Jan. 1, 2019, you may begin seeing Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) FEP members with FEP Blue Focus, a new benefit plan consistent with our commitment to expand access and make health care more affordable. We will also continue to offer FEP members our Standard Option and Basic Option products.

Some of the features of Blue Focus include:

- The first ten office visits of the year to in-network doctors for only \$10
- No more than a \$5 copay for preferred generic drugs
- No copay for the first two telehealth visits, \$10 copay for each additional visit
- No copay or coinsurance for ER visits for accidental injuries if the visits are within 72 hours of the injury
- ID cards will indicate enrollment code 131,132 or 133

BCBSTX is proud of our long history of serving federal employees, retirees and their families with products that deliver high-quality, comprehensive coverage. We appreciate your continued partnership in serving our FEP members.

Additional information is available at fepblue.org. If you have any questions regarding this benefit, please call FEP Customer Service at 800-972-8382.

FEP Benefits Changes for Infliximab Effective Jan. 1, 2019

The autoimmune drug infliximab will be covered as a medical benefit for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas Federal Employee Program® (FEP) members who receive their first infusion on or after Jan. 1, 2019. Prior to Jan. 1, 2019, FEP members may be receiving infliximab under **either** pharmacy or medical benefits. Members currently receiving infliximab under pharmacy benefits will continue to receive it under pharmacy benefits after Jan. 1, 2019. FEP will notify these members. There is no change for members who are currently receiving infliximab under their medical benefits.

If a member was receiving infliximab prior to Jan. 1, 2019, and they change FEP benefit plans or health insurers, they will receive the drug under their medical benefits regardless of how they previously received it.

Infliximab brand names are Remicade®, Inflectra® and Renflexis®. It is an intravenous antibody that is used to treat many life-long inflammatory health problems.

BlueCompare for Physicians Program to be Decommissioned

Effective Dec. 31, 2018, the BlueCompare for Physicians program will be decommissioned. The program evaluated the performance of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) Blue Choice PPOSM physicians on quality measures and cost efficiency as compared to peers in the same working specialty.

BlueCompare results were used to provide PPO members with quality-related and cost efficiency performance designations on BCBSTX's Provider Finder® using ribbons. With the decommissioning of the program, the provider ribbon designations displayed on Provider Finder will no longer be available.

If you have any questions, please email Bluecompareforphysicians@BCBSTX.com.

Preventive Care Guidelines Are Available

Each year, recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and other professional organizations are reviewed by medical staff at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) to update the Preventive Care and Wellness Guidelines related to preventive care, health screenings and immunizations.

The guidelines offer specific recommendations and should be considered for:

1. Children from birth to 18 years
2. Adults 19 years and older
3. Adults 65 years and older
4. Women needing perinatal care

The 2018-19 [Preventive Care Guidelines](#) are available on the [BCBSTX website](#).

The guidelines indicate that recommendations may vary, especially if there are risks involved. In addition, recommendations are not intended as medical advice, nor meant to be a substitute for your individual medical judgement or that of other health care professionals. Members are directed to their physician for individualized advice on the recommendations provided.

If you have questions or comments about the guidelines, please contact the Quality Improvement Programs department at 800-863-9798.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Behavioral Health Care Providers: We Need Your Help to Improve Access to Care

The need for behavioral health care continues to rise in Texas¹. For a variety of reasons, 56 percent of people who need behavioral health care do not get it². One reason is they don't know where to go for help. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) is making it easier for our members to know where to go.

BCBSTX members find behavioral health care providers through our online [Provider Finder](#)[®] tool. We want to give them the information they need to get help from the right professional at the right time. As a provider of behavioral health services, please help us make sure we have the right information about your practice. The surveys below will gather details about your practice, so we can make them available to our members. Please select the link and take the survey that applies to your practice:

- [Professionals](#)
- [Facilities](#)

We will update your information in Provider Finder with the answers you provide in the survey.

The surveys will be open from Jan. 21 to March 1, 2019. Please leave blank any questions that do not apply to your practice. Thank you for helping us connect our members with the behavioral health care they need.

Automated Phone System Change for Behavioral Health Services

Checking eligibility and benefits electronically through the Availity[®] Provider Portal or your preferred web vendor is the quickest way to access behavioral health coverage information for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) members. Online eligibility and benefit quotes include the patients' coverage status and benefit details, such as an applicable copayment, coinsurance, deductible amounts and preauthorization requirements.

However, if a call to BCBSTX is needed to verify patient coverage for behavioral health services, as of Dec. 16, 2018, providers must first obtain eligibility and benefit details through the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system. The IVR quotes the same level of eligibility and benefits information as a Customer Advocate provides. Our Customer Advocates will continue to be available for additional assistance and more complex benefit quotes.

Learn More

To learn more about online solutions, refer to the [Provider Tools page](#) in the Education and Reference Center of our Provider website. For IVR navigational assistance, refer to the [Eligibility and Benefit Caller Guide](#) located in the Claims and Eligibility section of our website.

Note: *The IVR phone system information is not applicable to government programs (Medicare Advantage and Texas Medicaid) member policies. For government programs eligibility and benefits requests via phone, refer to the number on the member's BCBSTX ID card.*

The Magellan® Connection: Partnering with PCPs to Manage their Patients' Behavioral Health Care Needs

Magellan Healthcare is contracted to perform **behavioral health** managed care functions for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas HMO plans. Magellan offers access to a variety of resources and services that can assist you in enhancing medical and behavioral outcomes for your patients.

Website Resources

- You can access Magellan's practitioner toolkit of behavioral health resources at MagellanPCPtoolkit.com.
 - The *Magellan PCP Toolkit* is designed to give medical practitioners the information and screening tools needed to assist in making behavioral health referrals.
 - Integrated care is the best practice model that addresses the whole health of an individual. Collaboration of the PCP and the behavioral health professional can improve the safety and efficacy of services to support better outcomes for members.
 - *The Magellan PCP Toolkit* offers numerous platforms and tools for standardizing and streamlining effective collaborative relationships.
- Members have access to magellanassist.com/default.aspx, Magellan's member website that offers several useful behavioral health self-management and educational tools. The member website also provides access to the Magellan *Provider Search* (provider directory).

Contact Magellan's Customer Care Line 800-729-2422

- Keep in mind that you can contact Magellan Healthcare for **assistance with screening your patients for co-occurring depression and substance abuse**.
 - Magellan also offers **case management support** for members with complex behavioral health needs.
 - Magellan case management programs assess, plan, implement, coordinate, and evaluate options and services to meet a member's clinical and medical needs. Activities vary based on the specifics of the member's needs, and our case managers help create a personalized plan of care for every member.
 - We strongly recommend referral to Magellan's case management program for patients whom you suspect may be suffering from severe and persistent mental illness.
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PREAUTHORIZATION INFORMATION

Radiology Quality Initiative (RQI) Program is Business as Usual

As a reminder, AIM Specialty Health® (AIM) administers the RQI Program for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) for Blue Choice PPOSM. An RQI number must be obtained through AIM before ordering CT/CTA scans, MRI/MRA scans, nuclear cardiology studies, and PET scans for **most** PPO members.

The RQI requirement applies when non-emergency high-tech imaging services are performed in a physician's office, the outpatient department of a hospital, or a freestanding imaging center. The ordering physician may obtain an RQI and the rendering provider may verify that an RQI has been issued by logging on to the [AIM Provider Portal](#) or by calling AIM at 866-455-8415.

Obtaining an RQI is not a substitute for checking eligibility and benefits. The RQI is not required if the member's benefit plan has other specific Advanced Imaging benefit preauthorization/prenotification requirements through another vendor. The RQI number is valid for 30 days; there is no grace period if the service is not performed.

To learn more, refer to the [AIM Radiology Quality Initiative \(RQI\) Program](#) section on our [provider website](#), or contact your BCBSTX [Provider Network Representative](#).

BlueCard® (Out-of-area) Reminder

Some Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) Plans have radiology management programs, other than AIM. Before ordering/rendering services for out-of-area BCBS members, it is important to check eligibility and benefits by calling the BlueCard Eligibility® line at 800-676-BLUE (2583).

AIM is an operating subsidiary of Anthem and an independent third-party vendor that is solely responsible for its products and services. BCBSTX makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding any products or services offered by independent third-party vendors. If you have any questions about the products or services offered by such vendors, you should contact the vendors directly.

Get Updates to the Blue Cross Medicare AdvantageSM Preauthorization List

Several codes were missing from the Jan. 1, 2019, preauthorization list published on Sept. 17. A revised list is in the [Notifications/Referral Requirements](#) section of BCBSTX's website under the "Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM and Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)SM effective Feb. 1, 2019" section. If you have any questions, please contact your BCBSTX Network Management Representative.

Checking Preauthorization Requirements by Procedure Code on Availity

Providers can access preauthorization requirements for specific Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) or Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes when conducting an eligibility and benefits inquiry through the Availity® Provider Portal. As a reminder, the CPT/HCPCS code inquiry option is for preauthorization determination only and is not a code-specific quote of benefits. Checking eligibility and/or benefit information and/or the fact that a service has been preauthorized is not a guarantee of payment. How to determine preauthorization requirements for CPT/HCPCS codes via Availity Portal:

- Eligibility and benefit inquiry entry (270) – Select a benefit/service type and/or enter a valid CPT/HCPCS code(s) and the associated place of service. Providers may enter up to eight CPT/HCPCS codes in the inquiry.
Note: If a benefit/service type is not selected, the place of service and at least one CPT/HCPCS code is required. If a CPT/HCPCS code is not entered, the place of service and benefit/service type is required.
- Eligibility and benefit inquiry response (271) – Displays specific preauthorization requirements in the Pre-Authorization Info tab for the benefit/service type and/or CPT/HCPCS codes entered in the inquiry. This information is organized in two sections:
 - Requested Procedure Code Authorization – Displays preauthorization information for the procedure codes submitted in the inquiry. If no procedure codes are submitted in the request, this section will not display any preauthorization information.
 - Service Level Authorization – Displays preauthorization information for the submitted benefit/service type in the inquiry. This section may also include preauthorization information for procedure codes related to the benefit/service type submitted in the inquiry.

When preauthorization is required for a benefit/service type and/or procedure code, the Pre-Authorization Info tab will display a red "Auth Required" badge. If preauthorization is not required a green "No Auth

Required” badge is displayed. In some instances, providers may see a gray “Auth Info Unknown” response for the requested benefit/service type. If preauthorization is required or unknown, contact information for completing the request and other important details are included.

Online CPT/HCPCS code inquiry for preauthorization is not returned for the following Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) members:

- Federal Employee Program® (FEP®)
- Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)SM and Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM
- Texas Medicaid STAR, STAR Kids and CHIP

Learn More

BCBSTX invites you to join the complimentary webinar training “Back to Basics: Availity 101” which includes how to verify preauthorization requirements for benefits using procedure codes or contact our Provider eBusiness Consultants at PECS@bcbstx.com for specific training needs or additional information. Please visit the [Provider Training](#) page on the BCBSTX provider website to view available training sessions.

Jan. 1 Preauthorization Requirement Updates

Effective Jan. 1, 2019, benefit plans managed by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) will be updating preauthorization and prenotification requirements.

Patient eligibility and benefits should be verified prior to every scheduled appointment. Eligibility and benefit information includes membership validation, coverage status and preauthorization requirements.

To obtain fast, efficient, detailed information for BCBSTX members, please access the [Availity® Eligibility and Benefits Tool](#). You must be registered with Availity to gain access to this **free online tool**. Additional tip sheets are available on the [Claims and Eligibility](#) section of the [BCBSTX provider website](#).

Below is a list of the impacted care categories that may need preauthorization for various networks effective Jan. 1, 2019:

- Molecular and genomic testing
- Radiation therapy
- Advanced Imaging
- Cardiac (heart related)
 - Cardiac advanced imaging services (MRI, MRA, PET, PET-CT, CT, CTA, Nuclear Medicine)
- Sleep Medicine
 - Sleep studies and sleep durable medical equipment (DME)
- Orthopedic (Musculoskeletal)
 - Artificial intervertebral disc
 - Autologous chondrocyte implantation (ACI) for focal articular cartilage lesions
 - Femoroacetabular impingement (FAI) syndrome
 - Functional neuromuscular electrical stimulation (FNMES)
 - Joint and spine surgery
 - Lumbar spinal fusion
 - Meniscal allografts and other meniscal implants
 - Orthopedic applications of stem-cell therapy
- Pain Management
 - Occipital nerve stimulation
 - Surgical deactivation of headache trigger sites
 - Interventional pain management
 - Percutaneous and implanted nerve stimulation and neuromodulation
 - Spinal cord stimulation
- Surgical Procedures

- Mastopexy; breast lift
- Orthognathic surgery; face reconstruction
- Reduction mammoplasty; breast reduction
- Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT)
 - Bone conduction hearing aids
 - Cochlear implant
 - Nasal and sinus surgery
- Gastroenterology (Stomach)
 - Gastric Electrical Stimulation (GES)
- Neurological
 - Deep brain stimulation,
 - Sacral nerve neuromodulation/stimulation,
 - Vagus nerve stimulation (VNS)
- Wound Care
 - Hyperbaric Oxygen (HBO2) Therapy
- Non-emergent Fixed Wing Air Ambulance
- Specialty Pharmacy including Infusion Site of Care

Not all requirements apply to each BCBSTX network (Blue Choice PPOSM, Blue EssentialsSM, Blue PremierSM or Blue Advantage HMOSM). It is imperative that providers check eligibility and benefits and verify preauthorization requirements through Availity or their preferred vendor.

A [2019 Preauthorization/Prenotification Requirements](#) comprehensive list of services that **may** require preauthorization or prenotification is available under Clinical Resources then [Preauthorizations/Notifications/Referral Requirements](#) on the BCBSTX provider website. Not all requirements apply to every BCBSTX plan. There is also a list of the [2019 Impacted Procedure Codes Including Care Categories That May Require Preauthorization Through BCBSTX](#).

Watch for updates on the website including available training sessions. If you have any questions or if you need additional information, please contact your BCBSTX [Network Management Representative](#).

Please note that verification of eligibility and benefits, and./or the fact that a service or treatment has been preauthorized or predetermined for benefits, is not a guarantee of payment. Benefit determination will occur when a claim is received and will be based on other things such as the member's eligibility and terms of the member's certificate of coverage applicable on the date of services when renders.

PHARMACY

Quarterly Pharmacy Program Changes

Review drug list changes including Utilization Management Program changes and information about the new Hemophilia Factor VIII, IX PA Program, which all went into effect Oct. 1.

[Read More](#)

CLAIMS & ELIGIBILITY

Why Doctors Review Health Insurance Claims

A recent article published in our online magazine, [Making the Health Care System Work](#)SM, pulls the curtain back on one step in the health insurance process that few know about – clinical review. [Why Doctors Review Health Insurance Claims](#) explains how experienced physicians work within our company to offer peer-level review of certain benefit preauthorization requests and claims.

The article touches on the role doctors and nurses take in building a bridge between the care our members need and the business requirements with an insider's point of view. Doctors and nurses on staff with Blue

Cross and Blue Shield of Texas have access to policy guidelines, best practices from other providers in the network, and the benefit information for the patient's health plan. They review cases for proper documentation, medical necessity and other criteria.

The article also looks at how clinical reviews may offer alternative treatments, reduce unwarranted care and recognize fraud, waste or abuse. However, while the peer review process can help hold costs in check and identify potential fraudulent or wasteful activity, the doctors who participate know in the end it's about the member, not about the money.

Read [Why Doctors Review Health Insurance Claims](#) and other articles about issues facing health care in our online magazine, [Making the Health Care System Work](#).

Reminder for Physicians: Postoperative Care Included in the Global Surgical Reimbursement Rate

The professional reimbursement for a global surgical period includes all the necessary services conducted by a surgeon or by members of the same group within the same specialty before, during and after a procedure.

In order to curb unnecessary costs incurred for follow up care provided in a facility setting, please ensure that your patient is well-informed on **how** and **where** to access postoperative care as part of discharge planning. Payment for postoperative services is included in the global professional reimbursement rate and care should be accessed in the physician office setting.

Postoperative services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Immediate postoperative care, including dictating operative notes, talking with the family and other physicians or other qualified health care professionals.
- Typical postoperative follow-up care related to the recovery of the surgery.
- Post-surgical pain management by the surgeon.
- Additional medical or surgical services required of the physician during the postoperative period due to complications to the surgery that do not require an additional surgical procedure in the facility setting.
- Miscellaneous services including but not limited to, dressing changes, incision care, removal of operative pack, cutaneous sutures and staples, lines, tubes, wires, drains, casts and splints; the insertion, irrigation and removal of catheters, nasogastric and rectal tubes, routine peripheral intravenous lines, and any changes and removal of tracheostomy tubes.

For more information on the global period of care, refer to the [Global Surgical Package \(CPCP014\)](#) policy in the [Clinical Payment and Coding Policies](#) under [Standards and Requirements](#) on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) [provider website](#) or contact your BCBSTX [Network Management Representative](#).

Notification of Annual Benefit Updates

BCBSTX will update member files with annual benefit changes over the next few weeks. As always, we encourage you to verify your patients' coverage first, using [Availity](#) or your preferred vendor portal. In the event you are asked to contact BCBSTX's provider customer service, hold times may be longer than normal due to open enrollment season. For patients who are not scheduled for appointments, plan to defer eligibility and benefit information requests to a later date.

Updates to Clinical Payment and Coding Policies – Preventive Services Policy

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has implemented clinical payment and coding policies based on criteria developed by specialized professional societies, national guidelines (e.g. MCGTM) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Provider Reimbursement Manual. Additional sources are

used and can be provided upon request. The clinical payment and coding guidelines are not intended to provide billing or coding advice but to serve as a reference for facilities and providers.

Effective January 1, 2019, the following policy is being updated:

- [Preventive Services Policy](#)

Refer to [Clinical Payment and Coding Policies](#) under Standards and Requirements on the provider website for the Clinical Payment and Coding Policies available.

If you have any questions or if you need additional information, please contact your BCBSTX [Network Management Representative](#).

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CLINICAL RESOURCES

Changes to Prior Approval Requirements for Home-based Sleep Study for FEP Members

In January 2017, benefit prior approval requirements for sleep studies performed outside the home were implemented for some Federal Employee Program® (FEP) members. Claims and appeals revealed that when outpatient facilities submitted claims for the equipment used for home-based sleep studies, our claims system presumed the services took place outside the home. For home-based sleep studies, this issue resulted in higher copayments and claim denials for FEP Basic Option members.

FEP made changes to correct this issue. Effective Sept. 4, 2018, the following unattended sleep study and portable test monitor procedure codes, when billed by outpatient facilities, are considered eligible home-based sleep studies that no longer require benefit prior approval:

- 95800
- 95801
- 95806
- G0398
- G0399
- G0400

Benefit prior approval continues to be required for all sleep studies performed outside the home. As a reminder, it is important to check eligibility and benefits for all members. This step will help you verify membership and other important details, such as copayment, coinsurance, deductible amounts and whether benefit prior approval may be required for a member/service. We encourage you to check eligibility and benefits online using the [Avality® Provider Portal](#), or your preferred web vendor. If you do not have web access, you may call 800-972-8382 to check eligibility and benefits for FEP members.

This material is for educational purposes only and is not intended to be a definitive source for coding claims. Health care providers are instructed to submit claims using the most appropriate code(s) based upon the medical record documentation and coding guidelines and reference materials.

The Importance of Diabetic Eye Exams

Many practitioners refer their diabetic patients to eye care specialists for an annual eye examination. It is important for referring providers to know details about the care a patient gets and to receive communication from you concerning that care. It is important to follow the American Diabetes Association (ADA) position statement on diabetic retinopathy and screening recommendations, which was updated in 2017:

- **Initial Exams:**

- Within five years of diagnosis for adults who have Type 1 diabetes
- At the time of diagnosis for adults with Type 2 diabetes
- **Exam Frequency:**
 - Every two years in the absence of retinopathy
 - Annually in the presence of retinopathy
 - At more frequent intervals in the presence of progressive retinopathy and/or deterioration of vision due to disease progression
- **Pregnancy:**
 - Educate women who are planning to be or are pregnant and who also have diabetes about the risk of diabetic retinopathy developing or progressing
 - Perform an eye exam prior to or at the time of diagnosis of pregnancy, during every trimester, and one year after delivery in the presence of pre-existing Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes
- **Exams:**
 - Should not be substituted by retinal photography
 - Should be conducted as mentioned above¹

To help improve outcomes, consider the following:

- **Incorporate** ADA recommendations into practice. Following the above recommendations will ensure best practice for patients.
- **Gather** patient information. Ask the patient about their diabetes history, medications they are taking, symptoms they are experiencing and if they have any questions.
- **Educate** your patients. Help them understand why a retinal exam for patients with diabetes is different than an eye exam for glasses and why it is essential to help prevent future problems.
- **Reassure** your patients with diabetes that a yearly retinal exam might be covered by medical insurance.
- **Submit** claims accurately. When submitting a claim for a diabetic patient eye exam, be sure to include “diabetes” as a diagnosis to ensure proper payment. A list of diabetes codes for diabetic eye exams and procedures is included in this communication for your reference.
- **Communicate** eye care exam results with the patient’s primary care physician.

We thank you for collaborating with us in the care of our Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service of Texas Federal Employee Plan members. Please remember to share eye care exam results with the patient’s PCP. Refer to the news and updates article on the provider website for a sample template for notifying the PCP. Working together, we can improve the care of people with diabetes. Please contact FEPQIPrograms@BCBSTX.com if you would like further information. [Learn more about diabetic retinopathy.](#)

Codes to Identify Eye Exams and Procedures for Diabetic Retinal Disease**

67028	67030	67031	67036	67039	67040	67041	67042	67043	67101
67105	67107	67108	67110	67112	67113	67121	67141	67145	67208
67210	67218	67220	67221	67227	67228	92002	92004	92012	92014
92018	92019	92134	92225	92226	92227	92228	92230	92235	92240
92250	92260	99203	99204	99205	99213	99214	99215	99242	99243
99245	2022F	2024F	2026F	3072F	S0620	S0621	S3000		

<EXAMPLE OF A NOTE TO SEND TO REFERRING PROVIDER>

(Insert Practice Logo in this Space)

Diabetic Eye Examination Report (Insert Practice Name)

TO: _RE: _____

FAX: _____

Current Eye Medications:

Date of Examination: _____

Dilated fundus examination: Y N

Result of Examination:

- No diabetic retinopathy at this time
- Proliferative diabetic retinopathy
- Non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy

Glaucoma examination: Y N

Result of examination: Present Suspected Absent

Other ocular conditions:

Recommendations:

- No treatment is necessary at this time, just yearly monitoring for any changes
- Close monitoring of ocular health status with a review in 3 months
- Close monitoring of ocular health status with a review in 6 months
- Referral to _____
- An appointment has been made with _____

I have discussed these findings with the above patient and stressed the importance of regular monitoring of eye health. Please let me know if I can provide you with more information. It's a pleasure to participate in the continued care of our mutual patient.

¹*Diabetic Retinopathy: A Position Statement by the American Diabetes Association, Sharon D. Solomon, Emily Chew, Elia J. Duh, Lucia Sobrin, Jennifer K. Sun, Brian L. VanderBeek, Charles C. Wykoff, Thomas W. Gardner, Diabetes Care, Mar 2017, 40 (3) 412-418; DOI: 10.2337/dc16-2641*

***Based on NCQA 2019 HEDIS® specifications.*

Proper Documentation of Obstetrical Care

Communication between health care professionals during a patient's pre-pregnancy, pregnancy and postpartum medical journey is important. It is recommended that when caring for a patient, the following be documented in their chart to ensure effective coordination and continuity of care:

Prenatal Visit in First Trimester:

- Prenatal risk assessment with counseling to include education, complete medical and obstetrical history, physical exam (e.g., American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) form)
- Prenatal lab reports (OB panel/TORCH antibody panel/Rubella antibody test/ABO/ Rh)
- Ultrasound, Estimated Date of Delivery (EDD)

Duration of Prenatal Visits:

- Prenatal flow sheet (ACOG, electronic medical record (EMR) or other)
- All progress/visit notes for duration of pregnancy

- Ultrasound reports and all consult reports

Delivery:

- Documents, such as hospital delivery records, verifying member had a live birth
- If the patient had a non-live birth, records that document the non-live birth

Postpartum:

- Documentation of a postpartum visit on or between 21-56 days after delivery
- Postpartum office visit progress notation that documents an evaluation of weight, blood pressure, breast exam, abdominal exam and pelvic exam

Thank you for your partnership with us in the care of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas Federal Employee Plan members.

The Cost of Treating Individuals with Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotic resistance is on the rise and leading to increasing costs of inpatient care. A recent national study reported on the additional health care costs for treating adult patients with antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections.¹ This study compared acutely hospitalized (excluding prison, nursing home, long-term care, and some similar facilities) patients with antibiotic-resistant infections to patients without antibiotic-resistant infections from 2002 to 2014. Researchers found that treating patients with antibiotic-resistant infections added \$1,383 per episode and \$2.2 billion total in increased annual hospital costs.

Implementing an antimicrobial stewardship program in hospitals and other health care facilities have shown an annual cost-savings of \$200,000 to \$400,000 compared to health care facilities that do not implement a program.²

However, the scope of antibiotic resistance and benefits of antibiotic stewardship applies beyond acute hospitalization. To combat antibiotic resistance, antibiotic stewardship programs also need to include collaborative outpatient setting efforts between providers and insurance companies. For example, in outpatient clinics, a CDC report estimates 30 percent of antibiotics prescribed are unnecessary.² Moreover, when antibiotics are indicated, this same report notes prescribers do not always use guideline-recommended, first-line antibiotics.²

New research by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) similarly showed patients seen at urgent care centers for common respiratory conditions such as asthma, flu and the common cold were more likely to receive unnecessary antibiotics, compared with patients treated for the same illnesses at other immediate-care types of facilities.⁴ This research looked at antibiotic use in emergency departments, retail health clinics (located within businesses such as pharmacies and grocery stores) and urgent care centers (typically stand-alone facilities where patients seek immediate and unscheduled care). All played a large role in providing unscheduled outpatient care in the U.S. Data showed about 46 percent of patients in urgent care centers who were diagnosed with one of the above respiratory conditions, for which antibiotics are neither recommended nor effective, received an antibiotic prescription compared with 25 percent and 14 percent in emergency departments and retail health clinics respectively.

To help support antibiotic stewardship quality improvement, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) started an antimicrobial stewardship program in the third quarter of 2017 and continues to monitor and reach out to providers who prescribe antibiotics more than their peers and not according to CDC recommendations.

Using an approach similar to the collaborative Pew Charitable Trust and CDC study, BCBSTX uses the Healthcare Effectiveness and Data Information Set (HEDIS)[®] Quality Indicators described in the below table to identify providers who may not have followed the recommended treatment course when prescribing an antibiotic. Identified top-prescribing providers, adjusted by specialty and state, receive an outreach letter

from BCBSTX notifying them of these patterns and encouraging them to consider better antibiotic stewardship based on CDC resources.

The program resulted in a 28 percent improvement in these prescribing behaviors among providers who received initial notifications and follow-ups. These program results help support broader antibiotic-related quality performance measures, which are audited annually (see table), and compared to Quality Compass (QC) national average, benchmarking results.

**The 2018 BCBSTX HEDIS/ Quality Rating System (QRS) Results
Compared to 2017 QC National Average:**

Quality measure	TX MKP HMO	TX Medicaid STAR	TX Com HMO Houston	TX Com HMO Dallas	TX Com HMO ESW	QC National average-50th	QC National average-75th	QC National average-90th
Appropriate Treatment for Children with Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)*	77.38%	94.43%	79.21%	78.30%	85.86%	89.33%	92%	95%
Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment in Adults with Acute Bronchitis (AAB)**	22.00%	35.00%	19.55%	25.24%	22.56%	26.77%	31%	39%

*The measure is reported as an inverted rate [1 – (numerator/eligible population)]. A higher rate indicates appropriate treatment of children with URI (i.e., the proportion for whom antibiotics were not prescribed).

**The measure is reported as an inverted rate [1 – (numerator/eligible population)]. A higher rate indicates appropriate treatment of adults with acute bronchitis (i.e., the proportion for whom antibiotics were not prescribed).

MKP= Marketplace

Com= Commercial

¹Thorpe, K. E., Joski, P., & Johnston, K. J. (2018). Antibiotic-resistant infection treatment costs have doubled since 2002, now exceeding \$2 billion annually. *Health Affairs* 37 (2). doi: 10.1377/hlthaff.2017.1153

²Center for Disease Control Prevention. (2017). Antibiotic Use in the United States, 2017: Progress and Opportunities. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/stewardship-report/pdf/stewardship-report.pdf>

³National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). HEDIS & Performance Measurement. Available at <http://www.ncqa.org/hedis-quality-measurement>

⁴Palms DL, Hicks LA, Bartoces M, Hersh AL, Zetts R, Hyun DY, Fleming-Dutra KE. Comparison of antibiotic prescribing in retail clinics, urgent care centers, emergency departments, and traditional ambulatory care settings, *JAMA Int Med.* 2018 Jul 16. doi: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2018.1632.

The above material is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for the independent medical judgment of a physician or other health care provider. Physicians and other health care providers are encouraged to use their own medical judgment based upon all available information and the condition of the patient in determining the appropriate course of treatment.

2018 Annual HEDIS®/QRS Reports

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has a Quality Improvement Program (QIP) to better serve you. The purpose of the QIP is to monitor and improve the care and service our members receive. We focus on encouraging preventive health and safety, and provide education related to chronic conditions.

There is a standard way to measure important areas of care and service called the Health Care Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS). These measures were developed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). They are widely used to measure health care performance in the U.S.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has a similar set of measures, the Quality Rating System (QRS). These measure similar areas of care and are specifically for those members enrolled in marketplace health care plans.

Through the QIP, BCBSTX measures how we are doing against the goals we've set. The table below summarizes how we are doing on selected measures.

Care Provided to BCBSTX Members	2018 Quality Compass National Average	Blue Essentials™ HMO HEDIS Rate		Blue Advantage HMO™ QRS Rates	
		2017	2018	2017	2018
Childhood Immunization • Combination 3 Rate: 4 DTaP, 3 IPV, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 Hep B, 1 VZV, 4 PCV	73%	55%	58%↑	73%	72%↓
Breast Cancer Screening	71%	61%	62%↑	57%	58%↑
Cervical Cancer Screening	74%	67%	67%	47%	47%
Colorectal Cancer Screening	61%	38%	43%↑	38%	45%↑
Appropriate Testing for Children with Pharyngitis	86%	81%	88%↑	72%	76%↑
Medication Management for People with Asthma • Total – Medication Compliance 75%	52%	43%	40%↓	48%	55%↑
Comprehensive Diabetes Care • Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) Testing • HbA1c Control (<8.0%) • Eye Exam (retinal or dilated exam) • Medical Attention for Nephropathy	90% 53% 52% 89%	84% 28% 21% 88%	88%↑ 22%↓ 25%↑ 88%	89% 48% 34% 89%	89% 47%↓ 29%↓ 89%
Appropriate Treatment for Children with Upper Respiratory Infection	88%	75%	81%↑	76%	77%↑
Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment in Adults with Acute Bronchitis	31%	22%	23%↑	19%	22%↑
Medication Management					
Annual Monitoring for Patients on Persistent Medications – Total	83%	85%	84%↓	86%	87%↑
Prenatal/Postpartum Care					
Prenatal and Postpartum Care • Timeliness of Prenatal Care • Postpartum Care	81% 71%	65% 32%	66%↑ 37%↑	80% 66%	89%↑ 69%↑

Key improvements in 2018 are seen in both the commercial (Blue Essentials) and retail (Blue Advantage HMO) memberships for:

- Colorectal cancer screening
- Appropriate testing for children with pharyngitis
- Appropriate treatment for children with upper respiratory infections

- Timeliness of prenatal care and postpartum care

The most significant decline from last year fell under Comprehensive Diabetes Care. More specifically, in HbA1c control in our commercial membership and eye exams in our retail membership.

How You Can Help

While BCBSTX provides education and resources to our members, your support in these efforts can positively impact your patient’s compliance with necessary preventive care screenings and routine monitoring of chronic health conditions. An established process to identify gaps in care and dedicated outreach staff are just a couple ways you can improve your patient’s health outcomes.

Results are rounded to the nearest percentage.

Preventive Services Reminder: Zero Copay for Blue Cross Medicare AdvantageSM

Are your patients up-to-date on preventive services benefits? Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) would like to remind you that there are no copays for preventive services for Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM or Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)SM. Blue Cross Medicare Advantage covers a full range of preventive services to help keep patients healthy, help find problems early and determine when treatment is most effective. You should let members know which of these services is right for them.

For a detailed list of the services with zero copay, access: [Are You Up-To-Date on Your Preventive Services](#).

Additionally, you should check eligibility and benefits electronically through Availity®, or your preferred web vendor.

Annual Health Assessment Coding*

Code**	Service	Description
G0402	Initial Preventive Physical Examination	Code is limited to new beneficiary during the first 12 months of Medicare enrollment.
G0438	Initial Annual Wellness Visit (AWV)	The initial AWV, G0438, is performed on patients who have been enrolled with Medicare for more than one year, including new or established patients.
G0439	Subsequent AWV	The subsequent AWV occurs one year after a patient’s initial visit.

**Codes for Annual Health Assessments are subject to change by Medicare Advantage Organization (MAO), without prior notice to Medical Group, for codes to be consistent with Medicare coding requirements for Annual Health Assessments.*

***Any updates, deletions and/or additions to coding shall be updated according to nationally recognized coding guidelines.*

EDUCATION & REFERENCE

New Provider Training Webinars

Do you have new staff? Or just need some refreshers? Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has posted complimentary educational webinar sessions on the BCBSTX provider website. These online training sessions give you the flexibility to attend live sessions. Provider billers, utilization areas, and administrative departments will benefit from these webinars. New sessions have been added to the [Educational](#)

[Webinar/Workshop sessions](#) for the following topics:

- Back to Basics: Availity® 101
- iExchange®
- Remittance Viewer

Please visit the [Provider Training](#) page on the [BCBSTX provider website](#) to view what topics are available and sign up for training sessions.

2019 Holiday Schedule Reminders

[Review the 2019 holiday schedule](#) to plan for scheduling issues that may affect electronic claims (837), and/or claim payments, and remittance (835) transactions in 2019.

Did You Know?

The following is information that Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) is required to provide in all published correspondence with physicians, professional providers, and facility and ancillary providers. It includes a collection of articles to assist provider offices in servicing BCBSTX patients. For the latest updates, visit the [News and Updates area](#) of the BCBSTX provider website.

Topics:

- Authorizations and Referrals
 - Benefits and Eligibility
 - Claims
 - Clinical Resources
 - CMS Guidance Notifications
 - Education & Reference
 - Electronic Options
 - eviCore™
 - Pharmacy
 - Provider General Information
 - Rights and Responsibility
-

Authorizations and Referrals

Importance of Obtaining a Preauthorization/Referral

A preauthorization/referral is required for certain types of care and services. Although Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) participating physicians, professional providers and facility and ancillary providers are required to obtain preauthorizations/referrals, it is also the responsibility of the member/subscriber to confirm that this action has been taken for services that require a preauthorization/referral.

To determine if a service requires a referral or preauthorization, it is imperative that providers check eligibility, benefits, and preauthorization requirements through Availity® or your preferred vendor and also reference the [Preauthorizations/Notifications/Referral Requirements](#) under Clinical Resources on bcbstx.com/provider.

Preauthorizations/referrals must be obtained for any services provided by someone other than the member's primary care physician/provider (PCP) (i.e., specialist, ambulatory surgery centers, ancillary, etc.). A preauthorization/referral is also needed for an initial stay in a facility and any additional days or services added on.

Preauthorizations are required to allow for medical necessity review. If a member/subscriber does not obtain a preauthorization/referral for initial facility care or services, or additional days or services added on, the benefit for covered expenses may be reduced. Retrospective reviews for medical necessity will not be performed for any HMO plans except in limited special circumstances.

A preauthorization/referral does not guarantee payment. All payments are subject to determination of the member/subscriber's eligibility, payment of required deductibles, copayments and coinsurance amounts, eligibility of charges as covered expenses, application of the exclusions and limitations and other provisions of the policy at the time services are rendered.

You can check the status of your submitted request via iExchange®. As a reminder, because we are sending confidential protected health information (PHI) to your fax machine, it should be in a secure location that is not accessible to those who do not have the authority to review member/patient PHI.

If a preauthorization/referral request is received from an out-of-network (OON) provider and the member/subscriber does not have an OON benefit, BCBSTX will contact the ordering provider to discuss network options. However, if a member/subscriber has an OON benefit, OON benefits will apply, which could result in a higher cost sharing.

Reminder: Utilization Management Review

The Medical Management team, which includes physicians and nurses, evaluate hospital admissions (anticipated or unanticipated) and continued stays, as well as outpatient services. The team utilizes a variety of resources, including MCG criteria and BCBSTX medical policy to inform benefit determinations regarding the level of care, transition of care and the management of home care needs.

Medical management does not make determinations about whether services are medically appropriate, only if the services meet the definition of medically necessary under the terms of the applicable benefit plan. If a service does not meet the definition of medically necessary, initially the case is referred to a medical director for a review of the medical necessity determination. Board certified physicians are available to review referred cases, make medical necessity determinations and resolve appeals.

See the [provider manual](#) for guidance on provider requirements when requesting services. The final determination about what treatment or services should be received is between the patient and their health care provider.

Enrollee Notification Form Required for Out-of-Network Care for Blue Choice PPOSM and Blue Advantage HMOSM (for Blue Advantage Plus)

Prior to referring a Blue Choice PPO or Blue Advantage HMO (for Blue Advantage Plus point-of- service benefit plan) member to an out-of-network provider for non-emergency services – if such services are also available through an in-network provider – the referring participating network provider must complete the appropriate Out-of-Network Care – Enrollee Notification form below.

- [Out-of-Network Care - Enrollee Notification Form for Regulated Business](#) (Use this form if "TDI" is on the member's ID card.)
- [Out-of-Network Care - Enrollee Notification Form for Non-Regulated Business](#) (Use this form if "TDI" is not on the member's ID card.)

The referring network physician must provide a copy of the completed form to the enrollee and retain a copy in the enrollee's medical record files.

It is essential that Blue Choice PPO and Blue Advantage Plus enrollees fully understand the financial impact of an out-of-network referral to a physician, professional provider, hospital, ambulatory surgery center or other facility that does not participate in their Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas provider network. Blue

Choice PPO and Blue Advantage Plus enrollees have out-of-network benefits and may choose to use out-of-network providers, however they will be responsible for an increased cost-share under their out-of-network benefits.

For additional information, refer to the [Provider Manual](#) section D Referral Notification Program on the bcbstx.com/provider website.

AIM RQI Reminder

Physicians, professional providers, and facility and ancillary providers must contact AIM Specialty Health (AIM) first to obtain a Radiology Quality Initiative (RQI) for most Blue Choice PPOSM members. Providers should check eligibility, benefits, and preauthorization requirements through Availity® or your preferred vendor and also reference the [Preauthorizations/Notifications/Referral Requirements](#) for applicable members when ordering or scheduling the following outpatient, non-emergency diagnostic imaging services when performed in a physician's, professional provider's or facility or ancillary provider's office, a professional provider's office, the outpatient department of a hospital or a freestanding imaging center:

- CT/CTA
- MRI/MRA
- SPECT/nuclear cardiology study
- PET scan

To obtain an RQI, log into AIM's provider portal at aimspecialtyhealth.com, and complete the online questionnaire that identifies the reasons for requesting the exam. If criteria are met, you will receive an RQI. If criteria are not met, or if additional information is needed, the case will automatically be transferred for further clinical evaluation and an AIM nurse will follow up with your office. AIM's Provider PortalSM uses the term "Order" rather than "RQI."

Notes:

- Facilities cannot obtain a RQI from AIM on behalf of the ordering physician, professional provider, facility or ancillary provider.
- The RQI program does not apply to Medicare enrollees with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) Medicare supplement coverage. Medicare enrollees with BCBSTX PPO coverage are included in the program.

AIM Specialty Health (AIM) is an operating subsidiary of Anthem, Inc.

Are Utilization Management Decisions Financially Influenced?

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) is dedicated to serving our customers through the provision of health care coverage and related benefit services. BCBSTX prohibits decisions based on financial incentives – utilization management decisions are based on appropriateness of care and service and existence of coverage.

BCBSTX does not specifically reward practitioners or clinicians for issuing denials of coverage, nor is there compensation based on the number or frequency of telephone calls or other contacts that occur with health care providers, members or subscribers. Financial incentives for utilization management decision makers do not encourage decisions that result in underutilization.

Benefits and Eligibility

BCBS Medicare Advantage PPO Network Sharing

Applies to: Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM

What is Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) Medicare Advantage (MA) PPO network sharing?

All BCBS MA PPO Plans participate in reciprocal network sharing. This network sharing will allow all BCBS MA PPO members to obtain in-network benefits when traveling or living in the service area of any other BCBS MA PPO Plan if the member sees a contracted BCBS MA PPO provider.

What does the BCBS MA PPO network-sharing mean to me?

If you are a contracted BCBS MA PPO provider with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) and you see BCBS MA PPO members from other BCBS Plans, these BCBS MA PPO members will be extended the same contractual access to care and will be reimbursed in accordance with your negotiated rate with your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas contract. These BCBS MA PPO members will receive in-network benefits in accordance with their member contract.

If you are not a contracted BCBS MA PPO provider with BCBSTX and you provide services for any BCBS MA PPO members, you will receive the Medicare allowed amount for covered services. For urgent or emergency care, you will be reimbursed at the member's in-network benefit level. Other services will be reimbursed at the out-of-network benefit level.

How do I recognize an out-of-area BCBS MA PPO member from one of these Plans participating in the BCBS MA PPO network sharing?

You can recognize a BCBS MA PPO member when their Blue Cross and Blue Shield Member ID card has the following logo:



The "MA" in the suitcase indicates a member who is covered under the BCBS MA PPO network sharing program. BCBS MA PPO members have been asked not to show their standard Medicare ID card when receiving services; instead, members should provide their Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield member ID card.

Do I have to provide services to BCBS MA PPO members from these other BCBS Plans?

If you are a contracted BCBS MA PPO provider with BCBSTX, you should provide the same access to care for BCBS MA members from other BCBS Plans as you do for BCBSTX MA PPO members. You can expect to receive the same contracted rates for such services.

If you are not a BCBS MA PPO contracted provider, you may see BCBS MA PPO members from other BCBS Plans, but you are not required to do so. Should you decide to provide services to BCBS MA PPO members, you will be reimbursed for covered services at the Medicare allowed amount based on where the services were rendered and under the member's out-of-network benefits. For urgent or emergency care, you will be reimbursed at the in-network benefit level.

What if my practice is closed to new local BCBS MA PPO members?

If your practice is closed to new local BCBS MA PPO members, you do not have to provide care for BCBS MA PPO out-of-area members. The same contractual arrangements apply to these out-of-area network sharing members as your local BCBS MA PPO members.

How do I verify benefits and eligibility?

Call BlueCard® Eligibility at 800-676-BLUE (800-676-2583) and provide the BCBS MA PPO member's alpha prefix located on the member's ID card. You may also submit electronic eligibility requests for BCBS MA PPO members. Follow these three easy steps:

- Log in to the [Availity Provider Portal](#) or your preferred vendor
- Enter required data elements
- Submit your request

Where do I submit the claim?

You should submit the claim to BCBSTX under your current billing practices. Do not bill Medicare directly for any services rendered to a BCBS MA PPO member.

What will I be paid for providing services to these out-of-area BCBS MA PPO network sharing members?

If you are a BCBS MA PPO contracted provider with BCBSTX, benefits will be based on your contracted BCBS MA PPO rate for providing covered services to BCBS MA PPO members from any BCBS MA PPO Plan. Once you submit the BCBS MA PPO claim, BCBSTX will work with the other Plan to determine benefits and send you the payment.

What will I be paid for providing services to other BCBS MA out-of-area members not participating in the BCBS MA PPO network sharing?

When you provide covered services to other BCBS MA PPO out-of-area members not participating in network sharing, benefits will be based on the Medicare allowed amount. Once you submit the BCBS MA PPO claim, BCBSTX will send you the payment. However, these services will be paid under the BCBS MA member’s out-of-network benefits unless for urgent or emergency care.

What is the BCBS MA PPO member cost sharing level and co-payments?

A BCBS MA PPO member cost sharing level and co-payment is based on the BCBS MA PPO member’s health plan. You may collect the co-payment amounts from the BCBS MA PPO member at the time of service. To determine the cost sharing and/or co-payment amounts, you should call the Eligibility Line at 800- 676-BLUE (800-676-2583).

May I balance bill the BCBS MA PPO member the difference in my charge and the allowance?

No, you may not balance bill the BCBS MA PPO member for this difference. Members may be balance billed for any deductibles, co-insurance, and/or co-pays.

What if I disagree with the reimbursement amount I received?

If there is a question concerning the reimbursement amount, contact Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO) Customer Service at 877-774-8592.

Who do I contact if I have a question about BCBS MA PPO network sharing?

If you have any questions regarding the BCBS MA PPO program or products, contact Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO) Customer Service at 877-774-8592.

Claims

HMO Plans – PCP Selection and Referral Requirements

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) HMO plans are:

- Blue Advantage HMOSM
- Blue Advantage PlusSM
- Blue EssentialsSM
- Blue Essentials AccessSM
- Blue PremierSM
- Blue Premier AccessSM

Blue Essentials Access and Blue Premier Access are considered “open access” HMO plans where no Primary Care Provider (PCP) selection or referrals are required when the member uses participating providers in their network.

For Blue Advantage HMO, Blue Essentials and Blue Premier where referrals are required, it must be initiated by the member's designated PCP and must be made to a participating physician or professional provider in the same provider network.

The table below defines when a PCP selection and referrals to specialists (except OB-GYN) are required and when they are not required. (Note: Members can self-refer to in-network OB/GYNs – no referrals are required.) If an in-network physician, professional provider, ambulatory surgery center, hospital or other facility is not available in the member's applicable provider network, preauthorization is required for services by an out-of-network physician, professional provider, ambulatory surgery center, hospital or other facility, through either iExchange® or by calling the preauthorization number on the back of the member ID card.

Providers should check eligibility, benefits, and preauthorization requirements through Availity® or their preferred vendor and also reference the [Preauthorizations/Notifications/Referral Requirements Lists](#) under Clinical Resources on bcbstx.com/provider.

HMO Plan	Designated PCP Required	Referrals Required for In-Network Providers	Out-Of-Network Benefits Available with Higher Member Cost Share
Blue Advantage HMO	Yes	Yes	No
Blue Advantage Plus HMO	Yes	Yes	Yes
Blue Essentials	Yes	Yes	No
Blue Essentials Access	No	No	No
Blue Premier	Yes	Yes	No
Blue Premier Access	No	No	No

*Prior to referring a Blue Advantage Plus member to an out-of-network provider for non-emergency services, please refer to Section D Referral Notification Program, of the Blue Essentials, Blue Advantage HMO and Blue Premier provider manual for more detail including when to utilize the Out-of-Network Enrollee Notification forms for [Regulated Business](#) and [Non-Regulated Business](#).

Sample HMO [ID cards](#) and other benefit plan ID cards are available on the BCBSTX provider website.

Reminders:

- The Blue Essentials, Blue Advantage HMO and Blue Premier physician, professional provider, facility or ancillary providers are required to admit a patient to a participating facility, except in emergencies.
- Blue Advantage Plus is a benefit plan that allows members to use out-of-network providers. However, members must understand the financial impact of receiving services from an out-of-network physician, professional provider, ambulatory surgery center, hospital or other facility.

Billing and Documentation Information and Requirements

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has implemented changes to clarify existing policies related to billing and documentation requirements for the BlueChoice® PPO, Blue Advantage HMOSM, Blue EssentialsSM, Blue PremierSM, Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM and Blue Cross Medicare

Advantage (HMO)SM plans effective Sept. 15, 2017, as reflected in the Blue Choice PPO Provider Manual and the Blue Essentials, Blue Advantage HMO and Blue Premier Provider Manual in Section F Filing Claims posted on bcbstx.com/provider under [Standards and Requirements/Manuals](#).

Benefit Categories Contained in IVR Phone System

Below is a list of common benefit categories contained within the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system.

The IVR quotes the same level of eligibility and benefit information that a Customer Advocate provides. Our Customer Advocates are available for more complex benefit quotes.

As a reminder, this information is continually reviewed and may vary across different BCBSTX networks, products and/or group policies. The current contained benefit category lists are shown below.

Contained Benefit Categories	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergy Colonoscopy Consultations Coordinated Home Care • Electrocardiogram (EKG) Extended Care Facility Hospital • Inhalation Therapy Laboratory Mammogram Office Services Office Visit Pap Smear Physical Exam Preventive Care • Private Duty Nursing Ultrasound • X-ray • 23-hour Observation Air Ambulance Anesthesia Assistant Surgeon CAT Scan Dialysis • Ground Ambulance Hospice • Medical Supplies MRI • Pathology PET Scan Prosthetics • Prostate-specific Antigen (PSA) Sterilization 	

FEP IVR Contained Benefit Categories	
Accidental Injury	Maternity
Allergy	Office Visit
Chiropractic Services	Outpatient Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy
Diagnostic – Lab, X-ray, Outpatient Diagnostic	Vision
Inpatient Benefits – Inpatient Hospital, Inpatient Surgery	

Note: The above listings are not applicable to Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM or Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)SM government program member policies. For eligibility and benefits for these government programs via phone, refer to the number on the member’s BCBSTX identification card.

As a reminder, checking eligibility and benefits electronically through Availity® or your preferred web vendor is the quickest way to access BCBSTX member information. To learn more about online solutions, see the [Provider Tools section of the BCBSTX provider website](#).

Clinical Payment and Coding Policies Now Online

BCBSTX is now publishing [Clinical Payment and Coding Policies](#) on our website. These payment and coding policies describe BCBSTX's application of payment rules and methodologies for Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®), HCPCS and ICD-10 coding as applied to claims submitted for covered services. This information is offered as a helpful general resource regarding BCBSTX payment policies and is not intended to address all reimbursement related issues. New policies have been posted and existing policies will be added over time. We regularly adjust clinical payment and coding policy positions as part of our ongoing policy review processes. Check [this newsletter](#) and the [News and Updates section on our website](#) for newly adapted or revised policies.

Update to After-hours and Weekend Care Codes Payment Policy

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) will be updating its payment policy regarding after-hours and weekend care codes.

After-hours or weekend care is reimbursable, within limitations, for services provided by an individual physician or other health care professional who is required to provide office-based services outside of regular posted office hours to treat a patient's urgent illness or condition.

Effective Jan. 1, 2017, BCBSTX will no longer reimburse facility-based or non-office-based providers for CPT Codes 99053, 99056 and 99060. These codes will be considered inclusive of the primary procedure.

ClaimsXten™ Quarterly Updates

New and revised Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) and HCPCS codes are periodically added to or deleted from the ClaimsXten code auditing tool software by the software vendor on a quarterly basis and are not considered changes to the software version.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) will normally load this additional data to the BCBSTX claim processing system within 60 to 90 days after receipt from the software vendor and will confirm the effective date via the [News and Updates](#) section of the BCBSTX provider website. Advance notification of updates to the ClaimsXten software version (i.e., change from ClaimsXten version 4.1 to 4.4) also will be posted on the BCBSTX provider website.

To help determine how coding combinations on a claim may be evaluated during the claim adjudication process, you may continue to utilize Clear Claim Connection™ (C3). C3 is a free, online reference tool that mirrors the logic behind BCBSTX's code-auditing software. Refer to our website at bcbstx.com/provider for additional information on gaining access to C3.

For more details regarding ClaimsXten, including answers to frequently asked questions, refer to the [C3 page](#) or [Claims Filing Tips](#) under [Claims and Eligibility](#) on the [BCBSTX website](#). Additional information may also be included in upcoming issues of [Blue Review](#).

Additional Code-Auditing Software

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) implemented additional code-auditing software, Verscend ConVergence Point™ BCBSTX implemented this code-auditing software in June 2017*.

This software further enhances the auditing of professional and outpatient facility claims for correct coding according to the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS), Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services guidelines. Providers may use the Claim Inquiry Resolution Tool, which is available on the Availity Provider Portal to research specific claim edits.

*The above notice does not apply to government program claims.

Technical and Professional Components

Modifiers 26 and TC: Modifier 26 denotes professional services for lab and radiological services. Modifier TC denotes technical component for lab and radiological services. These modifiers should be used in conjunction with the appropriate lab and radiological procedures only.

Note: When a physician or professional provider and facility or ancillary provider performs both the technical and professional service for a lab or radiological procedure, he/she must submit the total service, not each service individually.

Surgical Procedures Performed in the Physician's Office

When performing surgical procedures in a non-facility setting, the physician and professional provider reimbursement covers the services, equipment and some of the supplies needed to perform the surgical procedure when a member/subscriber receives these services in the physician's or professional provider's office.

Reimbursement will be allowed for some supplies billed in conjunction with a surgical procedure performed in a physician's or professional provider's office. To help determine how coding combinations on a claim may be evaluated during the claim adjudication process, you may continue to utilize Clear Claim Connection™ (C3). C3 is a free, online reference tool that mirrors the logic behind Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas' (BCBSTX) code-auditing software. Refer to the BCBSTX provider website at bcbstx.com/provider for additional information on gaining access to C3.

Please note the physician's and professional provider's reimbursement includes surgical equipment that maybe owned or supplied by an outside surgical equipment or Durable Medical Equipment (DME) vendor. Claims from the surgical equipment or DME vendor will be denied since the global physician's or professional provider's reimbursement includes staff and equipment.

Medical Records Process for BlueCard® Claims

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) is now able to send medical records electronically to all Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plans. This method significantly reduces the time it takes to transmit supporting documentation for BlueCard claims and eliminates lost or misrouted records.

As always, we request that you submit your medical records to BCBSTX if needed for claims processing. Requests for medical records from other Blues Plans before rendering services, as part of the preauthorization process, should be submitted directly to the requesting Plan.

Contracted Providers Must File Claims

As a reminder, physicians, facilities, professional providers and ancillary providers must file claims for any covered services rendered to a patient enrolled in a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) health plan. You may collect the full amounts of any deductible, coinsurance or copayment due and then file the claim with BCBSTX. Arrangements to offer cash discounts to an enrollee in lieu of filing claims with BCBSTX violate the requirements of your provider contract with BCBSTX.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a provision of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act changed HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) to add a requirement that if a patient self pays for a service in full and directs a provider to not file a claim with the patient's insurer, the provider must comply with that directive and may not file the claim in question. In such an event, you must comply with HIPAA and not file the claim to BCBSTX.

Billing for Non-Covered Services

As a reminder, contracted physicians, professional providers, facility and ancillary providers may collect payment from members/subscribers for copayments, co-insurance and deductible amounts. The physician, professional provider, facility or ancillary provider may not charge the member/subscriber more than the patient share shown on their provider claim summary (PCS) or electronic remittance advice (ERA).

If Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) determines that a proposed service is not a covered service, the physician, professional provider, facility or ancillary provider must inform the member/subscriber in writing in advance. This will allow the physician, professional, facility or ancillary provider to bill the member/subscriber for the non-covered service rendered.

In no event, shall a contracted physician, professional provider, facility or ancillary provider collect payment from the subscriber for identified hospital acquired conditions and/or serious reportable events.

Avoidance of Delay in Claims Pending COB Information

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) receives thousands of claims each month that require unnecessary review for coordination of benefits (COB). What that means to our physicians, professional providers, facility and ancillary providers is a possible delay, or even denial of services, pending receipt of the required information from the member/subscriber.

Here are some tips to help prevent claims processing delays when there is only one insurance carrier:

- CMS-1500, box 11-d – if there is no secondary insurance carrier, mark the “No” box.
- Do not place anything in box 9, a through d – this area is reserved for member information for a secondary insurance payer.

It is critical that no information appears in box 11-d or in box 9 a-d if there is only one insurance payer.

Hospitals, and Routine Services and Supplies

Routine services and supplies are generally included by the provider in charges related to other procedures or services. As such, these items are considered non-billable for separate reimbursement. The following guidelines may assist hospital personnel in identifying items, supplies, and services that are not separately billable (this is not an all-inclusive list):

- Any supplies, items and services that are necessary or otherwise integral to the provision of a specific service and/or the delivery of services in a specific location are considered routine services and not separately billable in the inpatient and outpatient environments.
 - All items and supplies that may be purchased over-the-counter are not separately billable.
 - All reusable items, supplies and equipment that are provided to all patients during an inpatient or outpatient admission are not separately billable.
 - All reusable items, supplies and equipment that are provided to all patients admitted to a given treatment area or units are not separately billable.
 - All reusable items, supplies and equipment that are provided to all patients receiving the same service are not separately billable.
-

Clinical Resources

BCBSTX Lab Guidelines

Quest Diagnostics, Inc., is the exclusive outpatient clinical reference laboratory provider for Blue EssentialsSM, Blue Premier and Blue Advantage HMOSM members* and the preferred statewide outpatient clinical reference laboratory provider for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) Blue Choice PPOSM subscribers. This arrangement excludes lab services provided during emergency room visits, inpatient admissions and outpatient day surgeries (hospital and free-standing ambulatory surgery centers).

Quest Diagnostics offers:

- Online scheduling for Quest Diagnostics' Patient Service Center (PSC) locations. To schedule a patient PSC appointment, log onto QuestDiagnostics.com/patient or call 888-277- 8772.
- Convenient patient access to more than 195 patient service locations.
- 24/7 access to electronic lab orders, results and other office solutions through Care360[®] labs and meds.

For more information about Quest Diagnostics lab testing solutions or to establish an account, contact your Quest Diagnostics Physician Representative or call 866-MY-QUEST (866-697-8378).

For physicians, professional providers or facility and ancillary providers located in the HMO Reimbursable Lab counties, only the lab services/tests indicated on the Reimbursable Lab Services list will be reimbursed on a fee-for- service basis if performed in the physician's, professional provider's office for Blue Essentials members. All other lab services must be sent to Quest. You can access the county listing and the Reimbursable Lab Services list in the [General Reimbursement Information](#) section located under the Standards and Requirements tab.

**Note: Physicians, professional providers or facility and ancillary providers who are contracted/affiliated with a capitated IPA/medical group and physicians, professional providers or facility or ancillary providers who are not part of a capitated IPA/medical group but who provide services to a member/subscriber whose PCP is a member of a capitated IPA/medical group must contact the applicable IPA/medical group for instructions regarding outpatient laboratory services.*

Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM Lab Guidelines

Quest Diagnostics, Inc., Clinical Pathology Laboratory (CPL) and LabCorp, Inc. are the preferred outpatient clinical reference laboratory providers for Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO) members.

Note: This arrangement excludes lab services provided during emergency room visits, inpatient admissions and outpatient day surgeries (hospital and free-standing ambulatory surgery centers).

For locations or questions contact:

- Quest Diagnostics at 888-277-8772 or questdiagnostics.com/patient
- Clinical Pathology Laboratory at 800-595-1275 or cpllabs.com
- LabCorp at 800-845-6167 or labcorp.com

As previously indicated, if lab services are performed at the participating physician's or other professional provider's office, the physician or professional provider may bill for the lab services. However, if the physician's or other professional provider's office sends the lab specimens to a contracted lab for completion, only the contracted lab can bill Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO) for the lab services.

Medical Necessity Review of Observation Services

As a reminder, it is the policy of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) to provide coverage for observation services when it is determined to be medically necessary based on the medical criteria and guidelines as outlined in the [MCG Care Guidelines](#). Claims for observation services are subject to post-service review, and BCBSTX may request medical records for the determination of medical necessity.

When medical records are requested, documentation should include the following information:

- The attending physician's order for observation care with clock time (or clock time can be noted in the nurse's observation admission note)
- The physician's admission and progress notes confirming the need for observation care
- The supporting diagnostic and/or ancillary testing reports
- The admission progress notes (with the clock time) outlining the patient's condition and treatment
- The discharge notes (with clock time) with discharge order and nurse's notes
- Itemized bill

Coordination of Care Between Medical and Behavioral Health Providers

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) continually strives to promote coordination of member care between medical and behavioral health providers. We understand that communication between providers and their patients regarding the treatment and coordination of care can pose challenges. Here are few resources available to you through BCBSTX:

The Coordination of Care Form Available Online

To provide assistance when coordinating care, BCBSTX has created a [Coordination of Care form](#) that is available online. This new form may help in communicating patient information, such as:

- To provide member treatment information to another treating provider
- To request member treatment information from another treating provider. It is important to note that a written release to share clinical information with members' medical providers must be obtained prior to the use of this form. BCBSTX recommends obtaining a written release prior to the onset of treatment.

If you are requesting member treatment information from another provider, it is recommended that the Patient Information and Referring Provider sections of the form be completed to expedite the care coordination process for the receiving provider.

If You Need Help Finding Behavioral Health Providers for Your Patients

Call the number on the back of members' BCBSTX ID cards to receive assistance in finding outpatient providers or behavioral health facilities.

Behavioral Health or Medical Case Management Services

If you believe a patient has complex health needs and could benefit from additional support and resources from a clinician, you can make a referral to one of the BCBSTX Case Management programs by calling the number on the back of the member's BCBSTX ID card. Case Management can also provide you and the member with information about additional resources provided by their insurance plan.

CMS Guidance Notifications

CMS Notifications for Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)SM and Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)SM

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) routinely publishes notifications that provide CMS guidance to all Medicare physicians, providers and suppliers, including those serving beneficiaries enrolled

in Original Medicare and one of the Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO) or Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO) plans. These CMS notifications are located in the Medicare Learning Network (MLN Matters) on CMS.gov and in the BCBSTX [News and Updates](#) section of the [provider website](#) under [CMS Notifications Medicare Advantage Plans](#) and may include informational regulatory updates and reminders, as well as required actions or changes by the provider rendering services. As such, it is important for providers to review these notifications and ensure your staff are aware of them.

Education & Reference

Provider Manual Update

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) makes periodic updates and clarifications related to operational changes and regulatory mandates to the provider manual, as well as the processes, policies and procedures that you comply with as a network provider. It is important that you stay up-to-date, so we share these changes in our monthly [Blue Review newsletter](#), in the [News and Updates](#) and/or the [Standards & Requirements/Disclosures sections](#) of the [BCBSTX provider website](#). These changes may also be communicated via mail. We encourage you to review both resources as you provide care to your patients. As a provider, it is your responsibility to review and comply with these changes.

Electronic Options

Multiple Online Enrollment Options Available in Availity®

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) offers you multiple enrollment opportunities for electronic options through the Availity Provider Portal. This is in addition to other electronic transactions available to you through Availity or your preferred web vendor portal. Instead of faxing or mailing paper enrollment forms, you can complete the online enrollment options listed below through Availity at no cost. Availity also provides single sign-on access to several online tools that offer greater convenience and security, without the need for another user ID and password. Refer to the [Provider Tools](#) and [Electronic Commerce Solutions](#) on the provider website for additional information on the following services:

- Availity transactions and single sign on
- Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) and Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA)
- Benefit Preauthorization via iExchange®
- Electronic Refund Management (eRM)
- Claim Inquiry Resolution (CIR)
- Claims Encounter Reconciliation Application (CERA)
- Clinical Quality Validation (CQV)
- Electronic Quality and Risk Adjustment Medical Record Requests

For assistance or customized training, contact a BCBSTX Provider Education Consultant at PECS@tx.com.

Electronic Replacement/Corrected Claim Submissions

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) claims system recognizes electronic claim submission types by the frequency code submitted. The **ANSI X12 837** claim format allows you to submit changes to claims that were not included on the original adjudication. For additional information, refer to the [Electronic Replacement/Corrected Claim Submissions](#) article on the BCBSTX Provider website.

eviCore™

eviCore Preauthorization Requirements

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) contracts with eviCore healthcare (eviCore), an independent specialty medical benefits management company, to administer preauthorization requirements for certain specialized services and products for BCBSTX members.

To determine which specialized clinical services and the effective dates of those services which require preauthorization/prior authorization through eviCore, providers should check eligibility, benefits, and preauthorization requirements through Availity® or your preferred vendor and also reference the [Preauthorization/Referral/Notification Requirements](#) found on the BCBSTX provider web site.

The services and effective dates vary by product as well as whether the member's group is self-insured or fully insured (identified by TDI on ID card).

For a detailed list of the services that require authorization through eviCore, refer to the [eviCore implementation site](#). Services performed without authorization may be denied for payment and you may not seek reimbursement from members/subscribers.

eviCore authorizations can be obtained using one of the following methods:

- Use the [eviCore healthcare web portal](#), which is available 24/7. After a one-time registration, you can initiate a case, check status, review guidelines, view authorizations and eligibility, and more. The web portal is the quickest, most efficient way to obtain information.
- Call eviCore at 855-252-1117 toll-free between 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. CT, Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. - noon CT, Saturday, Sunday and legal holidays.

For all other services that require a referral and/or authorization as noted on the Preauthorization/Referral Requirements Lists or the Prior Authorization/Referral List, continue to use iExchange®. iExchange is accessible to all physicians, professional providers and facilities. [Learn more about iExchange or set up a new account on BCBSTX's provider website.](#)

Pharmacy

Pharmacy Benefit Tips

For Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) members with prescription drug benefits administered by Prime Therapeutics®, BCBSTX employs many industry-standard management strategies to ensure appropriate utilization of prescription drugs. These strategies can include drug list management, benefit design modeling, specialty pharmacy benefits, clinical programs, among others. BCBSTX providers can assist in this effort by:

1. Prescribing drugs listed on the drug list

BCBSTX drug lists are provided as a guide to help in the selection of cost-effective drug therapy. Every major drug class is covered, although many of the drug lists cover most generics and fewer brand name drugs. The lists also provide members with criteria for how drugs are selected, coverage considerations and dispensing limits. While these drug lists are a tool to help members maximize their prescription drug benefits, the final decision about what medications should be prescribed is between the health care provider and the patient.

BCBSTX drug lists are regularly updated and can be found on the [Pharmacy Program](#) page on the [BCBSTX provider website](#).

Note: For members with Medicare Part D or Medicaid coverage, the drug lists can be found on the plan's website:

- Blue Cross MedicareRx (PDP)SM: getbluetx.com/pdp/druglist
- Blue Cross Medicare AdvantageSM: getbluetx.com/mapd/druglist
- Blue Cross Medicare Advantage Dual Care (HMO SNP)SM: getbluetx.com/dsnp/druglist
- Texas STAR: bcbstx.com/star/prescription-drugs/drug-coverage
- Texas CHIP: bcbstx.com/chip/prescription-drugs/drug-coverage
- Texas STAR KIDS: bcbstx.com/starkids/plan-details/drug-coverage.html

2. Reminding patients of covered preventive medications

Many BCBSTX health plans include coverage at no cost to the member for certain prescription drugs, women’s contraceptive products and over-the-counter medicines used for preventive care services.*

- [ACA \\$0 Preventive Drug List](#)
- [Women’s Contraceptive Coverage List](#)

3. Submitting necessary prior authorization requests

For some medications, the member’s plan may require certain criteria to be met before prescription drug coverage may be approved. You will need to complete the necessary prior authorization request and submit it to BCBSTX. More information about these requirements can be found on the [Pharmacy Program](#) page on the [BCBSTX provider website](#).

4. Assisting members with drug list exceptions

If the medication you wish to prescribe is not on your patient’s drug list or the preventive care lists, a drug list exception can be requested. You can call the customer service number on the member’s ID card to start the process or [complete the online form](#).

Visit the [Pharmacy Program](#) page for more information.

**Not available for all plans. Members should call the customer service number on their ID card to help determine what benefits may be available, including any requirements, limitations or exclusions that apply. Please refer to the member’s certificate of coverage and prescription drug list as there may be coverage for additional products beyond these lists.*

Dispensing QVT (Quantity Versus Time) Limits

To help minimize health risks and to improve the quality of pharmaceutical care, dispensing QVT limits have been placed on select prescription medications. The limits are based upon the U.S. Federal Drug Administration and medical guidelines as well as the drug manufacturer’s package insert. For current Drug List Dispensing Limits, visit [Pharmacy Program/Dispensing Limits](#) on the BCBSTX provider website.

Prescription Drug Lists

Throughout the year, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) Clinical Pharmacy department frequently reviews the prescription drug lists. Tier placement decisions for each drug on the list follow a precise process, with several committees reviewing efficacy, safety and cost of each drug.

For current drug updates, visit [Pharmacy Program/Prescription Drug List and Prescribing Guidelines](#) on the BCBSTX provider website.

Provider General Information

Fee Schedule Updates

Reimbursement changes and updates for Blue Choice PPO, Blue Essentials (Independent Provider Network only), Blue Advantage HMO and Blue Premier practitioners will be posted under Standards and

Requirements/General Reimbursement Information/Reimbursement Schedules and Related Information/Professional Schedules section on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) provider website at bcbstx.com/provider.

The changes will not become effective until at least 90 days from the posting date. The specific effective date will be noted for each change that is posted. To view this information, visit the [General Reimbursement Information section on the BCBSTX provider website](#). The CPT/HCPCS Drug/Injectable codes Fee Schedule will be updated quarterly on March 1, June 1, Sept. 1 and Dec. 1 each year. The NDC fee schedule will be updated monthly.

Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS)

Effective Sept. 1, 2017, BCBSTX was awarded the six- year contract for the ERS account. ERS participants covered under HealthSelectSM of Texas and Consumer Directed HealthSelectSM benefit plans will access care through the Blue EssentialsSM provider network in all 254 counties in Texas.

ERS participants can be identified through their BCBSTX ID card:

- The plan names HealthSelect of Texas and Consumer Directed HealthSelect will be printed directly on the ID card.
- ERS Participants will have a unique Blue Essentials network ID labeled HME.

Providers can refer to [ERS Tools](#) on the [provider website](#) under the [Education and Reference](#) section for additional information.

Provider Training

BCBSTX is proud to offer complimentary educational webinar sessions. These online training sessions give you the flexibility to attend live sessions. Provider billers, utilization areas and administrative departments will benefit from these webinars. Please visit [Educational Webinar/Workshop Sessions](#) on the bcbstx.com/provider website to view what is available and sign up for training sessions.

After-hours Access Is Required

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) requires that primary care physicians/providers, Specialty care physicians, professional providers, and facility and ancillary providers provide urgent care, and emergency care or coverage for care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Providers must have a verifiable mechanism in place, for immediate response, for directing patients to alternative after-hours care based on the urgency of the patient's need.

Acceptable after-hours access mechanisms may include:

- An answering service that offers to call or page the physician/provider or on-call physician/provider;
- a recorded message that directs the patient to call the answering service and the phone number is provided; or
- a recorded message that directs the patient to call or page the physician/provider or on-call physician/provider and the phone number is provided.

For more detail, [please refer to the provider manuals](#) for Blue Choice PPOSM Physician, Professional Provider and Facility and Ancillary Provider Manual (Section B) and Blue, Blue Premier Physician, Professional Provider, Facility and Ancillary Provider Manual (Section B) available in the Education & Reference section of our provider website. Click on the "Manual" link (note, a password is required).

Medical Record Requests: Include Our Letter as Your Cover Sheet

When you receive a letter from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) requesting additional information, such as medical records or certificates of medical necessity, please utilize the letter as a cover sheet when sending the requested information to us.

This letter contains a barcode in the upper right corner to help ensure that the information you send is matched directly to the appropriate file and/or claim. Do not submit a Claim Review form in addition to the letter, as this could delay the review process. Thank you for your cooperation!

Medical Policy Disclosure

New or revised medical policies, when approved, will be posted on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) provider website on the 1st or 15th day of each month. Those medical policies requiring disclosure will become effective 90 days from the posting date. Medical policies that do not require disclosure will become effective 15 days after the posting date. The specific effective date will be noted for each medical policy that is posted.

To view active and pending medical policies go to bcbstx.com/provider and click on the Standards & Requirements tab, then click on the [Medical Policies](#) offering. After reading and agreeing to the disclaimer, you will then have access to active and pending medical policies.

Draft Medical Policy Review

To streamline the medical policy review process, you can view draft medical policies on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) provider website and provide your feedback online. If there are any draft medical policies to review, these documents will be made available for your review around the 1st and the 15th of each month with a review period of approximately two weeks.

[View draft medical policies](#). After reading and agreeing to the disclaimer, you will then have access to view any draft medical policies, if available.

Annual Rights and Responsibilities Notification

Thank you for choosing to be a participating practitioner with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX). Please review the information below for the latest information that could affect your practice.

Your Rights

As a participating practitioner of our network, you have the right to review information submitted to support your credentialing application and receive the status of your credentialing (or recredentialing) application, upon request.

Providers have the responsibility to work directly with the reporting entity(ies) to correct erroneous information and/or conflicting information within 30 calendar days. All corrections must be submitted in writing to our Enterprise Credentialing Department, your assigned Network Management Consultant or a Medical Director to avoid future delays in processing your information for consideration in BCBSTX networks.

Mail: 1001 E. Lookout Drive
Richardson, Texas 75082
Fax: 972-766-2137
Email: CredentialingCommittee@bcbstx.com

Please note: Credentialing decisions will not be made until the applicant has responded or if the response has exceeded the 30 calendar days allocated.

Applicants who only see patients in an office setting and do not have hospital admitting privileges at a network hospital may attest to having coverage for hospital admissions by submitting a signed [Hospital Coverage letter](#). You can find a copy of this letter by visiting the [Forms](#) section under [Education and Reference](#) on the [BCBSTX provider website](#).

Care Management Programs: Case Management and Disease Management

BCBSTX Case Management (CM) and Disease Management (DM) staff work with enrolled members to increase their knowledge about their condition and help them better manage crisis events when they occur. CM and DM staff support the member and practitioner relationship, and aid communication between them. Members are encouraged to discuss issues and questions with their practitioner, develop a “shared decision making” partnership with their practitioner and take an active role in managing their own health.

Member compliance with physician treatment plans is monitored, including keeping appointments, compliance with medications and completing ordered tests. Program interventions are designed to coordinate with the activities of a member’s treating practitioners, specifically their primary care physician and/or appropriate specialist.

As a practitioner, you may refer a member for these care management programs at any time by calling the number on the back of the member’s identification (ID) card. A clinician will collaborate with you to provide our members with available resources and additional support.

Member Rights and Responsibilities

As a BCBSTX practitioner, it is important that you are aware of our members’ Rights and Responsibilities. Our health plan members can find their Rights and Responsibilities in their benefit booklet or on our website.

Member Rights and Responsibilities include:

- A right to receive information about BCBSTX, our services, our providers and facilities, and member rights and responsibilities.
- A right to be treated with respect and recognition of the member’s dignity and right to privacy.
- A right to participate with providers in making decisions about the member’s health care.
- A right to have a candid discussion of appropriate or medically necessary treatment options for the member’s condition, regardless of cost or benefit coverage.
- A right to voice complaints or appeals about BCBSTX or the care we provide.
- A right to make recommendations regarding our members’ Rights and Responsibilities policy.
- A responsibility to provide, to the extent possible, information that BCBSTX and the provider and facility need to provide care.
- A responsibility to follow the plans and instructions for care that the member has agreed to with their provider.
- A responsibility to understand their health problems and participate in the development of mutually agreed upon treatment goals, to the degree possible.

Utilization Management Decisions

BCBSTX is dedicated to serving our customers through the provision of health care coverage and related benefit services. Utilization Management (UM) determinations are made by licensed clinical personnel based on the:

- benefits policy (coverage) of a member’s health plan,
- evidence-based medical policies and medical necessity criteria, and the
- medical necessity of care and service.

All UM decisions are based on appropriateness of care and service, and existence of coverage. BCBSTX prohibits decisions based on financial incentives, nor does BCBSTX specifically reward practitioners or

clinicians for issuing denials of coverage. Financial incentives for UM decision makers do not encourage decisions that result in underutilization.

The criteria used for UM determinations are available upon request. Please call the Customer Service or Health Advocate number on the back of the member's ID card.

Pharmacy Benefits

As a participating practitioner, you are given a list of drugs that are reviewed and updated throughout the year.

For certain drugs, we have quantity limits and/or may require prior authorization before we approve any benefits for the drug. Prior approval and quantity limits are in place to ensure we are following current medically appropriate drug guidelines.

For more information regarding our Pharmacy programs, visit the [Pharmacy Program](#) section on the [BCBSTX provider website](#). For Federal Employee Program (FEP) members, information can be found at fepblue.org/pharmacy. We encourage you to check the website regularly and watch for updates in this newsletter.

You can find the following information on our website:

- Formulary lists, including restrictions and preferences
- How to use our pharmacy procedures
- An explanation of limits or quotas
- How you can provide information to support an exception request
- The process for generic drug substitutions, therapeutic interchange and step-therapy protocols

BCBSTX distributes the Roles and Responsibilities Notification to our practitioners annually to keep you informed about important topics that impact you and your practice.

Contact Us

View our [quick directory of contacts](#) for BCBSTX.

Update Your Information

Do you need to update your location, phone number, email or other important details on file with BCBSTX? Use our online forms to [request information changes](#). Are you receiving a copy of the Blue Review by email? If not, contact your local [BCBSTX Network Management Representative](#) to have up to 10 of your office email addresses added.

Checking eligibility, benefit information and/or if a service has been preauthorized is not a guarantee of payment. Benefits will be determined once a claim is received and will be based upon, among other things, the member's eligibility and the terms of the member's certificate of coverage applicable on the date services were rendered. If you have any questions, please call the number on the back of the member's ID card.

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Prime Therapeutics LLC is a pharmacy benefit management company. BCBSTX contracts with Prime to provide pharmacy benefit management and related other services. BCBSTX, as well as several independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans, has an ownership interest in Prime.

The information mentioned here is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for the independent medical judgment of a physician. Physicians are to exercise their own medical judgment. Pharmacy benefits and limits are subject to the terms set forth in the member's certificate of coverage which may vary from the limits set forth above. The listing of any particular drug or classification of drugs is not a guarantee of benefits. Members should refer to their certificate of coverage for more details, including benefits, limitations and exclusions. Regardless of benefits, the final decision about any medication is between the member and their health care provider.

bcbstx.com/provider

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