



**June 2019**

**NOTICES & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**New BCBSTX Network MyBlue Health<sup>SM</sup>**

We are excited to announce that Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has developed a new network to be effective January 1, 2020 in Dallas and Harris Counties only. MyBlue Health members in these areas will access care through providers contracted in the MyBlue Health network. Some of these providers may join us as part of our partnership with Sanitas.

With Sanitas, we will be building 10 new, advanced primary care medical centers in the Houston and Dallas communities. Construction on these medical centers will begin in spring 2019 and they will be fully functional and open for appointments beginning Jan. 1, 2020.

The new medical centers will feature convenient hours for working families and offer a variety of services. They will offer extended hours on weekdays and weekends with same-week appointments available for routine care and walk-ins for urgent care. Services will vary based on the center but will deliver primary care, urgent care, lab and diagnostic imaging services, care coordination and wellness and disease management programs.

If you have any questions, please contact your [Provider Network Representative](#). Continue to watch for additional information regarding MyBlue Health in future editions of this newsletter and on our website.

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**Network Participation Page Revisions are Here!**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of TX (BCBSTX) welcomes providers to apply to join our networks. We've enhanced the Provider Onboarding Process experience to obtain a provider record ID and get contracted. You will notice updates to the following processes on the Network Participation webpage:

- Provider Onboarding Process
- How to Join BCBSTX Provider Networks
- Request Contract/Agreement/Network Participation

We hope that you find these changes to be helpful. Watch for upcoming improvements to the Credentialing and Recredentialing portions of the website too.

If you have any questions, or if you need additional information, please visit our [provider website](#) and look under the Network Participation section or contact your local [BCBSTX Network Management Representative](#).

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## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

### Check Your Patients' Behavioral Health Preauthorization Requirements

Beginning July 15, 2019, we will be improving our claims review process for behavioral health services that require preauthorization. This will result in more consistent and accurate claims payment.

As a reminder, the following behavioral health services may require preauthorization:

- Services provided in the following settings:
  - Inpatient acute facilities
  - Residential treatment facilities
  - Partial hospitalization
  - Intensive outpatient therapy
  - Focused outpatient management
- Psychological or neuropsychological testing
- Applied behavior analysis
- Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS)

Services performed without preauthorization, if required, will be denied for payment and providers may not seek reimbursement from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) members.

Visit the BCBSTX provider website for more information regarding:

- Behavioral health [preauthorization requirements](#)
- Behavioral health [request forms](#)

You should always check eligibility and benefits for each member before treatment. This step will help you confirm applicable preauthorization requirements. You may check eligibility and benefits online for BCBSTX, out-of-area Blue Plan and Federal Employee Program® (FEP®) members via the Availity® Provider Portal or your preferred vendor portal.

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### Submit Benefit Preauthorization Requests Online for Intensive Outpatient Program and Electroconvulsive Therapy Services

Providers offering behavioral health intensive outpatient program (IOP) or electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) services now have the option to use iExchange® – our online benefit preauthorization tool – to submit benefit preauthorization requests for IOP and ECT services for Blue Cross and Blue Texas (BCBSTX) members with commercial and retail health plans. iExchange is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.\*

iExchange is accessible to physicians, professional providers, and facilities who have obtained a provider record with BCBSTX. To sign up and gain access, refer to the [iExchange page](#) for more information, including our [online enrollment form](#). Or, if you are already a registered Availity® Provider Portal user, you may enroll to use iExchange via the BCBSTX Payer Spaces – select the Resource tab, then “Pre-auth Registration.” There is no cost to use iExchange or Availity.

Customized training is available for providers who have never used iExchange. To request training, send an email to our Provider Education Consultants at [PECS@bcbstx.com](mailto:PECS@bcbstx.com). For ongoing support, you may contact the iExchange Help Desk at [iExchangeHelpDesk@bcbstx.com](mailto:iExchangeHelpDesk@bcbstx.com) or 800-746-4614.

### Important Reminder: Always Check Eligibility and Benefits First

It's critical to check eligibility and benefits for each patient to confirm coverage details. This step will also identify benefit preauthorization requirements and specify utilization management vendors that must be used, if applicable. Submit online eligibility and benefits requests (electronic 270 transactions) via the [Availity Portal](#) or your preferred web vendor portal. Obtaining benefit preauthorization is not a substitute

for checking eligibility and benefits.

### **Learn More About iExchange and Availity**

BCBSTX offers a variety of webinars with an emphasis on using electronic options:

- Join us for an iExchange webinar to learn how to access and navigate our online benefit preauthorization tool. Dates, times and online registration links for upcoming BCBSTX webinars, visit the [Educational Webinar/Workshop Sessions page](#).
- Also sign up for a BCBSTX Back to Basics: 'Availity 101' webinar for an overview of electronic transactions, such as eligibility and benefits that can be conducted via the Availity Portal.

If you have any questions, please contact your BCBSTX [Network Management Representative](#).

*\*With the exception of the third Sunday of the month from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.*


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## **PREAUTHORIZATION INFORMATION**

### **New Genetic Testing and Revised Sleep Study Preauthorization Requirements for H-E-B Partners with Blue Choice PPO<sup>SM</sup>**


There are important changes to the preauthorization requirements for your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) patients who are H-E-B partners and have the Blue Choice PPO health plan.


Effective Aug. 1, 2019, you will need to obtain preauthorization for an expanded list of molecular and genetic lab procedures through eviCore healthcare (eviCore) an independent specialty medical benefits management company. Also, procedure codes 81211, 81213, 81214, and 95805 that previously required preauthorization through BCBSTX for genetic testing or sleep studies have been removed.

The list of procedures\* that will require preauthorization through eviCore as of Aug. 1, 2019, as well as the codes related to Knee/Hip/Spine, Sleep Study/Sleep Apnea and Specialty Drugs that will continue to require preauthorization through BCBSTX for H-E-B members is on our provider website under Clinical Resources then [Preauthorizations/Notifications/Referral Requirements](#) and refer to "[H-E-B Members Only Additional Preauthorization Procedure Code List Effective 8/1/2019](#)" .

\*This list is not exhaustive of all codes. It is imperative to use Availity® or your preferred vendor to check eligibility and benefits, determine if you are in-network for your patient and whether preauthorization or prenotification is required. Availity allows you to determine if preauthorization is required based on the procedure code. Refer to "[Eligibility and Benefits](#)" on the [provider website](#) for more information on Availity. H-E-B partners can be identified by employer group #091043 on their BCBSTX identification cards. Payment may be denied if you perform procedures without authorization. If this happens, you may not bill your patients.

Once you have determined your service requires preauthorization through eviCore, use one of the following methods to obtain authorizations:

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

For other services requiring preauthorization through BCBSTX, continue to use iExchange® to preauthorize those services. For more information or to set up an iExchange account, visit [iExchange](#)  on the provider website.

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

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### **Change for American Airlines Members to Preauthorization Requirements for Spinal Fusion Surgery Procedures to eviCore**

There is an important change to the preauthorization requirements for your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) patients who are American Airlines members and have the Blue Choice PPOSM health plan.

Effective Aug. 1, 2019, for the spinal fusion surgery codes listed below, instead of requesting preauthorization through BCBSTX, you will need to obtain preauthorization through eviCore healthcare (eviCore) an independent specialty medical benefits management company.


The list of the spinal fusion surgery procedures\* that will require preauthorization through eviCore as of Aug. 1, 2019, are listed below:

Spinal Fusion Surgery Procedure Codes				
22533	22558	22630	22842	22847
22534	22585	22632	22843	22848
22551	22600	22633	22844	22853
22552	22612	22634	22845	22854
22554	22614	22841	22846	22859

\*Note: This list is not exhaustive of all codes that require preauthorization for American Airlines members. It is imperative to use Availity® or your preferred vendor to check eligibility and benefits, determine if you are in-network for your patient and whether preauthorization or prenotification is required. Availity allows you to determine if preauthorization is required based on the procedure code. Refer to "[Eligibility and Benefits](#)" on the [provider website](#) for more information on Availity.

American Airlines members can be identified by employer group # 120369, 150554, 169026, 169027, 169028, 169029 or 186287 on their BCBSTX identification cards. Payment may be denied if you perform procedures without authorization. If this happens, you may not bill your patients.

Once you have determined your service requires preauthorization through eviCore, use one of the following methods to obtain authorizations:

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

For other services requiring preauthorization through BCBSTX, continue to use iExchange® to preauthorize those services. For more information or to set up an iExchange account, visit [iExchange](#) on the provider website.

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

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### Save Time! Use eviCore® Web Portal for Preauthorization Requests

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) contracts with eviCore healthcare (eviCore), an independent specialty medical benefits management company, for select outpatient specialty utilization management services.

After you use Availity® or your preferred vendor and determine the service for your member requires preauthorization through eviCore, you can save a lot of time by submitting preauthorization requests through [eviCore's provider portal](#). eviCore recently made several improvements to make requests even easier.

Submitting a request through the eviCore provider portal helps make sure the request is submitted correctly and includes the needed information, which will help the approval process go more smoothly. Using the eviCore provider portal to submit requests for preauthorization will also allow you to:

- **Review clinical criteria** – review guidelines to see what's required, prior to submitting your request
- **Save time** – online benefit preauthorization requests are three times faster than phone requests
- **Access requests 24/7** – submit requests and check their progress when it is convenient
- **Stop and start as needed** – save your benefit preauthorization request and return to it later, without the need to start over
- **View and print results** – see case numbers and approval details online
- **Show you which procedure codes/diagnoses are impacted** – see codes for applicable categories/members
- **Upload member's medical records** – use the portal to respond quickly with clinical information necessary to support medical necessity of the service/procedure
- **Schedule consultations online** – set up a Clinical Consultation through the portal if you have questions.


To begin managing eviCore authorizations online, go to [eviCore.com](#) and register. Training sessions are available through the [eviCore training center](#). For provider portal help, email [portal.support@evicore.com](mailto:portal.support@evicore.com) or call 800-646-0418 and select option 2.

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### Replacement Codes Updated on ERS Specialty Drug List

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has updated the **Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) Specialty Drug Prior Authorization List**. The following drugs codes to reflect their new replacement Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes assigned by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services:

- **Cuvitru** – changed from J3590 to J1555
- **Exondys 51** – changed from J3590 & C9484 to J1428
- **Rituxan** – changed from J9310 to J9312
- **Tecentriq** – changed from C9483 to J9022

The [ERS Specialty Drug Prior Authorization List](#)  can be found on the [provider website](#) under [Preauthorizations/Notifications/Referral Requirements](#). These codes continue to require prior authorization for ERS participants.

If you have any questions, please contact your [Network Management Representative](#).

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## PHARMACY

### BCBSTX Now Offers a Choice in Pharmacies for Specialty Medications

We are happy to let you know that both Accredo and AllianceRx Walgreens Prime are now in-network pharmacies for specialty medications covered under the medical benefit for the 2019 calendar year.

Please note: This only applies to specialty medications that are covered under a medical benefit plan and are administered by a provider and does not apply to self-administered drugs covered under a pharmacy benefit. Additionally, certain new-to-market or limited distribution drugs may require an alternative specialty pharmacy. Please call the number on the members' ID card to verify coverage or for questions about their benefits.

*Specialty medication coverage is based on the member's benefit plan. This network update does not impact specialty medications that are covered under the pharmacy benefit plan. Members may need to meet select prior authorization criteria before coverage consideration is approved. Providers can find referral forms and additional information at [bcbstx.com/provider](http://bcbstx.com/provider).*

*The relationship between BCBSTX and specialty pharmacies is that of independent contractors. Prime Therapeutics has an ownership interest in AllianceRx Walgreens Prime, a central specialty and home delivery pharmacy. BCBSTX contracts with Prime Therapeutics 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 Therapeutics.*

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### Pharmacy Program Updates: Quarterly Pharmacy Changes

[Review pharmacy drug list changes and updates](#), dispensing limit changes, and Utilization Management program changes that went into effect **April 1**.

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## CLINICAL RESOURCES

### Helping Patients Find Cost-Effective Knee/Hip Replacements

#### **Premium Care Without Breaking the Bank**

A surprising number of younger Americans are choosing to have knee and hip replacement procedures. But they might be shelling out more cash - between 30 to 40 percent more - than they really need to. Those are just two of the unexpected findings from a new report by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA). The data show that 242,000 Americans spent \$25 million replacing their worn-out or damaged joints during 2017. Those under 65 are the primary market.

The report entitled "[Planned Knee and Hip Replacement Surgeries Are on the Rise in the U.S.](#)," describes a growing national market for shiny new hips and knees.

Interestingly, the exact same procedures cost 30 to 40 percent less in outpatient settings than inpatient venues. Yet only 11 percent of knee replacements happened in outpatient locations during 2017. Hip replacements were even lower at 8 percent.

- An inpatient knee replacement costs around \$30,249, while an outpatient procedure runs about \$19,002.
- An inpatient hip replacement costs \$30,685, compared to \$22,078 at an outpatient setting.

It's also worth noting that prices can vary dramatically, even in the same city. In Dallas, for example, some hip replacement patients paid nearly four times the lowest price available.

Why are prospective patients missing out on these big savings? Given today's health care complexities,



they simply might not know where to look. That's where you come in. They trust their providers to help them make informed, well-educated choices. And that's where BCBSTX comes in. We can help you direct your patients to affordable, high-quality care designed to meet their needs.

Patient safety, of course, dictates where these procedures should best take place. But the report notes that safety is comparable in both inpatient and outpatient settings. In some instances, outpatient complication rates are actually lower than inpatient.

So how can BCBSTX and providers help guide patients to the best solution for their individual needs? You can start by steering them to [Blue Distinction Centers+®](#). It's an elite distinction awarded to health care facilities for high-quality, cost-efficient specialty care. Savings can be as high as 24 percent compared to non-Blue Distinction Centers+.

Texas has 12 [Blue Distinction Centers+](#) specializing in knee and hip replacements.

There's also Blue Access for Members<sup>SM</sup>, a 24/7 online service with, among other features, cost estimates, quality rankings and patient reviews of hospitals nationwide. We've made it a priority to give members advanced, easy-to-use tools and options that will help them make informed decisions about the best care choices for their specific needs.

So, the next time a patient comes to you with questions about the ups and downs of hip or knee replacement, isn't it nice to know you can give them resources and savings as well as peace of mind? Blue Distinction Center+ designation, visit the [Blue Cross Blue Shield Association](#) website.

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### **The New Great Depression**

More than 9 million commercially insured Americans have been diagnosed with depression – [a number that has climbed 33%](#) since 2013. In fact, 89 percent\* of Americans adults say that depression is a very serious or somewhat serious condition. However, 2 million of those diagnosed in 2016 did not seek treatment. As a growing number of pharmaceutical and behavioral therapeutic options become available, it's critical to connect people with the individualized treatment that works for them.

Encourage your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas patients to call us at the number on their card to learn about the behavioral health benefits available to them. Members may have coverage for office visits, therapy, medication or even virtual visits with behavioral health professionals.

*\*Information above found in the Blue Cross Blue Shield, The Health Of America Report® which examined U.S. commercially insured members diagnosed with major depressive disorder (major depression) and uses the breadth and depth of data available through the Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Index<sup>SM</sup>.*

*Blue Cross Blue Shield, The Health Of America Report The Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) Health Index is a unique health metric that provides a better understanding about which diseases and conditions most impact Americans' overall quality of life. The BCBS Health Index identifies more than 200 health conditions and quantifies how each condition affects Americans' health, life expectancy and well-being. Powered by data from more than 41 million BCBS commercially insured members per year from birth to age 64, this extensive resource brings an unmatched contribution to other available health data to support national and local discussions about how to improve health care in the United States. [Visit this link](#) for more information about the BCBS Health Index.*

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### **Imaging Studies for Low Back Pain**

At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX), we are committed to offering support and resources to physicians to achieve the highest level of care possible for their patients. Thank you for your dedication to ensure that your patients receive exceptional care.

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) developed and maintains the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) to standardize and measure quality of care for all patients. One of these measurements looks at using imaging studies for **uncomplicated new onset lower back pain**. The intent is to evaluate the appropriate use of all diagnostic imaging studies, including x-rays for this condition. **Generally, patients with a new onset low back pain diagnosis should not receive any imaging within the first 30 days of diagnosis, but rather receive conservative medical treatment with prescription strength analgesics and physical therapy.**

The NCQA realizes that each patient’s presentation is unique, and imaging may be required. Therefore, they have added a vast number of medical conditions where imaging could be considered medically necessary on initial patient presentation. If you have such a situation and simply provide that additional diagnosis in your medical evaluation, then your patient with low back pain is excluded from your HEDIS metric and does not negatively affect your performance for NCQA.

Below we have provided a chart for you to use during your low back pain patient visits. We hope this provides one less step in your daily process to evaluate your patients.

DESCRIPTION	ICD-10 CODE
Cancer (active)	All ICD10 “C” codes
Cancer (personal history)	All ICD10 “Z” codes
HIV	B20; Z21
IV Drug Abuse	All ICD10 “F” codes
Kidney transplant	0TY00Z0-0TY00Z2; 0TY10Z0-0TY10Z2
Major Organ Transplant, other than kidney	Heart, Small intestine, Large intestine, Liver, Pancreas islets, Ovaries, Face, Head, Thymus, Spleen, Lungs, Esophagus, Stomach
Neurologic Impairment	G83.4
Spinal Infection, Osteomyelitis and Discitis	A17.81, G06.1, M46.25-M46.28, M46.35-M46.38, M46.46-M46.48
Trauma/Fractures	All ICD10 “S” codes

**Note:** The above list is not all inclusive

If you have any questions regarding the HEDIS measure for Use of Imaging in Low Back Pain and your Federal Employee Program (FEP) patients, please do not hesitate to email BCBSTX’s Sonja J. Hughes M.D. directly at [sonja\\_j\\_hughes@bcbsok.com](mailto:sonja_j_hughes@bcbsok.com).

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### Quality Improvement Program Information Available to Providers

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has a Quality Improvement Program (QIP) to better serve our members. The program focuses on preventive health, behavioral health, patient safety and condition management. By collaborating with physicians, providers and health care professionals, the program promotes safe and appropriate care. It also encourages the efficient use of resources, which ultimately helps reduce health care costs and improves member satisfaction with their health care plan.

The QIP includes many activities to develop, review and monitor services provided, including (but not limited to):

- Member complaints and appeals,
- Member and provider satisfaction,
- Utilization management statistics and systematic measurement of clinical care (e.g., such as cancer screenings), immunizations and chronic conditions (e.g., asthma and diabetes)

Member care and service are evaluated on a regular basis to determine whether members are receiving



appropriate care and service, and that they are satisfied with the health plan. Information regarding the QIP is available in the BCBSTX provider manuals. These manuals are available online under [Standards and Requirements section](#) on the [BCBSTX provider website](#). To receive a written summary of the QIP, which includes outcomes, please call the **Quality Improvement Programs Department at 800-863-9798**.

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### **Are You Using Shared Decision-Making Aids?**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) wants to support you as you work to improve the health outcomes of our members. Below is a list of evidence-based shared decision-making (SDM) aids that provide information about treatment options, lifestyle changes and outcomes. These aids are not intended to replace your guidance, but to complement the conversations you have with your patients. Engaging your patients in decision making can lead to better outcomes and quality of life. For your convenience, this SDM list can also be found under [Clinical Resources/Related Resources](#) on the BCBSTX provider website.

### **[Mayo Clinic Shared Decision Making National Resource Center](#)**

- [Cardiovascular primary prevention choice](#)
- [Depression medication choice](#)
- [Diabetes medication choice](#)
- [Osteoporosis decision aid](#)
- [PCI choice](#) (Percutaneous Coronary Intervention)
- [Smoking cessation around the time of surgery](#)
- [Rheumatoid arthritis \(RA\) choice](#)
- [Statin choice electronic decision aid](#)

### **[Cincinnati Children's James M Anderson Center for Health Systems Excellence](#)**

- ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Deficit) treatment for school age child
- Diarrhea treatment with lactobacillus GG
- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination
- Hydroxyurea for sickle cell anemia
- Treatment for children with autism
- Behavior concerns in young children
- Juvenile idiopathic arthritis treatment
- Fertility preservation for children newly diagnosed with cancer
- Treatment of obstructive sleep apnea
- Weight loss for adolescents

### **[Dartmouth-Hitchcock Center for Shared Decision Making](#)**

- **Decision Support Toolkit for Primary Care**

The following seven steps offer a framework for implementing patient decision support in primary care:

- [Step 1: Leadership](#)
- [Step 2: Goals and Scope of Project](#)
- [Step 3: Assessment](#)
- [Step 4: Decision Support Tools](#)
- [Step 5: Education and Training](#)
- [Step 6: Implementation](#)
- [Step 7: Quality Monitoring Tools](#)

### **Decision Support Toolkit for Specialty Care**

- **Breast Cancer**

- [Early Stage Breast Cancer Toolkit](#) – Guidelines and tools for integrating decision support into clinical care for women newly diagnosed with early stage invasive breast cancer.
  - [Ductal Carcinoma in Situ \(DCIS\) Toolkit](#) – Guidelines and tools for integrating decision support into clinical care for women newly diagnosed with ductal carcinoma in situ.
  - [Breast Reconstruction Toolkit](#) – Guidelines and tools for integrating decision support into clinical care for women considering immediate or delayed breast reconstruction after breast cancer surgery.
- **Hip and Knee Osteoarthritis**
    - [Hip and Knee Osteoarthritis Toolkit](#) – Guidelines and tools for integrating decision support into clinical care for patients with knee and/or hip osteoarthritis.

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

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### **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.

For a detailed list of the services that require authorization through eviCore, refer to the [eviCore implementation site](#).

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. Also reference the [Preauthorization/Referral/Notification](#) page on BCBSTX's provider website. Services performed without authorization may be denied for payment and you may not seek reimbursement from members/subscribers

**Note:** Some plans may require inpatient Musculoskeletal Surgery Medical Necessity authorization through eviCore. The provider will be required to supply the eviCore preauthorization number to BCBSTX to obtain a BCBSTX preauthorization number for the inpatient stay.

### **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 requiring a referral and/or authorization through BCBSTX, 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 the BCBSTX [provider website](#).

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## CLAIMS & ELIGIBILITY

### Clinical Payment and Coding Policy Updates

BCBSTX publishes [Clinical Payment and Coding policies](#) on our website that describe payment rules and methodologies for Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®), HCPCS and ICD-10 coding when applied to claims submitted as covered services. This information is offered as a resource regarding BCBSTX payment policies and is not intended to address all reimbursement related issues. We regularly add and modify clinical payment and coding policy positions as part of our ongoing policy review processes.

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### Change in Reject Notification for Invalid National Drug Codes Used on Electronic Medicare Advantage Claims

**The notice applies to providers submitting electronic claims for the following Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) members:**

- **Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)<sup>SM</sup>**
- **Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)<sup>SM</sup>**

Effective April 11, 2019, payer response reports for the above-referenced electronic government programs claims will identify invalid National Drug Codes (NDCs) that are causing the claim to reject. Submitters will continue to receive:

- Health Care Claim Status Category Status Code A8: *Acknowledgement/Rejected for relational field in error*; and
- Health Care Claim Status Code 218: *NDC number*.

The **277CA – Health Care Claim Acknowledgement** will now include the invalid NDC that caused the claim to reject in data element 2200D, STC12. This will help you quickly identify and correct the invalid NDC that is causing the claim to reject. All NDCs present are compared against the Medi-Span® NDC list and must be active relative to the Date of Service (DOS) on the service line. If they are not, the claim will reject. If the claim was a paper submission, you will receive a letter from BCBSTX notifying you of the claim rejection. After making the appropriate correction, you may immediately resubmit the claim electronically to help avoid processing/payment delays.

**Please share this notice with your practice management/hospital information system software vendor, billing service or clearinghouse, if applicable, to help ensure they will be able to process/display the additional data element (2200D, STC12).** Providers who utilize Availity® services for electronic claim submission do not need to confirm this process with them, as Availity will display this additional data element in their payer response reports.

If you have any questions, please contact your assigned [BCBSTX Provider Network Representative](#).

*Availity is a trademark of Availity, LLC, a separate company that operates a health information network to provide electronic information exchange services to medical professionals. Availity provides administrative services to BCBSTX. Medi-Span is a trademark of the **Health division of Wolters Kluwer, an independent third-party vendor that is a leading global provider of information and point of care solutions for the health care industry.** BCBSTX makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding any products or services provided by third-party vendors such as Availity or Wolters Kluwer. If you have any questions about the products or services provided by such vendors, you should contact the vendor(s) directly.*

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### **Check Eligibility and Benefits: Don't Skip This Important First Step!**

Is your patient's membership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) still active? Are you or your practice/medical group in- or out-of-network for a specific patient? Is benefit preauthorization required for a particular member/service?

#### **Get Answers Up Front**

*Benefits will vary based on the service being rendered and individual and group policy elections.* It is imperative to check eligibility and benefits for each patient before every scheduled appointment. Eligibility and benefit quotes include important information about the patients' benefits, such as membership verification, coverage status and applicable copayment, coinsurance and deductible amounts. Also, the benefit quote may include information on applicable benefit preauthorization/prenotification requirements. When it is determined that services may not be covered, you should notify members in writing that they may be billed directly.

#### **Don't Take Chances**

Ask to see the member's BCBSTX ID card for current information. Also, ask for a driver's license or other photo ID to help guard against medical identity theft.

#### **Use Online Options**

We encourage you to check eligibility and benefits via an electronic 270 transaction through the [Availity® Provider Portal](#) or your preferred vendor portal. You may conduct electronic eligibility and benefits inquiries for local BCBSTX, out-of-area Blue Plans and Federal Employee Program® (FEP®) members.

#### **Learn More**

For more information, such as a library of online transaction tip sheets organized by specialty, refer to the [Eligibility and Benefits section](#) of the BCBSTX provider website. BCBSTX also offers educational webinars with an emphasis on electronic transactions, including eligibility and benefits inquiries. Refer to the [Educational Webinar page](#) for upcoming webinar dates, times and registration links to sign up now.

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### **Three-character Prefix on Member ID Cards**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield member identification numbers (ID) usually begin with a three-character prefix. Previously, the prefixes included only letters. As of April 2018, to ensure we have enough prefixes to support our current and future business needs, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association has determined that the prefixes can now be alphanumeric.

#### **Quick Reminders:**

- Three-character member ID prefixes may now have both letters and numbers.
- Cards that have prefixes with letters-only are still valid.
- The three-character prefix is always followed by the rest of the member's ID number.
- Include the entire member ID number, with the prefix, on all correspondence and claims.
- Do not omit, randomly select or substitute a different three-character prefix.
- If a member's ID number does not have a three-character prefix, make sure you request their most current identification card.
- Some Blue Cross and Blue Shield member ID prefixes may have less than three characters. Federal Employee Program® members, for example, have a single-letter prefix.

Be sure to obtain eligibility and benefits to confirm membership (including the correct ID number), verify the member's coverage and determine if you are in-network or out-of-network for the member's plan before rendering services.

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### Transferring Hospital DRG Rate Calculation and Discharge Status Code Addition

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) will implement system logic **effective July 15, 2019**, to include discharge status code 05 (discharge/transferred to a designated cancer center or children's hospital) to appropriately apply the Diagnosis Related Group (DRG) Per Diem calculation.

The DRG Per Diem rate calculation will continue to apply to the following discharge status codes:

- 02 (discharged/transferred to short term general hospital for inpatient care)
- 82 (discharged/transferred to short term general hospital with a planned acute care hospital inpatient readmission)

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

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## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### In-home Colorectal Cancer Screening Test Provided to Select Members


The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says one-third of adults age 50 or older have not been screened for colorectal cancer as recommended.<sup>1</sup> Together, we can help our members at the greatest risk of developing colorectal cancer get the screening they need by making it easier and more convenient. Some of your patients in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) Blue Advantage HMO<sup>SM</sup> and Blue Advantage Plus<sup>SM</sup> HMO networks who are 51 to 75 years old with no claim history of having a colorectal screening, may receive a Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) Kit. The FIT Kit allows our members to complete the test in the comfort and privacy of their homes at no additional charge.

We let our members know they will receive the test and that taking the test is voluntary. Members who complete the test at their home will send their completed test kits to Home Access Health Corporation, an independent company specializing in in-home diagnostic testing. Home Access Health Corporation will process the tests and send results to the member and their Primary Care Provider. Members have until Nov. 15, 2019, to complete and submit their test for processing.

#### How You Can Help:



- Discuss the importance of colorectal cancer screening and healthy lifestyle choices that promote wellness with your patients.
- If your patients receive a FIT Kit and call your office with questions, please encourage them to participate and complete the screening as soon as possible.
- You may receive a test result from Home Access Health Corporation. Please include it in your patient's medical record and discuss the results with your patient.

If you have any questions, please contact your BCBSTX [Network Management Representative](#).

<sup>1</sup>CDC, Screen for Life: National Colorectal Cancer Action Campaign, October 29, 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/sfl/index.htm> 

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### Bringing Relief to the Urban Food Desert in the Dallas Area

Do you have patients who don't have access to healthy food? Is their lack of nutrition impacting their health? Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) and the [Blue Cross Blue Shield Institute](#)<sup>SM</sup>  (BCBS Institute) have partnered to form [foodQ](#)<sup>SM</sup>  – a subscription-based food service that delivers healthy meals to food deserts. These are areas where sensible food isn't available or affordable.

Access to food is directly related to an individual's health. foodQ's goal is to bring nutritious, ready-to-eat meals straight to your patients' door. Eating better helps lower the risks of chronic illnesses like diabetes and obesity, which can often result in costly hospital treatment.

foodQ will soon be delivering meals to 15 ZIP codes in Dallas. When it starts, participants can enter their ZIP code on the [foodQ](#) website to determine if they are eligible. Customers must live in one of the ZIP codes listed below to qualify, but don't have to be a BCBSTX member. Participants may select from six meal options, including beef, chicken and vegetarian.

**Eligible ZIP codes:**

75204	75216	75227
75206	75217	75228
75210	75220	75231
75214	75223	75243
75215	75226	75246

**Note** – Check for additional ZIP codes in your area on [foodQhub.com](#).

**COST:**

- **Non-subscription fee**  
\$10 per meal plus \$6 delivery fee per order
- **Monthly subscription fee**  
\$10 per month subscription (includes free delivery and buy-one-get-one option for each meal)

Front Porch Pantry, a partner with foodQ, will provide the meals for the Dallas community.

**How Can You Help?**

Check the ZIP codes listed above to see if foodQ can help your patients. Then let them know how foodQ can provide healthy meal options at roughly the cost of a fast-food value meal.

For more about foodQ, including menus, visit [foodQhub.com](#).

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**Making an Impact in Our Community**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has a long history of protecting members and helping them be at their best. As a company, BCBSTX is focused on making deeper connections with our members and providers in the communities where they live, work and play. Why? BCBSTX is a part of these communities too!

Here are a few examples where we are [Making an Impact](#) by strengthening our communities:

- Helping families eat, breathe and live better;
- Fighting lung disease and helping prevent blindness;
- Bridging gaps in preventive care through the Caring Foundation of Texas<sup>SM</sup> Care Van<sup>®</sup> mobile health program;
- Teaching kids to brush their teeth and make smart food choices;
- Building safe places for them to play; and
- Lending a helping hand to rural doctors.

[Making an Impact](#) tells the stories about how we're working to improve health and wellness in our communities. Check out the report to see how we're going deeper into our communities to improve the lives of others.



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### Living365® Diabetes Classes for Members

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) is working with **Albertsons® Market, Randalls® and Tom Thumb®** pharmacies to offer **Living365®** diabetes education classes starting this month at NO CHARGE to our members. These classes will give members a chance to:

- Go on a “Healthy Eating” grocery store tour led by a registered dietitian. During the tour members will learn about counting carbohydrates, types of fat, reading food labels and much more.
- Engage with a pharmacist to learn more about diabetes and related treatments, monitoring blood glucose, and incorporating physical activity into their lifestyle.
- Participate in a question and answer session.
- Receive educational materials and items such as a tote bag and water bottle.

The classes are scheduled from 6 – 7:30 p.m. as follows:

DATE	PHARMACY	LOCATION
April 4	Randalls	2051 Gattis School Rd, Round Rock, TX
April 25	Albertsons	320 Casa Linda Plaza, Dallas, TX
May 22	Tom Thumb	612 Grapevine Highway, Hurst, TX
June 20	Randalls	5161 San Felipe, Houston, TX

Members can call 877-728-6655, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. or [visit this registration page](#) to reserve a space.

At BCBSTX, we believe that healthy actions add up. Please encourage your patients to attend these educational classes.

If you have other questions or concerns, please call the number on the back of the member's ID card.

*Albertsons Market, Tom Thumb and Randalls are independently contracted pharmacies solely responsible for their products and services.*

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### NETWORK PARTICIPATION

#### Revised Change of Ownership (CHOW) Form Now Available

The [Consent to Assignment of Provider Contracts – Change of Ownership](#) (CHOW) form has been revised. This form is used to process a change of ownership for a hospital and/or ancillary provider. The revision includes a listing of required documents needed to process the change. We also included links to the Electronic Commerce and Availity® sections of our website to ensure that any revised paperwork can be submitted at the same time. Please contact your [Network Management Representative](#) if you have any questions about filling the form out.

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#### BCBSTX Plans and Referral Requirements

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) has the following PPO and HMO plans:

##### Blue Choice PPO<sup>SM</sup>

Covered members have direct access to all in-network Blue Choice PPO providers. A covered person does not need to obtain a referral from their primary care physician (PCP) to seek services/care from an

in-network specialty care physician or provider. Covered persons can choose to use out-of-network providers under their out-of-network benefit. If an out-of-network provider, including facilities, are necessary due to network inadequacy or continuity of care, then authorization is required by BCBSTX.

**HMO Plans**

- Blue Advantage HMO<sup>SM</sup>
- Blue Advantage Plus<sup>SM\*</sup>
- Blue Essentials<sup>SM</sup>
- Blue Essentials Access<sup>SM\*</sup>
- Blue Premier<sup>SM</sup>
- Blue Premier Access<sup>SM\*</sup>

**Blue Advantage HMO, Blue Essentials** and **Blue Premier** require referrals initiated by the covered person's designated PCP and must be made to an in-network physician or professional provider in the covered person's applicable HMO provider network. **Blue Essentials, Blue Advantage HMO** and **Blue Premier** physician and professional providers are required to admit a patient to an in-network facility in the covered person's HMO provider network, except in an emergency.

\*Note:

- **Blue Essentials Access** and **Blue Premier Access** are considered "open access" HMO plans where no PCP selection or referrals are required when the covered person uses in-network providers in their applicable HMO network.
- **Blue Advantage Plus** allows covered persons to use out-of-network providers. Covered persons can choose to self-direct their care under their out-of-network benefits at a higher out of pocket. Please be sure the covered person understands the financial impact of receiving services from an out-of-network provider, including facilities.

The table below defines when PCP selection and referrals to specialists are required and if out-of-network benefits are available for the HMO plans.

- Exception: No referrals are required for in network OB/GYNs in the covered person's applicable HMO network.
- When in-network providers and/or facilities are not available in the covered person's applicable HMO network, preauthorization would be required to utilize an out-of-network provider and/or facility.

HMO Plan	Designated PCP Required	Referrals Required for In-Network Providers	Out-Of-Network Benefits Available with Higher Covered Person's Cost Share
Blue Advantage HMO	Yes	Yes	No
Blue Advantage Plus**	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

\*\*Before referring Blue Advantage Plus covered persons to an out-of-network provider for non-emergency services, please refer to the **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](#)).

#### Reminders:

- Some services in both HMO and PPO plans may require preauthorization or prenotification.
- It is imperative that providers use Availity<sup>®</sup> or their preferred vendor to obtain eligibility and benefits, determine if you are in- or out-of-network for their plan, and whether preauthorization/prenotification is required. Availity allows preauthorization determination by procedure code. Refer to the BCBSTX [Eligibility and Benefits](#) web page for more information on Availity.
- Utilize [iExchange<sup>®</sup>](#) or call the preauthorization number on the back of the covered person's identification (ID) card to obtain authorization.
- Sample [ID cards](#) are available on the BCBSTX provider website.

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#### Provider Onboarding Form User Guide Now Available

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of TX (BCBSTX) welcomes providers to apply to join our networks. We want to make the process of applying for a BCBSTX provider record number ID and joining our networks faster and easier than ever before. Prospective providers will be able to fill out our electronic Provider Onboarding form.

The Provider Onboarding form will be used by BCBSTX to set up a provider record number and if indicated by the provider, request contracts for the networks they would like to participate in. Providers can locate the electronic Provider Onboarding form and the Provider Onboarding Form User Guide on the [BCBSTX provider website](#) under the How to Join BCBSTX Provider Networks section. The [Provider Onboarding Form User Guide](#) can help make the application process easier and faster.

The Provider Onboarding form should be filled out by the following interested providers:

- Individual providers who would be new to our networks
- Groups and clinics that would be new to our networks
- Existing contracted groups or clinics that are adding a new provider
- Providers needing to submit claims electronically as an out-of-network provider

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

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#### EDUCATION & REFERENCE

##### 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<sup>®</sup> 101
- iExchange<sup>®</sup>
- 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.

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## 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](http://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.

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#### **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.

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#### **Enrollee Notification Form Required for Out-of-Network Care for Blue Choice PPO<sup>SM</sup> and Blue Advantage HMO<sup>SM</sup> (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](http://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 PPO<sup>SM</sup> members. Providers should check eligibility, benefits, and preauthorization requirements through Availity® or your preferred vendor 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](https://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 Portal<sup>SM</sup> 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.*

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## 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.

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## Benefits and Eligibility

### BCBS Medicare Advantage PPO Network Sharing

**Applies to: Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)<sup>SM</sup>**

### 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.

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**Claims**

**Preventive Services Reminder: Zero Copay for Blue Cross Medicare Advantage<sup>SM</sup>**

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)<sup>SM</sup> or Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)<sup>SM</sup>. 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<sup>®</sup>, 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.

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### 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 HMO<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Essentials<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Premier<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)<sup>SM</sup> and Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)<sup>SM</sup> 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](http://bcbstx.com/provider) under [Standards and Requirements/Manuals](#).

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### 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.

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### 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](http://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](#).

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#### **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 (HCPSC), 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.*

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#### **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.

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#### **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.

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#### **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.

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### **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.

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### **Hospitals, and Routine Services and Supplies**

Routine services and supplies are generally already 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.
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### **Clinical Resources**

#### **BCBSTX Lab Guidelines**

Quest Diagnostics, Inc., is the exclusive outpatient clinical reference laboratory provider for Blue Essentials<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Premier and Blue Advantage HMO<sup>SM</sup> members\* and the preferred statewide outpatient clinical reference laboratory provider for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) Blue Choice PPO<sup>SM</sup> 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](https://www.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<sup>®</sup> 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.*

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### **Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)<sup>SM</sup> 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](http://questdiagnostics.com/patient)
- Clinical Pathology Laboratory at 800-595-1275 or [cpllabs.com](http://cpllabs.com)
- LabCorp at 800-845-6167 or [labcorp.com](http://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.

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### **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.

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## CMS Guidance Notifications

### CMS Notifications for Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO)<sup>SM</sup> and Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (HMO)<sup>SM</sup>

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.

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## 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.

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## 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](mailto:PECS@tx.com).

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## 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.

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## eviCore™

No articles at this time.

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## 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)<sup>SM</sup>: [getbluetx.com/pdp/druglist](http://getbluetx.com/pdp/druglist)
- Blue Cross Medicare Advantage<sup>SM</sup>: [getbluetx.com/mapd/druglist](http://getbluetx.com/mapd/druglist)
- Blue Cross Medicare Advantage Dual Care (HMO SNP)<sup>SM</sup>: [getbluetx.com/dsnp/druglist](http://getbluetx.com/dsnp/druglist)
- Texas STAR: [bcbstx.com/star/prescription-drugs/drug-coverage](http://bcbstx.com/star/prescription-drugs/drug-coverage)
- Texas CHIP: [bcbstx.com/chip/prescription-drugs/drug-coverage](http://bcbstx.com/chip/prescription-drugs/drug-coverage)
- Texas STAR KIDS: [bcbstx.com/starkids/plan-details/drug-coverage.html](http://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.*

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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](http://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.

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### 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 HealthSelect<sup>SM</sup> of Texas and Consumer Directed HealthSelect<sup>SM</sup> benefit plans will access care through the Blue Essentials<sup>SM</sup> 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.

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### 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 PPO<sup>SM</sup> 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).

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### **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!

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### **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](http://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.

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### **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.

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### **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](mailto:CredentialingCommittee@bcbstx.com)

**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](http://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.

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### Contact Us


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

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### 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.

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 File is in portable document format (PDF). To view this file, you may need to install a PDF reader program. Most PDF readers are a free download. One option is Adobe® Reader® which has a built-in screen reader. Other Adobe accessibility tools and information can be downloaded at <http://access.adobe.com>.

 By clicking this link, you will go to a new website/app (“site”). This new site may be offered by a vendor or an independent third party. The site may also contain non-Medicare related information. In addition, some sites may require you to agree to their terms of use and privacy policy.

*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.*

*eviCore is a trademark of eviCore health care, LLC, formerly known as CareCore, an independent company that provides utilization review for select health care services on behalf of BCBSTX.*

*iExchange is a trademark of Medecision, Inc., a separate company that offers collaborative health care management solutions for payers and providers. BCBSTX makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding any products or services offered by third-party vendors such as Medecision. If you have any questions about the products or services offered by such vendors, you should contact the vendor(s) directly.*

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*ConVergence Point is a trademark of Verscend Technologies, Inc., an independent third-party vendor that is solely responsible for its products and services.*

*Availity is a trademark of Availity, LLC, a separate company that operates a health information network to provide electronic information exchange services to medical professionals. Availity provides administrative services to BCBSTX. iExchange is a trademark of Medecision, Inc., a separate company that offers collaborative healthcare management solutions for payers and providers. BCBSTX makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding any products or services offered by third party vendors such as Availity or Medecision. If you have any questions about the products or services offered by such vendors, you should contact the vendor(s) directly.*

*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](http://bcbstx.com/provider)

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