

# BLUE REVIEW<sup>SM</sup>

A newsletter for physician, professional, facility, ancillary and Medicaid providers

September 2019

## Did You Know?

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

### Topics:

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

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## Authorizations and Referrals

### 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® 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®](#) 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.

**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 [Prior Authorizations & Predeterminations](#) under Clinical Resources on [bcbstx.com/provider](http://bcbstx.com/provider).

Prior authorizations/referrals may be required 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 prior authorization/referral is also needed for an initial stay in a facility and any additional days or services added on.

Prior authorizations are required to allow for medical necessity review. If a member/subscriber does not obtain a prior authorization/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 prior authorization/referral does not guarantee payment. All payments are subject to determination of a member'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 prior authorization/referral request is received from an out-of-network (OON) provider and the member does not have an OON benefit, BCBSTX will contact the ordering provider to discuss network options. However, if a member 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.

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### 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](http://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>*

All Blue Cross and Blue Shield Medicare Advantage<sup>SM</sup> (BCBS MA PPO) plans participate in reciprocal network sharing. This network sharing allows 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.

For detailed information on BCBS MA PPO network sharing, refer to the [Blue Cross Medicare Advantage \(PPO\) Provider Manual Supplement located under Standards and Requirements/Manuals on the BCBSTX provider website.](#)

If you have any questions regarding the BCBS MA PPO program or products, contact Blue Cross Medicare Advantage (PPO) Customer Service at 1-877-774-8592.

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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<sup>®</sup> PPO, Blue Advantage HMO<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Essentials<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Premier<sup>SM</sup>, MyBlue Health<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, Blue Premier and MyBlue Health 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, Cotiviti formerly known as Verscend Technologies, Inc. BCBSTX implemented this code-auditing software in June 2017\*.

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

*\*The above notice does not apply to government program claims (Medicare Advantage and Texas Medicaid).*

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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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### 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.



## 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://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 health care 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 and 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: Health care providers who are contracted/affiliated with a capitated IPA/medical group and health care providers who are not part of a capitated IPA/medical group but who provide services to a member 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
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### **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<sup>®</sup>**

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<sup>®</sup>
- 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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## eviCore®



### Use eviCore® Web Portal for Preauthorization Requests

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

After you use Availity® – or your preferred vendor – and determine the service for a member requires preauthorization through eviCore, you should submit preauthorization requests through [eviCore's provider portal](#) .

Using the eviCore provider portal to submit requests for preauthorization allows you to:

- **Save time** - an authorization request initiated on the eviCore provider portal is three times faster than a phone request
- **Access requests** - submit requests and check their progress when it is convenient
- **Stop and start as needed** - save your authorization request and return to it later
- **View and print authorization information** - see details for the approval and the case number
- **Review clinical** - see what is required to secure a preauthorization, including what procedure codes require preauthorization
- **Upload member's medical records** - upload clinical information if needed
- **Schedule consultations** - schedule a Clinical Consultation through the portal if you have questions.

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

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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, Blue Premier and MyBlue Health 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.

## 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> Provider Manual (Section B) and Blue Essentials, Blue Advantage HMO, Blue Premier, MyBlue Health Provider Manual (Section B) available in the General Reference Information section of our provider website.

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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 [feblue.org/pharmacy](http://feblue.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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🔗 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.*

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

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

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

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