



producer **ALERT**

Blue Shield recognizes the importance of keeping our valued associates informed of changes that affect our mutual employer group clients. The Transparency in Coverage final rules (TCFR) and the Consolidated Appropriations Acts (CAA), which includes the No Surprises Act, contain a number of such changes.

Our teams are currently working on implementing the requirements of these new mandates and intend to be compliant as soon as is reasonably possible.

Most pressing is Section 203 of the CAA, which adds a comparative analysis requirement to the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. This provision was effective February of this year, while the remaining provisions are effective at the end of 2021 or later. We expect to have a process document for Section 203 available for our employer groups in mid-July. Should any groups undergo audit by the Department of Labor (DOL) in the interim and require comparative analysis for MHPAEA, the group should contact their Blue Shield representative.

The Blue Shield Section 203 process document will be applicable for all groups - fully insured and self-funded - for which we administer both medical / surgical (M/S) and mental health and substance use disorder (MH/SUD) benefits.

While we are prepared to assist our self-funded clients with their compliance obligations in a manner consistent with our role as a third-party administrator (TPA), we will not manage Section 203 compliance overall. Blue Shield cannot anticipate the specific information the DOL might request to fully demonstrate a group health plan's compliance with Section 203.

Some provisions of the CAA and TCFR are more complex than others, and the effective dates also vary, which impacts when Blue Shield will be able to provide detail on our implementation solutions. Some solutions may be ready to share with the market as early as July, while others will run closer to effective dates before release. Blue Shield remains committed to open communication and ensuring that you remain up to date on Blue Shield's advances in this area.

We greatly appreciate the work of our broker and consultant associates and remain committed to serving our mutual employer group clients through all aspects of their healthcare needs, including assistance in meeting their compliance obligations.

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Blue Shield of California | 601 12th Street | Oakland, CA 94607