

Primary Doctor Matching:

Summary and FAQs

The purpose of this document is to provide you with updates on Blue Shield of California's primary doctor matching for our members.

Summary

1. Beginning January 2021, Blue Shield fully-insured Full PPO plan members in California will be matched with a primary doctor, otherwise known as a primary care physician (PCP), when enrolling or renewing.
2. Through this initiative, members will be meaningfully matched with a primary doctor who will provide for the member's care. Factors such as member demographics, claims history (if available), Blue Shield provider quality metrics, costs, and retention will be considered in the matching algorithm.
3. Members enrolled in a PPO plan are not required to seek care from their suggested primary doctor match, and will not be required to obtain a referral before seeing another primary doctor or specialist.
4. This initiative will enable Blue Shield to promote innovative programs that improve our members' health and support our mission – to offer affordable and quality health care that is worthy of our family and friends.

FAQs

- 1. What can the member expect as a result of Primary Doctor Matching for fully-insured PPO members?**
 - a. Beginning January 2021, fully-insured PPO members in California across all lines of business will be matched with a primary doctor upon enrollment or renewal. This includes EPO and Active Choice plans as well.
 - b. All members, including subscribers and his/her dependents, will be matched with a primary doctor after they enroll or renew in 2021. For members who belong to an employer group with an off-cycle enrollment or renewal, matching will take place at the time of enrollment or renewal.

- c. Members are not required to receive care from their matched doctor and can still self-refer to other primary doctors, specialists, and other healthcare professionals.
- d. There will be no changes to member ID cards. Unlike primary doctor matching for HMO benefit plan products, the matched doctor's name will not appear on member ID cards for PPO benefit plan members. The member will be able to find the name of their suggested primary doctor in the member portal at blueshieldca.com or by using the Blue Shield of California mobile app.

2. What is the purpose of a matched primary doctor to PPO members?

Primary doctors play an integral role in maintaining preventive care and recommending high quality specialty care for their patients. Having a primary doctor encourages collaboration between patients and their care providers. Blue Shield's goal is to provide the best match for members so they will keep and utilize their primary doctor.

3. Are members required to receive care from their matched primary doctor?

No, members can self-refer to another primary doctor, specialist, or other healthcare professional. Members can use Blue Shield's *Find a Doctor* online tool to search for other doctors.

4. What if a member is currently primarily seeking care from a non-participating doctor?

The algorithm used to match members to primary doctors will identify the most appropriate in-network physician for each member, including members who primarily receive their primary healthcare services from a non-participating physician.

5. Will the matched PPO Network primary doctor be expected to function in the same way as a primary doctor does for HMO members?

No, unlike primary care doctors for HMO benefit plan enrollees, a member does not need their suggested primary doctor's referral to see any other clinicians, including other primary care or specialty care physicians.

6. Will the member be able to select a primary doctor of their choice?

Members will have the ability to change their primary doctor if they want to, but are not required to inform Blue Shield before seeing another primary doctor of their choice. Since the matched primary doctor has no impact on the member's benefits, there is no need for a member to select their doctor during enrollment or renewal. Members can use Blue Shield's *Find a Doctor* online tool to search for other doctors.

7. Will members with a PPO benefit plan continue to have access to non-participating physicians?

Yes, there is no change to PPO benefit plan structures as a result of Primary Doctor Matching.

8. Will the name of the matched primary doctor be on the fully-insured Full PPO member's Blue Shield ID card?

Matched primary doctor names will not appear on fully-insured Full PPO member ID cards.

9. How will the member know which primary doctor has been matched to them?

The member will be able to find the name of their suggested primary doctor in their member portal at blueshieldca.com or in the Blue Shield of California mobile app.

10. What is the process for primary doctor matching?

Through an intelligent matching system each member will be meaningfully matched with a primary doctor who will primarily provide for all the member's healthcare needs. First, the matching algorithm looks to see if the member is already seeing a primary doctor based on claims. If so, the match is to the doctor they are already seeing. If there are no claims with a primary doctor, then the algorithm creates a match based on the provider's retention, cost and quality to find the best match for the member. Member demographics such as age, gender, and location are also taken into consideration.

11. What happens if the member already has a primary doctor?

Members can continue to see their primary doctor. If the suggested match is not the member's primary doctor, the member may, but is not required to, use the member website or call Customer service to update the matched primary doctor. Members do not need to notify Blue Shield of their primary doctor choice if it is different than the one they were matched with.

12. Will members in the Tandem PPO plan be matched with their existing primary doctor?

Existing Tandem PPO members will not have their primary doctor changed. Anyone who has a primary doctor in our system today, will not be matched with a new primary doctor.

13. Are there any member communications that will go out notifying the member of their primary doctor match?

Member communications will begin on January 1, 2021 upon renewal or new enrollment. Members will be able to see their primary doctor match via their dashboard when logged in to blueshieldca.com. This experience will share the benefits of having a primary doctor, details about their matched physician and instructions on how to make a change. Direct communications to members will begin in the spring to all registered members with an email address on file.

14. Will members enrolled in HMO, Tandem PPO, and IFP ePPO benefit plans, which already matches members to a primary doctor, be affected by this change?

- a. No, members who are currently enrolled in an HMO, Tandem PPO, or IFP ePPO benefit plan will not experience any changes on their end.
- b. Members who already have an assigned primary doctor will not be changed through this process.