Hospital and Facility Guidelines

A procedure manual for Blue Shield network hospitals and facilities (including ambulatory surgery centers, behavioral health outpatient facilities, birthing centers, dialysis centers, residential treatment centers, and skilled nursing facilities)

January 2020
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Section 1: Introduction

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Section 1: Introduction

Purpose of the Hospital and Facility Guidelines

The Hospital and Facility Guidelines describe the Blue Shield of California (Blue Shield) administrative guidelines, policies, and procedures for hospitals and ancillary facilities that have signed an agreement with Blue Shield to participate as a network facility.

Section 6: Capitated Hospital Requirements contains information applicable to only capitated hospitals (i.e., those hospitals that have Blue Shield capitated payment arrangements).

This Hospital and Facility Guidelines replaces and supersedes all previous versions of the manual that may have been received or viewed online before this issue date.

Manual Orders and Updates

Go to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider and click on Guidelines & Resources, then Provider Manuals to view and download a copy of the Hospital and Facility Guidelines.

To order a copy of the manual on CD, email providermanuals@blueshieldca.com or contact Provider Information & Enrollment at (800) 258-3091.

This manual is updated at least annually, in January.
Section 1: Introduction

Enrollment and Eligibility

For routine eligibility verification, the provider may:

- Log onto Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider for current and historical eligibility and benefit information that is updated daily.
- Use the Member Services toll-free number listed on the member’s ID card.

If eligibility cannot be verified, the provider should obtain written verification that the member agrees to accept financial responsibility if not eligible for Blue Shield coverage.

The provider may use his/her own office form or Blue Shield’s Acknowledgment of Financial Responsibility Form for this purpose. A copy of this form can be found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Guidelines and Resources, Forms, then Patient Care Forms.

Premium Payment Policy

The member is responsible for payment of premiums to Blue Shield. Blue Shield does not accept direct or indirect payments of premiums from any person or entity other than the member, his or her family members or a legal guardian, or an acceptable third party payor, which are:

- Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs under Title XXVI of the Public Health Services Act;
- Indian tribes, tribal organizations or urban Indian organizations;
- A lawful local, State, or Federal government program, including a grantee directed by a government program to make payments on its behalf; and
- Bona fide charitable organizations and organizations related to the member (e.g., church or employer) when all of the following criteria are met: payment of premiums is guaranteed for the entire plan year; assistance is provided based on defined financial status criteria and health status is not considered; the organization is unaffiliated with a healthcare provider; and the organization has no financial interest in the payment of a health plan claim. (Financially interested institutions/organizations include institutions/organizations that receive the majority of their funding from entities with a financial interest in the payment of health insurance claims, or institutions/organizations that are subject to direct or indirect control of entities with a financial interest in the payment of health insurance claims.)

Upon discovery that premiums were paid directly or indirectly by a person or entity other than the member or an acceptable third party payor, Blue Shield has the right to reject the payment and inform the member that the payment was not accepted and that the premiums remain due. Payment of member premiums by a Blue Shield contracted provider represents a material breach of the provider’s agreement. Please note that processing any payment does not waive Blue Shield’s right to reject that payment and future payments under this policy.
Enrollment and Eligibility (cont’d.)

Blue Shield Enrollment Responsibilities to Members on the Exchange

Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) for Exchange-purchased individual insurance policies eligible for premium subsidies, when premiums/dues are not received from members, there will be a three-month (90-day) delinquency period. During this grace period, Blue Shield may not disenroll delinquent members but may suspend claims payments unless and until member premiums are received in full. See Section 4: Special Billing Situations for Blue Shield’s responsibilities regarding unpaid premiums for Exchange members.

Retroactive Cancellation/Ineligible Member

Should the hospital or facility provide authorized covered services in reasonable reliance upon verification of a patient’s eligibility provided by Blue Shield, and the patient is subsequently determined not to have been a member at the time services were provided, Blue Shield’s compensation for such services will be at the rates set forth in the contract with Blue Shield, less amounts, if any, due to the hospital or facility from any other health care service plan, insurer or third party payor (including Medicare) by which the patient is covered. If the patient was covered by another health plan during the time period involved and the service is covered by that health plan, insurer, or third party payor, hospitals or facilities must first bill the other payor for those services. If no payment is received from or the claim is denied by the other carrier, please submit a copy of the other carrier’s claim determination (e.g., letter or EOB) to Blue Shield.

If the hospital or facility fails to verify the patient’s eligibility in accordance with this manual, Blue Shield shall have no obligation to compensate the hospital or facility for any services provided to patients who are not members at the time such services are rendered.

This provision does not apply to BlueCard Host, Medicare Advantage, and the Federal Employee Program.
Member Rights and Responsibilities

Blue Shield has established Member Rights and Responsibilities that all Blue Shield members receive in their Evidence of Coverage.

Statement of Member Rights

Blue Shield health plan members have the right to:

1. Receive considerate and courteous care, with respect for their right to personal privacy and dignity.
2. Receive information about all health services available to them, including a clear explanation of how to obtain health services.
3. Receive information about their rights and responsibilities.
4. Receive information about their health plan, the services we offer them, the physicians and other practitioners available to care for them.
5. Select a primary care physician and expect their team of health workers to provide or arrange for all the care that they need.
6. Have reasonable access to appropriate medical services.
7. Participate actively with their physician in decisions regarding their medical care. To the extent permitted by law, they also have the right to refuse treatment.
8. A candid discussion of appropriate or medically necessary treatment options for their condition, regardless of cost or benefit coverage.
9. Receive from their physician an understanding of their medical condition and any proposed appropriate or medically necessary treatment alternatives, including available success/outcomes information, regardless of cost or benefit coverage, so they can make an informed decision before they receive treatment.
10. Receive preventive health services.
11. Know and understand their medical condition, treatment plan, expected outcome, and the effects these have on their daily living.
12. Have confidential health records, except when disclosure is required by law or permitted in writing by them. With adequate notice, they have the right to review their medical record with their primary care physician.
13. Communicate with and receive information from member services in a language they can understand.
14. Know about any transfer to another hospital, including information as to why the transfer is necessary and any alternatives available.
15. Obtain a referral from their primary care physician for a second opinion.
16. Be fully informed about the Blue Shield grievance procedure and understand how to use it without fear of interruption of health care.
17. Voice complaints about the health plan or the care provided to them.
18. Participate in establishing public policy of the Blue Shield health plans, as outlined in their Evidence of Coverage or Health Service Agreement.
19. Make recommendations regarding Blue Shield’s member rights and responsibilities policy.
Member Rights and Responsibilities (cont’d.)

Statement of Member Responsibilities

Blue Shield health plan members have the responsibility to:

1. Carefully read all Blue Shield health plan materials immediately after they are enrolled so they understand how to use their benefits and how to minimize their out-of-pocket costs. Ask questions when necessary. They have the responsibility to follow the provisions of their Blue Shield health plan membership as explained in the Evidence of Coverage or Health Service Agreement.

2. Maintain their good health and prevent illness by making positive health choices and seeking appropriate care when it is needed.

3. Provide, to the extent possible, information that their physician, and/or the plan need to provide appropriate care for them.

4. Understand their health problems and take an active role in developing treatment goals with their medical care provider, whenever possible.

5. Follow the treatment plans and instructions they and their physician have agreed to and consider the potential consequences if they refuse to comply with treatment plans or recommendations.

6. Ask questions about their medical condition and make certain that they understand the explanations and instructions they are given.

7. Make and keep medical appointments and inform the plan physician ahead of time when they must cancel.

8. Communicate openly with the primary care physician they choose so they can develop a strong partnership based on trust and cooperation.

9. Offer suggestions to improve the Blue Shield health plan.

10. Help Blue Shield to maintain accurate and current medical records by providing timely information regarding changes in address, family status, and other health plan coverage.

11. Notify Blue Shield as soon as possible if they are billed inappropriately or if they have any complaints.

12. Select a primary care physician for their newborn before birth, when possible, and notify Blue Shield as soon as they have made this selection.

13. Treat all plan personnel respectfully and courteously as partners in good health care.

14. Pay their dues, copayments, and charges for non-covered services on time.

15. For all mental health and substance abuse services, follow the treatment plans and instructions agreed to by them and Blue Shield’s mental health services administrator (MHSA) and obtain prior authorization for all non-emergency mental health and substance abuse services.
Member Grievance Process

Blue Shield administers the investigation of member grievances. This process follows a standard set of policies and procedures for the resolution of member grievances. The process also encourages communication and collaboration on grievance issues among various Blue Shield departments and functional areas. Blue Shield requests that contracted hospitals and physicians become familiar with the member grievance process and suggest members use it.

Although it is inadvisable to require patients to sign arbitration agreements as a condition of providing medical care, providers may choose to enter into arbitration agreements with Blue Shield plan members, providing the agreement to arbitrate fully complies with the California Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) Section 1295 including the important provision that the patient is permitted to rescind the arbitration agreement in writing within 30 days of signature, even when medical services have already been provided.

Blue Shield encourages members to resolve their grievances with their Blue Shield providers. If this is not possible, members, member representatives, or an attorney or provider on the member’s behalf, may contact their Customer Service representatives for initiation of the grievance process.

A member’s grievance is defined as any of the following:

- Access to Care/Potential Quality Issue (PQI)
- Appeal - Standard or Expedited
- Complaint
**Member Grievance Process (cont’d.)**

**Definitions**

Potential Quality Issue (PQI) – Any suspected deviation from expected provider or health plan performance that deals with the quality of care and/or the quality of service provided by any provider related to any Blue Shield or Blue Shield Life enrollee’s care or treatment, regardless of line of business. Possible examples include but are not limited to those listed below. PQIs can be categorized as followed:

- Access to Care
- Referral/Authorization Procedures
- Communication issues
- Provider/Staff Behavior
- Coordination of Care
- Technical Competence or Appropriateness
- Facility/Office Environment

Appeal – A request to the health plan for reconsideration of an initial determination resulting in a denial of service, benefit, or claim. Appeals may also include reduction of benefit, claim payment, redirection of service or benefits, delay of prospective authorization for service or benefits or eligibility related denials.

Complaint – An expression of dissatisfaction with a provider, provider group, vendor, or health plan that does not have a clinical aspect or claims monetary component to the issue.

Expedited Review – Any denial, termination, or reduction in care, where the member feels that the determination was inappropriate and the routine decision making process might seriously jeopardize the life or health of the member, or when the member is experiencing severe pain. The expedited review process requires resolution and response to the member as soon as possible to accommodate the member’s condition not to exceed 72 hours of the member’s initial request. The member, his/her representative, or his/her physician on behalf of the member may file this request.

**Blue Shield Commercial Policy**

All Blue Shield commercial members receive in their *Evidence of Coverage* or *Certificate of Insurance* a Statement of Member Rights and Responsibilities.

Members, member representatives, or an attorney or provider on the member’s behalf, may file a grievance by contacting Blue Shield’s Customer Service Department in writing, by telephone, or by submitting a completed Grievance Form online at blueshieldca.com. Blue Shield researches and investigates all grievances and, as appropriate, the Blue Shield Medical Director may review a grievance.

In compliance with the State Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC), California Department of Insurance (CDI), legislative requirements, and National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), Blue Shield will resolve all member grievances within 30 calendar days of receipt.

When appropriate, Blue Shield will send copies of the member’s correspondence to the provider and request that he/she review and respond in writing to the Blue Shield Medical Director.
Member Grievance Process (cont’d.)

Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Plan Policy

All Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members receive in their Evidence of Coverage a Statement of Member Rights and Responsibilities. If a Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan member asks about filing a grievance, complaint, or appeal, the member should be referred to Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Member Services.

The Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Appeals and Grievance Resolution Department will acknowledge receipt of the member’s concern within five calendar days and provide the member with the name of the person working on their concern. The complaint will normally be resolved within 30 days of receipt. If not resolved, the member will be provided with a progress report every 31 days. Post service appeals (claims) are resolved within 60 days.

If the member is not satisfied with the initial resolution of the grievance or complaint, the member may file a written request for a grievance meeting. If the member is not satisfied with the proposed resolution after a grievance meeting, a formal grievance hearing may be requested and held within 31 days of receipt of written request. Contracted providers may be requested by the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Appeals and Grievance Resolution Department to respond in writing to a member’s issues.

All grievances are researched and investigated by the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Appeals and Grievance Resolution Department, and, as appropriate, reviewed by a Blue Shield Medical Director. Medicare policy, such as Medicare National Coverage Determinations (NCDs) and Local Coverage Determinations (LCDs), must be applied in the review of appeals by Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members.

If a member, member representative, or physician files a grievance, appeal or complaint, providers may be required to provide medical records for review as part of the review process. As a Blue Shield contracted provider, you are responsible for the maintenance of a member's medical records and the timely submission of any and all requested documentation considered as part of the review process.

Standard Review Process

The standard review process for member grievances allows a 30-calendar day period of resolution from the date the grievance is received by Blue Shield to the time the member is informed of the decision. When the grievance is received, Blue Shield will acknowledge receipt of the member’s grievance within 5 calendar days of receipt and provide the member with the name of a person to contact regarding their grievance. Generally, the member must participate in Blue Shield’s grievance process for 30 calendar days before submitting a complaint to the DMHC or CDI. However, the DMHC or CDI can waive this requirement in “extraordinary and compelling cases.” In these events, Blue Shield has five days to respond to the grievance. The Blue Shield grievance process allows members to file grievances within 180 days following any incident or action that is the subject of the enrollee’s dissatisfaction.

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1 When the manual references Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan, it refers to Blue Shield’s Medicare Advantage plans: Blue Shield 65 Plus (HMO), Blue Shield Plus Choice Plan (HMO), Blue Shield Trio Medicare (HMO), Blue Shield Inspire (HMO), Blue Shield Vital (HMO), and Blue Shield Medicare (PPO).
Member Grievance Process *(cont’d.)*

**Expedited Review**

In keeping with the Knox Keene Act, Blue Shield provides an expedited review process in those circumstances where a member believes that his/her health or ability to function could be seriously harmed by waiting the 30 calendar days for a standard grievance. There are specific criteria that must be met in order for a grievance to be considered expedited. If there is a question as to whether a specific grievance qualifies for expedition, the member, member representative, or an attorney or provider on behalf of the member may contact Customer Services and request an expedited review. If the grievance meets the expedited criteria, the case will be handled within the expedited review process. If the grievance does not meet the criteria, the member will be informed of this decision and the review will be conducted under the standard review process guidelines. The expedited review process requires resolution and response to the member as soon as possible to accommodate the member’s condition not to exceed 72 hours of the member’s initial request. The member, his/her representative, attorney or physician on behalf of the member may file this request. The Blue Shield grievance process allows members to file grievances within 180 days following any incident or action that is the subject of the enrollee’s dissatisfaction.

**External Review**

If a member’s grievance involves a claim or services for which coverage was denied in whole or in part by Blue Shield on the grounds that the service is not medically necessary or is experimental/investigational (including the external review available under the Friedman-Knowles Experimental Treatment Act of 1996), the member may choose to have the matter submitted to an independent agency for external review in accordance with California law. The member normally must first submit a grievance to Blue Shield and wait for at least 30 days before requesting external review; however, if the matter would qualify for an expedited decision as described above, the member may immediately request an external review. The member may initiate this review by completing an application for external review, a copy of which can be obtained by contacting Blue Shield Customer Service. The DMHC or CDI will review the application and, if the request qualifies for external review, will select an external review agency for an independent opinion. There is no cost to the member for this external review. The member and his or her physician will receive copies of the opinions of the external review agency. This external review agency decision is binding on Blue Shield. This process is completely voluntary on the member’s part; the member is not obligated to request external review.

**Contacting the Appeals and Grievance Department**

To contact the Appeals and Grievance Department, please refer to the contact list on Provider Connection at [https://www.blueshieldca.com/provider/about-this-site/contact-us/contact-us-claims.sp](https://www.blueshieldca.com/provider/about-this-site/contact-us/contact-us-claims.sp).
Section 1: Introduction

Fraud Prevention

Each year hundreds of millions of dollars are lost due to health care fraud, waste, and abuse. The mission of the Blue Shield Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is to ensure we provide the best investigative services for the company and stakeholders by being nimble and highly responsive to a broad spectrum of suspected fraudulent activities. The SIU is accountable for leading in investigations and criminal/civil prosecutions of internal and external entities and is the primary liaison with all levels of law enforcement. In conjunction, the SIU coordinates efforts to recover erroneous payments, misrepresentative billing, fraud, abuse or other acts resulting in overpayments.

Providers can help us to stop this pervasive problem by reporting suspicious incidents. To learn more, as well as how and what to report, go to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider, click on the Privacy link at the bottom, and then the Fraud Prevention link to the left. Here, providers can get guidance related to billing practices and prevention of inappropriate practices. Investigators in the (SIU) research suspicious billing practices.

Providers can also email Special Investigations directly at stopfraud@blueshieldca.com, or call Blue Shield’s 24-hour Fraud hotline at the toll-free telephone number (855) 296-9092. Callers and emailers may remain anonymous, if desired.

Provider Audits

The Blue Shield Special Investigations Unit (SIU) has the duty and responsibility to conduct periodic provider audits. The SIU monitors and analyzes billing practices in order to ensure services are correctly billed and paid.

Audits are also conducted to ensure compliance with:

- Blue Shield of California Medical, Medication, and Payment Policies
- Accepted CPT, HCPCS, ICD-10-CM, and ICD-10-PCS billing and coding standards
- Scope of Practice
- Blue Shield’s policies and procedures on claims submissions
- State and federal laws and regulations

All audits comply with federal and state regulations pertaining to the confidentiality of patient records and the protection of personal health information.

SIU personnel shall contact the provider’s office to schedule onsite audits five (5) business days in advance or earlier if mutually agreed upon. The provider shall allow inspection, audit and duplication of any and all records maintained on all members to the extent necessary to perform the audit or inspection. This includes any and all Electronic Health Records (EHR) and systems including any electronically stored access logs and data entry for electronic systems. Blue Shield requires that all records and documentation be contained in each corresponding Patient chart at the time of the audit. Audit findings will be communicated in writing.

Provider audits may result in a determination of overpayment and a request for refund.
Section 1: Introduction

Fraud Prevention (cont’d.)

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

The Medicare Prescription Drug benefit was implemented by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to allow all Medicare beneficiaries access to prescription drug coverage. In its effort to combat fraud in the Medicare prescription drug program, CMS has added several Medicare Drug Integrity Contractors (MEDICs). In California, the MEDIC is Health Integrity, LLC. Health Integrity, LLC is responsible for monitoring fraud, waste, or abuse in the Medicare Part C and Part D programs on a national level.

Health Integrity, LLC has been authorized by CMS to monitor Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse and to investigate any beneficiary complaints related to Medicare Part C and D benefits.

Health Integrity, LLC is interested in receiving reports of potential fraud, waste or abuse from Medicare beneficiaries. Examples of these types of complaints may include:

- An individual or organization pretends to represent Medicare and/or Social Security, and asks the beneficiary for their Medicare or Social Security number, bank account number, credit card number, money, etc.
- Someone asks the beneficiary to sell their Medicare ID card.
- Someone asks the beneficiary to get drugs or medical services for them using their Medicare ID card.
- The beneficiary feels a Medicare Advantage or standalone Part D plan has discriminated against them, including not letting them sign up for a specific plan because of their age, health, race, religion, or income.
  - The beneficiary was encouraged to disenroll from their current health plan.
  - The beneficiary was offered cash to sign up for a Medicare Advantage or standalone Part D plan.
  - The beneficiary was offered a gift worth more than $15 to sign up for a Medicare Advantage or standalone Part D plan.
  - The beneficiary’s pharmacy did not give them all of their drugs.
  - The beneficiary was billed for drugs or medical services that he/she didn’t receive.
  - The beneficiary believes that he/she was charged more than once for their premium costs.
  - The beneficiary’s Medicare Advantage or standalone Part D plan did not pay for covered drugs or services.
  - The beneficiary received a different Part D drug than their doctor ordered.

Medicare beneficiaries should contact Health Integrity, LLC at (877) 772-3379 to report complaints about any of these types of fraud, waste, and abuse issues or a related complaint. Health Integrity, LLC may also be contacted by fax at (410) 819-8698 or on their website at healthintegrity.org. Reports may also be submitted directly to Blue Shield of California’s Special Investigations Unit at (855) 296-9092, via email at stopfraud@blueshieldca.com, or through the Medicare Compliance Department at (855) 296-9084.
Section 1: Introduction

Fraud Prevention (cont’d.)

Medicare Compliance and Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Training Requirements

Blue Shield has a comprehensive program in place to detect, prevent and control Medicare Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (FWA) as part of the General Compliance Plan Requirements (42 C.F.R. § 423.504(b)(4)(vi)(H)) and 42 C.F.R. § 422.503(b)(4)(vi).

The Medicare Compliance and Fraud, Waste, and Abuse training is a requirement under CMS for anyone who works with the Medicare programs. Blue Shield’s Medicare Compliance training is available for First-Tier, Downstream, and Related Entities (FDRs), including but not limited to IPAs, medical groups, providers, independent sales agents, third party marketing organizations (TMOs), and contracted pharmacies to ensure these providers have a thorough understanding Medicare Program requirements. Successful completion is required of anyone involved with the administration or delivery of the Medicare benefit. The training focuses on how to detect, correct, and prevent non-compliance and fraud, waste, and abuse surrounding Medicare programs. To access the online training, please go to https://www.blueshieldca.com/provider/about-this-site/announcements/medicare-compliance-training.sp.

All FDRs must ensure that all personnel, employees and contracted staff involved in the administration or delivery of Medicare benefits complete Blue Shield’s Medicare Compliance and FWA training, alternative equivalent training through another Medicare Plan Sponsor, the CMS web-based Compliance and FWA training, or deemed through enrollment into the Medicare program or accreditation as a durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) supplier.

This requirement applies to all personnel, employees and contracted staff upon initial hire. Evidence of training must be maintained for a minimum of ten (10) years and produced upon request for audit purposes. Training must be completed within 90 days of hire or election to the Board and annually thereafter.

A statement of attestation is required annually by all IPAs, medical groups, and network pharmacies contracted with Blue Shield for the Medicare programs. The compliance statement of attestation indicates that the IPA, medical group or pharmacy staff, and downstream providers have completed the Medicare Compliance and Fraud, Waste, and Abuse training, equivalent training from another Plan Sponsor, or the CMS web-based compliance and FWA training.
Blue Shield’s Code of Conduct and Corporate Compliance Program

Blue Shield is subject to a wide variety of federal, state, and local laws. These include, but are not limited to, laws governing confidentiality of medical records, personally identifiable information, health plan and insurance regulatory requirements, government contracts, kickbacks, fraud, waste, and abuse, false claims and provider payments.

Blue Shield’s Code of Conduct is the foundation of our Corporate Compliance Program, which is designed to prevent, detect, and remediate unlawful and unethical conduct by Blue Shield personnel, as well as to promote a corporate culture of integrity. In doing so, the Program is designed to create an environment that facilitates the reporting of actual or suspected violations of the Code and other misconduct without fear of retaliation.

Reporting misconduct demonstrates transparency, responsibility, and integrity to other workforce members, business partners, Board members, and our customers. It also serves to protect our Company, brand, and reputation. We all “own” compliance and integrity with our daily conduct and decisions.

Providers can make confidential reports of concerns via the Compliance & Ethics Help Line at (888) 800-2062 or report actual or potential violations anonymously via the Compliance & Ethics Hot Line at (855) 296-9083. To view Blue Shield’s Code of Conduct, click the link below:

[Blue Shield of California Code of Conduct.pdf](#)

If you or members of your staff have any other questions or require further assistance, please contact Provider Information & Enrollment at (800) 258-3091.

Privacy and Security

The Privacy Office provides oversight of Blue Shield's compliance with state, federal, and international privacy laws, including the privacy components of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act.

The Privacy Office accomplishes its mission of ensuring compliance with these laws and regulations via employee awareness and training programs, outreach, audits, policy development, incorporation of industry best practices, investigations, and through consultation and guidance provided to business units.

For additional information about confidentiality, privacy and security, please contact Blue Shield’s Privacy Office Helpline at (888) 266-8080 or Hotline at (855) 296-9086.
Privacy and Security Risks of Medical Devices

There are several compliance risks associated with medical devices that can adversely affect healthcare organizations. Medical equipment and devices can contain electronic protected health information, which means any devices that are lost, stolen, or accessed by unauthorized individuals can result in privacy incidents that must be investigated, and potentially reported as breaches. Blue Shield suggests the following safeguards that hospitals can take to lower the risk of their medical devices being hacked:

1. Medical equipment should be assigned to hospital personnel. This provides accountability as well as ensuring software is routinely updated and missing equipment is reported immediately. The average hospital has 10 to 15 medical devices per hospital bed. With many devices operating 24/7, this creates countless entry point opportunities for hackers.

2. Medical equipment and devices that require a user name and password should be unique to each user. Some medical equipment and devices are installed with default user IDs and passwords. User names, passwords, and scannable badges should not be shared among personnel. Different passwords should be used for each piece of medical equipment that connects to the hospital’s systems directly, using Wi-Fi, or other internet connection. Further, if a vendor controls the software upgrades, lists of authorized users, passwords, etc., require that the vendor keep the security software current and assigns different passwords for each piece of equipment. This will help prevent hacking all equipment if access is gained through one device.

3. Medical equipment and devices are not generally designed to be remotely managed. The timeframe for an idle user should be limited after sign-on, so that another person cannot access the device under the previous user’s credentials.

4. Medical equipment and devices that are equipped with location capabilities should have those capabilities activated at all times. This will help locate lost or stolen equipment.

5. Medical equipment and devices with external USB ports should be covered if possible, to prevent the introduction of malware from an external storage device. In addition, hospital staff should refrain from sharing any Wi-Fi passwords with customers.

Hospital personnel who take these suggested actions will help lower the facility’s risk for hacking through its medical equipment and devices.
Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Program Overview

The Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act (MMA) introduced the Medicare Advantage Program and the Prescription Drug Benefit. The prescription drug benefit, as well as an employer subsidy for qualified retiree health plans, is referred to as Medicare Part D. Coverage for the drug benefit is being provided by private prescription drug plans (PDPs) that offer drug-only coverage, or through Medicare Advantage plans that offer both prescription drug and health care coverage (known as Medicare Advantage – Prescriptions Drug (MA-PD) plans.

Blue Shield 65 PlusSM (HMO), Blue Shield Trio Medicare (HMO), Blue Shield 65 Plus Choice Plan (HMO), Blue Shield Inspire (HMO), Blue Shield Vital (HMO), and Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) are Blue Shield’s Medicare Advantage-Prescription Drug (MA-PD) plans. These plans are open to all Medicare beneficiaries, including those under age 65 who are entitled to Medicare on the basis of Social Security disability benefits, who meet all of the applicable eligibility requirements for membership, have voluntarily elected to enroll in Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans, have paid any premiums required for initial enrollment to be valid, and whose enrollment in Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan has been confirmed by CMS. Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans are offered to individual Medicare beneficiaries and to group Medicare beneficiaries retired from employer groups/unions who have selected the product as an option.

The Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO plan provides comprehensive coordinated medical services to members through an established provider network. Similar to the commercial HMO product, Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members must choose a primary care physician (PCP) and have all care coordinated through this physician.

The Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan is regulated by CMS, the same federal agency that administers Medicare.
Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Compliance Program

The Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) established the Medicare Advantage (MA) Program, building on the prior compliance requirements for health plans contracted under the Medicare program. The MMA added Medicare Part D and new coverage for prescription drugs and continued to build on the program integrity provisions in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Medicare Advantage Organizations and Part D Sponsors are required by CMS to possess a compliance program through which the organization establishes and maintains compliance with all federal and state standards. Moreover, provisions in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) require that the compliance program be “effective” in preventing and correcting non-compliance with Medicare Program requirements and fraud, waste, and abuse.

The compliance program must include:

- Written policies, procedures, and standards of conduct
- Compliance Officer, Compliance Committee, and high level oversight
- Effective training and education
- Effective lines of communication
- Well publicized disciplinary actions
- Effective system for routine monitoring, auditing and identification of compliance risks
- Procedures and system for prompt response to compliance issues

Blue Shield’s Corporate Compliance Program includes four primary components:

- Model policies for employee, officer, and director conduct
- Code of business conduct
- Toll-free hotline for reporting actual or suspected violations
- Special investigations team for fraud and abuse reviews

All the components in the Corporate Compliance Program are supported by Blue Shield company values which include: doing the right thing, placing customers at the center of what we do, keeping promises, being creative and taking risks, creating an environment that promotes personal, professional, and team fulfillment, and being responsible for maintaining Blue Shield’s heritage. Leadership principles reinforce our organizational commitment to company values.
Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Compliance Program (cont’d.)

While the existing Corporate Compliance Program remains the foundation for our organizational compliance, a separate compliance structure was established for the Medicare Advantage Program and the Medicare Part D Programs. Medicare Compliance is supported by a dedicated team. Under the oversight of Blue Shield’s Vice President, Chief Compliance & Ethics Officer, the Medicare Compliance Department handles communication with CMS and the Blue Shield operating departments regarding the Medicare plans. A dedicated team headed by the Director of Medicare Compliance, Medicare Compliance Managers, staff of compliance analysts and auditors, and delegated claims compliance and performance auditors advise about CMS requirements and monitor compliance within the organization and in relation to Blue Shield’s representatives in the community. The Director of Medicare Compliance leads the day-to-day operations of the Medicare Compliance function and reports directly to the VP, Chief Compliance & Ethics Officer, who provides direct and periodic reports to Blue Shield’s Board of Directors (Audit Committee), the company’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and senior management on relevant Medicare Compliance and other Corporate Compliance issues, as appropriate. The Medicare Compliance Department builds on components of our Corporate Compliance & Ethics Program and Code of Conduct, and the work of the Privacy Office, which is responsible for the oversight of Blue Shield's compliance with state and federal privacy laws, including the privacy components of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH).

The Director of Medicare Compliance chairs the Plan’s Medicare Compliance Committee, which has representation from all areas of the company that touch the Medicare programs. The Committee serves as the forum for program direction and oversight relative to operating requirements, performance measures and the definition and implementation of effective corrective actions, when indicated. The Medicare Compliance Committee, and Medicare Compliance Department staff, as well as the Blue Shield team of internal auditors, validates the continuing compliant operations of functional areas within the company and the compliant performance of contractors and agents through:

- Monitoring, auditing performance and regulatory compliance
- Auditing of delegated and downstream providers' compliant execution responsibilities
- Monitoring of corrective actions imposed by internal and external entities
- Training and education of employees, temporary employees, and contracted providers and agents in Medicare program requirements and Blue Shield policies on privacy, compliance, fraud, waste, and abuse detection and reporting.
- Tracking of changes in CMS requirements and educating operating units, accordingly
- Verifying current written policies and procedures
- Tracking and submission of required certifications and reporting to CMS
Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Compliance Program (cont’d.)

The Medicare Compliance Program sets the framework for our oversight vision and processes, and lays out monitoring programs and activities relative to our overall compliance with CMS regulatory requirements. It is our expectation that the Medicare Compliance Program will not only enable Blue Shield to meet increasing CMS requirements, but also to improve the quality of care and service provided to our Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D members. The overall compliance structure incorporates the Code of Conduct and the Compliance Program to promote ethical behavior, equal opportunity, and anonymity in reporting of any improprieties within the Medicare product or elsewhere within the organization. Blue Shield has and enforces a strict non-retaliation policy for reporting actual or suspected legal, policy or Code violations, or any other misconduct, in good faith. Key compliance indicators or benchmarks, as well as concerns raised through internal and external monitoring activities, are reviewed by the Medicare Compliance Committee to help proactively identify potential issues and facilitate internal corrective actions or policy changes, as indicated. These elements of the Blue Shield Medicare Compliance Program provide examples of policies and programs that providers might wish to establish within their own organizations.

Auditing and Monitoring

Blue Shield has various departments, e.g., Provider Claims Compliance and Delegation Oversight, that audit first-tier entities for compliance with CMS Program requirements. However, providers are tasked with the oversight and audit of the entities with which they contract to ensure compliance with Medicare Program requirements. Upon request, providers must provide the results of the monitoring and auditing of their downstream entities.

Confirmation of Eligibility of Participation in the Medicare Program

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) excludes individuals and entities from participation in Medicare, Medicaid, the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and all Federal health care programs (as defined in section 1128B(f) of the Social Security Act (the Act)) based on the authority contained in various sections of the Act, including sections 1128, 1128A, 1156, and 1892. The OIG and the General Services Administration (GSA) maintains a sanction list that identifies those individuals and entities found guilty of fraudulent billing, misrepresentation of credentials, etc. Delegated entities managing Medicare members are responsible for checking the sanction list at minimum on a monthly basis to ensure their Board of Directors, owners, or employees are not on the list. The delegated entity, its MSO, or any sub-delegates are prohibited from hiring, continuing to employ, or contracting with individuals named on the OIG List of Excluded Individuals and Entities (LEIE) and the GSA Excluded Parties Lists System (EPLS). Below are links to the LEIE and EPLS:

- https://www.oig.hhs.gov/exclusions/exclusions_list.asp
- https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/

Upon audit, providers must provide evidence that they are checking their employees, temporary workers, and Board of Directors against the excluded provider data bases upon hire, contracting, or election to the Board, and monthly thereafter.
Healthcare Regulatory Agencies

California Department of Insurance (CDI)

The California Department of Insurance (CDI) is responsible for regulating health insurance. The Department’s Health Claims Bureau has a toll-free number (800) 927-4357 or TDD (800) 482-4833 to receive complaints regarding health insurance from either the insured or his or her provider. If providers have a complaint against the insurer, providers should contact the insurer first and use their grievance process. If providers need the Department’s help with a complaint or grievance that has not been satisfactorily resolved by the insurer, the provider may call the Department’s toll-free telephone number 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding holidays). Providers may also submit a complaint in writing to: California Department of Insurance, Health Claims Bureau, 300 S. Spring St., South Tower, Los Angeles, CA 90013, or through the website at http://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/101-help.

California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC)

The California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) is responsible for regulating health care service plans. If the member has a grievance against Blue Shield, the member should first telephone Blue Shield at the number provided in their Evidence of Coverage booklet to use the grievance process before contacting the DMHC. Utilizing Blue Shield’s grievance process does not prohibit any potential legal rights or remedies that may be available to the member. If the member needs help with a grievance involving an emergency, a grievance that has not been satisfactorily resolved by Blue Shield, or a grievance that has remained unresolved for more than 30 days, the member may call the DMHC for assistance. The member may also be eligible for an Independent Medical Review (IMR). If they are eligible for IMR, the IMR process will provide an impartial review of medical decisions made by Blue Shield related to the medical necessity of a proposed service or treatment, coverage decisions for treatments that are experimental or investigational in nature and payment disputes for emergency or urgent medical services.

Providers can reach the DMHC at (888) 466-2219, TDD line (877) 688-9891 for the hearing and speech impaired, or through dmhc.ca.gov, where complaint forms, IMR application forms, and instructions can be found.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is the federal agency that administers the Medicare program. Blue Shield has entered into contracts with CMS to provide benefits to Medicare beneficiaries. Blue Shield 65 Plus℠ (HMO), Blue Shield Trio Medicare (HMO), Blue Shield 65 Plus Choice Plan (HMO), Blue Shield Inspire (HMO), Blue Shield Vital (HMO), and Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) are Blue Shield’s Medicare Advantage-Prescription Drug plans. These plans are open to all individual Medicare beneficiaries who have Medicare Part A and Part B, who permanently reside within the plan service area, and who do not have End-Stage Renal Disease at the time of enrollment in the MA-PD plan. Blue Shield also offers a group Medicare Advantage-Prescription Drug plan to Medicare beneficiaries retired from employer groups/ unions who have selected the product as an option.

Blue Shield also offers two stand-alone Medicare prescription drug plans, Blue Shield Rx Plus (PDP) and Blue Shield Rx Enhanced (PDP). These plans are open to all individual Medicare beneficiaries who have Medicare Part A and/or Part B and permanently reside within the plan’s service area. Additionally, Blue Shield offers a group Medicare prescription drug plan to Medicare beneficiaries retired from employer groups/unions who have selected the product as an option. Information about CMS or the Medicare program is available by calling (800)-MEDICARE [(800) 633-4227] and through the websites medicare.gov and cms.hhs.gov.
Section 2: Hospital and Facility Responsibilities
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Section 2: Hospital and Facility Responsibilities

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Quality Management and Improvement

The Quality Management Department, in collaboration with Blue Shield’s Quality Committees selects and oversees quality measurement and improvement activities according to Blue Shield’s strategic goals, accreditation, and regulatory requirements. Activities are conducted in all areas and dimensions of clinical and non-clinical member care and service, such as: Member Satisfaction, Access and Availability, Case Management, Continuity and Coordination of Care, Wellness, Preventive Health, Health Risk Appraisal, and Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) Measurement.

Blue Shield conducts ongoing systematic reviews of the health care and services provided to members. Care and services are coordinated and monitored in accordance with a variety of applicable accrediting standards, regulatory bodies, and statutes, including but not limited to:

- National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)
- California Health and Safety Code
- California Department of Insurance (CDI)
- Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC)
- Department of Labor Employer Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA)
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
- Centers for Disease Control (e.g., ACIP)
- Office of the Patient Advocate
- Covered California

Accreditation

Blue Shield maintains Health Plan Accreditation (HPA) status with National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). Blue Shield takes the following product types through NCQA accreditation: Commercial HMO/POS, Commercial PPO, Marketplace HMO/POS (Covered CA/Exchange), Marketplace PPO (Covered CA/Exchange) and Medicare HMO. The NCQA review process is an ongoing quality assurance and improvement process that culminates in an audit of health plan performance on NCQA standards every three years. Health Plan scores are evaluated based on audit outcomes and yearly review of health plan scores relative to other plans on key HEDIS and CAHPS measures.

Provider Responsibilities for Quality Management and Improvement

Blue Shield actively solicits network provider representatives’ participation in several quality management and improvement activities, including:

- Participation on QI Committees
- Expert consulting for Peer Review and UM determinations
- Expert advising for clinical QI workgroups
- Participation in Focus groups
- Partnership in QI studies

All Blue Shield providers, including hospitals, are required to participate in quality management activities by providing member information, medical records, and quality data, to the extent allowed by applicable state and federal laws, for quality of care and service reviews.
Quality Management and Improvement (cont’d.)

Provider Responsibilities for Quality Management and Improvement (cont’d.)

To comply with NCQA accreditation requirements, Blue Shield collects and reports HEDIS data as it relates to Blue Shield members. Blue Shield HMO-contracted physicians and hospitals are required to provide medical records requested for HEDIS data collection within the defined time period. HIPAA includes data collection for HEDIS reporting in the category of health care operations, thus no special patient consent or authorization is required to release this information.

Quality management activities are considered privileged communication in conjunction with peer review activities conforming to Evidence Code Section 1157 and Section 1370 of the California Health and Safety Code. As such, neither the proceedings nor the records of the review may be disclosed to any person outside of those participating in the review process.

Submission of Laboratory Results Data

All hospitals contracting with Blue Shield are required to submit member-level laboratory results data as part of Blue Shield’s quality management and improvement initiatives. These data elements are used for HEDIS, Align Measure Perform (AMP), disease management programs, and other similar activities.

Results for laboratory tests (analyses) must be submitted using the current version of the CALINX lab data standard, which is based on the Health Level 7 (HL7) industry standard for exchange of laboratory results data. This standard can be obtained on the Integrated Healthcare Association’s website at http://www.iha.org/calinx_lab_standards.html. Coding for analytes must use the LOINC coding system. Blue Shield subscriber and member IDs must be used in each record. Data must be submitted on a monthly basis using Blue Shield’s secure data exchange procedures.

Contact Yuan Hong at (310) 744-2674 or yuan.hong@blueshieldca.com for additional details and requirements, as well as to initiate required submissions of laboratory results data.

Reporting Specified C-Section Rates

To comply with Covered California requirements, hospitals must report quarterly to the Maternal Data Center of the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative the number of nulliparous women with a term, singleton baby in a vertex position (NTSV) delivered by cesarean section.

- Numerator: uncomplicated c-sections MS-DRG 766
- Denominator: all born MS-DRGs 765, 766, 767, 768, 774, 775
- Exclusions: twins and higher ICD-10s O30091, O30109, O30099, O30041, O30090, O30009
Quality Management and Improvement (cont’d.)

Reporting Hospital-Acquired Conditions to CMS

To comply with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and Covered California requirements, hospitals must report to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) quarterly rates of hospital-acquired conditions (HACs) specified below using CDC’s reporting criteria (www.cdc.gov/nhsn/pdfs/validation/2018/pcsmanual_2018-508.pdf):

- Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)
- Catheter-associated Urinary Tract Infection (CAUTI)
- Central Line-associated Bloodstream Infection (CLABSI)
- Colorectal Surgical Site Infection (SSI Colon)
- Clostridium difficile Infection (CDI)

Blue Shield is actively working towards improvement of Hospital Acquired Conditions for all contracted hospitals. In order to comply with Covered California’s requirements that all hospitals achieve infection rates (measured as a standardized infection ration or SIR) of 1.0 or lower, Blue Shield may reserve the right to promote hospital involvement in a performance improvement plan for Hospitals performing in the bottom quartile.

Patient Safety

Blue Shield is committed to improving the safety of clinical practice by fostering an environment in which all parties are attentive to safety issues. Blue Shield supports our network providers by identifying patient safety opportunities. We also endorse statewide collaborative activities and encourage hospitals to participate in the following programs:

- The Blue Distinction® Program  
  http://www.bcbs.com/healthcare-partners/blue-distinction-for-providers/
- Cal Hospital Compare  
  www.calhospitalcompare.org
- The California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative  
  https://www.cmqcc.org/
- The Leapfrog Hospital Survey  
  http://www.leapfroggroup.org/survey-materials

Blue Shield has incorporated safety-related information and on-line consumer decision support tools to promote informed consumer decision making at the point of care.

We take an active role in supporting and improving patient safety through a variety of activities including:

- Promoting continuity and coordination of care between practitioners and between care settings.
- Member education regarding preparation for surgery and post-surgical care.
- Designation of centers of excellence for complex, high-risk procedures.
- Comprehensive Case Management program to improve medication treatment plan adherence.
Section 2: Hospital and Facility Responsibilities

Quality Management and Improvement (cont’d.)

**Patient Safety (cont’d.)**

- Focused utilization management to improve readmission rates and bed day utilization.
- Careful evaluation of new medical procedures and medications, utilizing evidence-based literature, and seeking input from academically acknowledged medical authorities.
- “Alert” messages for physicians and patients regarding clinical compliance with well-accepted practice guidelines.

**Quality of Care Reviews**

Blue Shield has a comprehensive review system to address potential quality of care concerns. A potential quality issue arising from member grievances or internal departments is forwarded to the Blue Shield Quality Management Department where a quality review nurse investigates and compiles a care summary from clinical documentation including a provider written response, if available. The case may then be forwarded to a Blue Shield Medical Director for review and determination of any quality of care issues. A case review may also include an opinion about the care rendered from a like-peer specialist and/or review by the Blue Shield Peer Review Committee.

During the review process, requests for additional information may be made to the Facility. Upon review completion and dependent upon the severity of any quality findings identified, follow-up actions may be taken and can include a corrective action request or an educational letter outlining opportunities for improvement. Patient safety concerns or patterns of poor care can be considered during Blue Shield re-credentialing activities or reviewed in more detail by the Credentials Committee.

Contracted facilities are obligated to participate in quality of care reviews and provide requested documents. Peer review activities are considered privileged communication under California Health and Safety Code section 1370 and California Evidence Code 1157. As such, neither the proceedings or record of the review may be disclosed outside of the review process.

**Medical Records**

To assist us in maintaining continuity of care, hospitals must provide medical records of services rendered to Blue Shield members when it is essential to communicate the documentation of care to other providers and/or Blue Shield for the purpose of delivering further care and/or making further care decisions.

Members are entitled to obtain copies of their own medical records, including copies of emergency department records, X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs. Hospitals must make member medical records available upon request within time requirements established by regulatory agencies, to the member, and to Blue Shield and its designated agents. Additionally, the hospital must, without charge, transmit a member's medical record information to the member's primary care physician and other providers, to government officials, and to Blue Shield for purposes of utilization management, quality improvement, and other Blue Shield administrative purposes. The hospital also must secure from the member on admission a release of medical information, in the event it is required by law.

Hospitals must maintain an individual, continuous unit record for each member and document on an ongoing basis when a member is seen in the facility with all pertinent information recorded in a legible manner. The medical record must document care provided in the facility, as well as referrals and follow-up to referrals for care outside of the hospital. Allergies must be noted in a prominent place in the medical record, as well as the existence or absence of an executed Advance Directive.
Quality Management and Improvement (cont’d.)

Medical Records (cont’d.)

Hospitals shall maintain the usual and customary records for Blue Shield members in the same manner as for other hospital patients and require that all physicians treating members at the facility establish and maintain, in an accurate and timely manner, an organized medical record. It should contain the demographic and clinical information necessary to document the member’s medical problems and the medical services he or she receives.

The medical record shall include a historical record of diagnostic and therapeutic services recommended or provided by, or provided under the direction of, the hospital. The record shall be in a form that allows trained health professionals, other than the hospital, to readily determine the nature and extent of the member’s medical condition and which services were provided and that allows peer review of the care provided.

In keeping with regulatory standards, a member’s medical records must be kept for at least 10 years after the last member contact.

Advance Directives

An Advance Directive (also known as a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare) is a formal document completed by an individual in advance of an incapacitating illness or injury. When the individual becomes too ill to communicate his or her wishes concerning medical care, providers use the directive as guidance in providing treatment. Blue Shield recommends that all Medicare members and any member 18 and older have a signed Advance Directive communicating their wishes regarding health care decisions to their physician and family members.
Service Accessibility Standards

Blue Shield requires that IPAs and medical groups, together with their contracted providers, provide access to health care services within the time periods as established by Blue Shield and Title 28 CCR Section 1300.67.2.2 as specified in this manual.

Blue Shield uses the Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Survey (CAHPS), the Patient Assessment Survey (PAS), Provider Satisfaction Survey, Appointment Availability Survey results, and member appeals and grievances to measure compliance with the applicable access standards. While all of the previously mentioned surveys will be used to demonstrate compliance, an overall rate of compliance by the IPA/medical group will also be calculated based solely on the Provider Satisfaction Survey and Appointment Availability Survey results. Groups that are found non-compliant with the access standards will be required to submit a corrective action plan containing details on how the IPA/medical group will achieve and maintain compliance.

If it is not possible to grant a member an appointment within the timeframes indicated in the Access-to-Care table below, the wait time may be extended if the referring or treating licensed health care provider, or the health professional providing triage or screening services, as applicable, has determined that a longer wait time will not have a detrimental impact on the health of the enrollee. Such provider must note, in the appropriate record, that it is clinically appropriate and within professionally recognized standards to extend the wait time.

If a member is unable to obtain a timely referral to an appropriate provider, the member, member representative, or an attorney or provider on the member’s behalf, may file a grievance by contacting Blue Shield’s Customer Service Department in writing, by telephone, or by submitting a completed Grievance Form online at blueshieldca.com. Blue Shield researches and investigates all grievances and, as appropriate, the Blue Shield Medical Director may review a grievance. For commercial members, call (800) 541-6652 and for Blue Shield Medicare Advantage call (800) 776-4466.

Members or providers on the member’s behalf may also contact the applicable state regulator to file a complaint at the following toll-free numbers if they are unable to obtain a timely referral to an appropriate provider.

- California Department of Insurance (CDI): (800) 927-HELP (4357) or TTY (800) 482-4833
- Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC): (888) 466-2219 or TDD (877) 688-9891
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS): (800)-MEDICARE [(800) 633-4227] or TTY/TTD (877) 486-2048

### Service Accessibility Standards for Commercial and Medicare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESS-TO-CARE</th>
<th>STANDARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preventive Care Appointments</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to preventive care with a PCP, Nurse Practitioner, or Physician Assistant at the same office site as a member’s assigned PCP.</td>
<td>Within 30 calendar days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regular and routine care PCP</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to routine, non-urgent symptomatic care appointments with a member’s assigned PCP. The time standards must be met unless: the referring, treating, or health professional providing triage services determines that a longer waiting time will not have a detrimental impact on the enrollee or the appointment request is for preventive care services.</td>
<td>Within 10 business days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ACCESS-TO-CARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STANDARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Regular and routine care SPC**  
Access to routine, non-urgent symptomatic care appointments with a specialist. The time standards must be met unless the referring, treating, or health professional providing triage services determines that a longer waiting time will not have a detrimental impact on the enrollee or the appointment request is for preventive care services. | Within 15 business days |
| **Urgent Care Appointment**  
Access to urgent symptomatic care appointments that do not require prior authorization with the PCP, specialist, covering physician, or urgent care provider. The time standards must be met unless the referring, treating, or health professional providing triage services determines that a longer wait time will not have a detrimental impact on the enrollee. | Within 48 hours |
| **Urgent Care Appointment**  
Access to urgent symptomatic care appointments requiring prior authorization. The time standards must be met unless the referring, treating, or health professional providing triage services determines that a longer wait time will not have a detrimental impact on the enrollee. | Within 96 hours |
| **Ancillary Care Appointments**  
Access to non-urgent appointments for ancillary services for the diagnosis or treatment of injury, illness, or other health condition. The time standards must be met unless the referring, treating, or health professional providing triage services determines that a longer wait time will not have a detrimental impact on the enrollee or the appointment request is for preventive care services. | Within 15 business days |
| **Rescheduling of Appointments and Authorizations**  
When it is necessary to reschedule an appointment or authorization it must be promptly rescheduled, in line with the health care needs of the patient, and consistent with professional standards. Interpreter services will be coordinated with scheduled appointments to ensure the provision of interpreter services at the time of the appointment. | As determined by licensed healthcare professional |
| **After Hours PCP Access**  
See “After Hours Requirements” below for more details on this requirement. | PCP or covering physician available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week |
| **Emergency Care** | Immediate |
| **After Hours Emergency Instructions** (telephone answering service or machine)  
See “After Hours Requirements” below for more details on this requirement. | Specific instructions for obtaining emergency care such as directing the member to call 911 or to go to the nearest emergency room. |
| **In-office Wait Time Recommendation:** In the absence of emergencies, medical offices should seek to limit wait time to 15 minutes after patient’s scheduled appointment. | Member care will not be adversely affected by excessive in-office wait time. |
| **Hours of Operation** | All providers will maintain sufficient hours of operation so as not to cause member-reported access and availability problems with an adverse effect on the quality of care or medical outcome. |
### ACCESS TO TELEPHONE SERVICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESS TO TELEPHONE SERVICE</th>
<th>STANDARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Speed to Answer (ASA)</td>
<td>45 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment Rate</td>
<td>≤ 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Shield’s 24/7 Nurse Advice Line will be available for all enrollee triage and screening needs. The speed to answer will be:</td>
<td>Within 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to the Blue Shield Customer Service line during normal business hours</td>
<td>Within 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Behavioral Health Access Standards for Commercial Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>ACCESS STANDARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine Office Visit (including non-physician providers)</td>
<td>Appointment for routine office visits offered within 10 business days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgent Care</td>
<td>Within 48 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care for an Emergent Non-Life-Threatening Situation</td>
<td>Within six (6) hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Behavioral Health Access Standards for Medicare Advantage Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>ACCESS STANDARD</th>
<th>COMPLIANCE TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Geographic Distribution of Behavioral Health including: Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, Substance Abuse and Addiction Specialists | Urban: 1 within 10 miles of each member  
Suburban: 1 within 20 miles of each member  
Rural: 1 within 30 miles of each member | Urban: 90%  
Suburban: 85%  
Rural: 75% |
| Geographic Distribution of Behavioral Health including: Inpatient Facility, Residential & OP Treatment Facility | Urban: 1 within 15 miles of each member  
Suburban: 1 within 30 miles of each member  
Rural: 1 within 60 miles of each member | Urban: 90%  
Suburban: 85%  
Rural: 75% |
| Behavioral Health Member Ratio including: Top 3 HVS Substance Abuse practitioner | 1 provider: 20,000 members | 100% |
Service Accessibility Standards *(cont’d.)*

After Hours Requirements for Commercial and Medicare Members

IPA/medical groups should abide by the following standards for after-hours emergency instructions and after-hours access to care guidelines.

### After Hours Emergency Instructions

*Note: The IPA/medical group must ensure that its contracted physicians leave emergency instructions that are compliant when contacted by telephone. A list of compliant and non-compliant responses is listed below.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPLIANT RESPONSES</th>
<th>NON-COMPLIANT RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hang up and dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.</td>
<td>1. Stay on the line and you will be connected to a PCP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Go to the nearest emergency room.</td>
<td>2. Leave your name and number, someone will call you back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hang up and dial 911.</td>
<td>3. Given another number to contact physician.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. The doctor or on-call physician can be paged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Automatically transferred to urgent care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Transfer to an advise/triage nurse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. No emergency instructions given.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### After Hours Access-to-Care Guidelines

*Note: The IPA/medical group should ensure that its contracted physicians or health care professionals respond to non-emergent After Hours calls within 30 minutes of a patient trying to reach the physician. A list of compliant and non-compliant responses from a physician or a health care professional is furnished below:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPLIANT RESPONSES</th>
<th>NON-COMPLIANT RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Immediately, can cross connect</td>
<td>1. Within the next hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Within 30 minutes</td>
<td>2. Unknown or next business day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Provider Availability Standards for Commercial Products

Blue Shield has provider availability standards to ensure a network of established primary care physicians (PCPs) and high-volume specialty practitioners that is sufficient in number and geographic distribution for applicable commercial products. Please refer to the provider availability standards below.

**Geographic Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PRODUCT TYPE</th>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>COMPLIANCE TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total PCPs</td>
<td></td>
<td>One PCP within 15 miles or 30 minutes of each member</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCP General Practitioner</td>
<td></td>
<td>One PCP within 15 miles or 30 minutes of each member</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Practitioner</td>
<td></td>
<td>One PCP within 15 miles or 30 minutes of each member</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internist</td>
<td></td>
<td>One PCP within 15 miles or 30 minutes of each member</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatrician</td>
<td></td>
<td>One PCP within 15 miles or 30 minutes of each member</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 10 High Volume Specialists</td>
<td></td>
<td>One of each type of Top 10 High Volume Specialists within 30 miles of each member</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td></td>
<td>One hospital within 15 miles of each member</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiology</td>
<td>HMO/POS PPO - CDI PPO – DMHC IFP ePPO CCSB HMO/PPO</td>
<td>One Radiology facility in 30 miles</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>One lab in 30 miles</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>One Pharmacy in 10 miles</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DME</td>
<td></td>
<td>One DME in 15 miles</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td></td>
<td>One ASC in 30 miles</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNF</td>
<td></td>
<td>One SNF in 30 miles</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgent Care</td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban: 1 in 15 miles</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suburban: 1 in 20 miles</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural: 1 in 30 miles</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban: 1 in 15 miles</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suburban: 1 in 20 miles</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural: 1 in 30 miles</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acupuncturist</td>
<td>PPO</td>
<td>1 in 15 miles Or 1 in 30 minutes</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Provider Availability Standards for Commercial Products (cont’d.)

Provider-to-Member Ratio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PRODUCT TYPE*</th>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>COMPLIANCE TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCP</td>
<td>HMO</td>
<td>One PCP to 2,000 commercial members</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DCHMO</td>
<td>One PCP to 2,000 commercial members</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total PCP To Member Availability Ratio</td>
<td>HMO</td>
<td>One PCP to 2,000 commercial members</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 10 HVS to Member Ratio</td>
<td>HMO</td>
<td>1 OB/GYN to 10,000 commercial members. 1 HVS to 20,000 members.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PPO-DMHC</td>
<td>One Acupuncturist to 5,000 commercial members</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IFP-ePPO</td>
<td>One Acupuncturist to 5,000 commercial members</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic/Cultural and Language Needs</td>
<td>HMO/PPO</td>
<td>1 PCP speaking a threshold language to 1,200 members speaking a threshold language**</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PPO plans are both Blue Shield PPO – DMHC and PPO – CDI plans. PPO membership excludes ASO/self-insured business.

** Threshold languages are: Spanish, Chinese – Traditional, and Vietnamese

Provider Availability Standards for Medicare Advantage Products

Linguistic and Cultural Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURE</th>
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<th>COMPLIANCE TARGET</th>
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<td>1 PCP speaking a threshold language to 1,000 members speaking a threshold language</td>
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### Section 2: Hospital and Facility Responsibilities

#### Provider Availability Standards for Medicare Advantage Products (cont’d.)

#### Facility Time and Distance Requirements as required by CMS

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<th>Specialty</th>
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#### Provider Time and Distance Requirements as required by CMS

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Provider Availability Standards for Medicare Advantage Products (cont’d.)

Provider Minimum Number Requirements

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</table>

*Minimum number of providers required is based upon the (minimum provider to beneficiary ratio) multiplied by the (95th percentile of the average health plan market share times the total Medicare beneficiaries residing in a county).

IPA/medical groups are required to be in compliance with the standards stipulated by CMS. If any IPA/medical group is unable to provide primary or specialty care services according to the requirements of CMS outlined above, the IPA/medical group is required to do one of the following to meet compliance:

1. Have a Medicare fee-for-service provider who meets both the driving time and driving distance requirements render services to the member, or

2. Contact Blue Shield and utilize a Blue Shield’s PPO provider who is also contracted for the Medicare line of business and meets both the driving time and driving distance requirements render services.

In selecting either one of the options, the financial responsibility for professional services rendered under this circumstance will rest with the IPA/medical group.
Language Assistance for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

This section summarizes Blue Shield’s Language Assistance Program (LAP) and specifies the roles and responsibilities of Blue Shield and its contracted hospitals in supporting the program.

Blue Shield’s Threshold Languages

Blue Shield’s threshold languages as of 2020 are:

- Spanish
- Chinese – Traditional
- Vietnamese

A threshold language is a language other than English that Blue Shield will use to translate vital documents. Threshold languages are determined based on the language preferences of the largest number of plan enrollees, excluding Medi-Cal, Medicare and Administrative Services Only enrollees.

Blue Shield’s Language Assistance Program

Blue Shield is committed to providing quality health care services to all enrollees regardless of their ability to speak English. Access to timely language services is provided through competent, trained interpreters and translators.

Blue Shield and its contracted hospitals must offer timely language assistance services to its LEP enrollees at all points of contact where the need for such services can be reasonably anticipated, and at no charge to the enrollee, even when the enrollee is accompanied by a family member or friend who can interpret.

Identifying LEP Enrollees at Points of Contact

When an enrollee communicates his or her language preference to Blue Shield, it is added to the enrollee’s profile and printed on his or her member identification card if it is a language other than English.

Hospitals must inform Blue Shield LEP enrollees who have a language preference other than English that the hospital provides access to interpretation services at no cost to the enrollee.

Providing Interpretation Services at Points of Contact

Blue Shield provides trained bilingual representatives who speak Spanish and can assist Spanish-speaking LEP enrollees who call us, using the telephone number listed on the enrollee’s identification card. Additionally, our representatives have access to telephonic interpretation services to provide timely interpretive services in other languages.

Hospitals are required to provide interpretation services. Therefore, when Blue Shield enrollees request assistance directly from hospital staff, the hospital is responsible for making arrangements and for any associated cost. Regulations require that Blue Shield monitor contracted facilities for deficiencies in the delivery of interpretation services. Where language or communication barriers exist between patients and staff of any general acute care hospital or facility, arrangements must be made for professional staff members that are bilingual to ensure adequate and speedy communication between patients and staff.
Language Assistance for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (cont’d.)

Timeliness Standards for Interpretation Services at Points of Contact

For purposes of this subsection, "timely" means in a manner appropriate for the situation in which language assistance is needed. Interpretation services are not timely if they delay results in the effective denial of the service, benefit, or right at issue. Quality assurance standards for timely delivery of language assistance services for emergency, urgent and routine health care services, including standards for coordinating interpretation services with appointment scheduling, are:

- **Over-the-Phone Interpretation (OPI):** Immediate – no more than 10 minutes, from time of connection with the interpretation vendor to the time that the interpreter (who speaks the enrollee’s language) is present on the telephone line.
  
  Used for administrative points of contact with Blue Shield, and routine, urgent and emergent services with contracted hospitals.

- **In-Person Interpretation (IPI), or Face-to-Face Routine Visit:** Five (5) business days with advanced notice from the enrollee is preferred in order to make best efforts to accommodate the request for face-to-face interpreters. At the time of the appointment, if a face-to-face interpreter has been scheduled and the interpreter does not show after a 15-minute wait time, hospital staff shall offer the enrollee the choice of using a telephone interpreter or the opportunity to reschedule the appointment.

- **For appointments made within 48 hours/Emergency** (same or next day access for routine or urgent care): Provide services telephonically (see Over-the-Phone Interpretation above).

These standards also apply when the enrollee contacts Blue Shield to arrange for an interpreter.
Language Assistance for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (cont’d.)

Documenting Enrollee Refusal of Language Assistance

If the enrollee refuses language assistance services offered when contacting Blue Shield, it will be documented in the enrollee’s record. If the enrollee declines language assistance services offered by a Blue Shield contracted hospital, the hospital staff is required to document the refusal in the enrollee’s medical record.

Documenting that a patient has refused interpretive services in the medical record is a way to protect hospitals. It will ensure consistency when medical records are monitored through site reviews or audits. If the patient insists on using a family member or friend to interpret, hospital staff must also note that in the medical record. It is especially important to document if the interpreter used is a minor. Consider offering a professional telephonic interpreter through the telephonic interpretation service, in addition to a patient’s chosen family member or friend, to ensure accuracy of the interpretation.

In emergency situations, a minor may be used as an interpreter if the following conditions are met:

(A) The minor demonstrates the ability to interpret complex medical information in an emergency/critical situation; and,

(B) The insured is fully informed in his or her primary/preferred spoken language that a qualified interpreter is available at no charge to the insured. If the insured refuses the offer of the qualified interpreter, the offer of a qualified interpreter and the insured’s decision to use the minor as the interpreter shall be documented in the medical record file.

It is required that hospital staff document in the patient’s medical record an LEP patient’s preferred language. Additionally, it is recommended the medical record also contain the name and contact information of any professionally-trained interpreter whose services were used for a medical visit.

Informing Enrollees of their Right to Appeal

Blue Shield provides enrollees with written notices in their language, provided that it is one of Blue Shield’s threshold languages, informing them about their right to file an appeal with the plan or seek independent medical review (IMR).

These notices are available for hospitals on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Guidelines & resources, Patient care resources, and then Language Assistance Program. Members may access appeal and IMR information in their Evidence of Coverage or Certificate of Insurance, and at blueshieldca.com, as well as the DMHC website at dmhc.ca.gov or on the CDI website at Insurance.ca.gov. Hard copies of the DMHC notice may also be requested by submitting a written request to: Department of Managed Health Care, Attention: HMO Help Notices, 980 9th Street, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814.
Language Assistance for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (cont’d.)

Providing Translation Services

Vital Documents

Vital documents are materials deemed critical to accessing the health plan and its benefits. Vital documents may be produced by the plan, a contracted health care service provider, or contracted administrative services provider.

The following documents are the “vital documents” produced by Blue Shield. This category includes documents produced or distributed to enrollees by a delegated IPA or medical group:

- Applications
- Consent forms, including any form by which a member authorizes or consents to any action by Blue Shield
- Letters containing important information regarding eligibility and participation criteria
- Notices pertaining to the denial, reduction, modification, or termination of services and benefits, and the right to file a grievance or appeal
- Notices advising LEP enrollees of the availability of language assistance at no cost and other outreach materials that are provided to enrollees
- Blue Shield’s and delegated IPA/medical group explanation of benefits or similar claim processing information that is sent to an enrollee if the document requires a response from the enrollee
- Enrollee disclosures (Benefit Matrix or Patient Charge Schedules).

Vital documents are divided into two categories:

- **Standard Vital Documents**
  Most standard documents are translated up front, while other standard vital documents such as Summary of Benefits Coverage, benefit summaries and benefit matrices will be translated upon request by LEP enrollees.

- **Non-Standard Vital Documents**
  Non-standard vital documents contain enrollee-specific information. These documents are not translated into threshold languages. Blue Shield will include with any non-standard vital documents distributed to enrollees the appropriate DMHC/CDI-approved written notice of the availability of interpretation and translation services. If translation or interpretation of any non-standard vital document is requested by the enrollee, Blue Shield will provide the requested translation within 21 calendar days of that request, with the exception of expedited grievances, as noted below.

**Blue Shield’s Standard Vital Documents**

Blue Shield has identified its standard vital documents (i.e., documents that do not contain enrollee-specific information) and has translated these documents into its threshold languages. Examples of standard vital documents include:

- Applications, consent forms
- Notices of the right to file a grievance or appeal
- Notice of language assistance at no cost
Language Assistance for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (cont’d.)

Blue Shield’s Non-standard Vital Documents (those containing enrollee-specific information) include:

- Letters containing important information regarding eligibility and participation criteria;
- Notices pertaining to the denial, reduction, modification, or termination of services and benefits.

Notice of the Availability of Language Assistance Services

Blue Shield issues non-standard vital documents to all enrollees and includes brief, alternate instructions in English and our threshold languages (Spanish, Chinese – Traditional, and Vietnamese), as follows:

**English:** For assistance in English at no cost, call 1-866-346-7198.

**Spanish (Español):** Para obtener asistencia en Español sin cargo, llame al 1-866-346-7198.

**Tagalog (Tagalog):** Kung kailangan ninyo ang libreng tulongsa Tagalog tumawag sa 1-866-346-7198.

**Chinese (中文):** 如果需要中文的免费帮助，请拨打这个号码 1-866-346-7198.

**Navajo (Dine):** Diné k’ehjí doo bágh tilmígo shìka’ a’óowół ninízingó, kwijí’ hodíílnih 1-866-346-7198.

**Vietnamese (Tiếng Việt):** Để được hỗ trợ miễn phí tiếng Việt, vui lòng gọi điện số 1-866-346-7198.

**Korean (한국어):** 한국어도움이 필요하시면, 1-866-346-7198 무료전화로전화하십시오.

**Armenian (Հայերեն):** Հայերեներում սպառնաքի մեկնարկային տեղեկատություններ կարելի է ստանալ 1-866-346-7198.

**Russian (Русский):** Если нужна бесплатная помощь на русском языке, то позвоните 1-866-346-7198.

**Japanese (日本語):** 日本語支援が必要な場合 1-866-346-7198 に電話をかけてください。

**Persian:** برای دریافت کمک رایگان زبان فارسی لطفاً با شماره تلفن 7198-666-346-7198 نام می‌گیرید. (فارسی)

**Punjabi (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ):** ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਵਾਦ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰੋ: 1-866-346-7198.

**Khmer (ខ្មែរ):** បញ្ហារឿងស្តីព័ត៌មានប្រការព័ត៌មាន អាសយដ្ឋានក្របខែម៉ោង 1-866-346-7198.

**Arabic:** لحصول على المساعدة في اللغة العربية مباشرة، فضل باتصال على هذا الرقم: 7198-666-346.

**Hmong (Hmoob):** Xav tau kev pab dawb lub Hmoob, thov hu rau 1-866-346-7198.

**Hindi (हिन्दी):** हिंदीभाषी खार्च केंड्रित लाइफएंडके रशिया के साथ-साथ नरेश के साथ-साथ 1-866-346-7198.

**Thai (ไทย):** สำหรับภาษาไทยและภาษาไทยในกลุ่มภาษาไทย 1-866-346-7198.

**Laotian (ພາສາລາວ):** ແສ່ງIFICATE ເປັນແມ່ນແກ້ບວ່າວຸ່ນທາງວ່າທາງທີ່ຂາຍຂອງ. ການທີ່ຂອງ 1-866-346-7198.
Language Assistance for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (cont’d.)

Notice of the Availability of Language Assistance Services (cont’d.)

A copy of Blue Shield’s Notice of Availability of Language Assistance (that includes both DMHC- and CDI-approved language) is available on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Guidelines & resources, Patient care resources, and then Language Assistance Program.

The notice states the following in English and in Blue Shield’s threshold languages and non-threshold languages:

- The notice in threshold languages (Blue Shield’s threshold languages are Spanish, Chinese – Traditional, and Vietnamese):
  
  “No Cost Language Services. You can get an interpreter. You can get documents read to you and some sent to you in your language. For help, call us at the number listed on your ID card or 1-866-346-7198. For more help call the CA Dept. of Insurance at 1-800-927-4357.”

- The notice in non-threshold languages:
  
  “No Cost Language Services. You can get an interpreter and get documents read to you in [language]. For help, call us at the Member/Customer Service number listed on the back of your ID card or 866-346-7198. For more help call the CA Dept. of Insurance at 1-800-927-4357.”

Enrollees requiring help to read a Blue Shield-generated non-standard vital document are instructed to call the toll-free telephone number on the back of their member ID card for no cost interpretation or translation into the plan’s threshold languages. When translation of the non-standard vital document is requested, Blue Shield provides the translation within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the request.

An approved notice of language assistance must accompany the provider’s non-standard vital documents if those documents are related to IPA/medical group-generated claims/UM non-standard vital documents.

Request for Translation

Providers are not delegated to provide translation of non-standard vital documents and must forward such requests received from Blue Shield enrollees to Blue Shield.

A provider who receives a request for a vital document translation should forward it to Blue Shield within one business day if it is urgent or within two business days if it is not urgent.

To forward the vital document to Blue Shield:

- Complete Blue Shield’s “Language Assistance Form” available at Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Guidelines & resources, Patient care resources, and then Language Assistance Program;

- Attach a copy of the document to be translated;

- Fax the request to (248) 733-6331.
Language Assistance for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (cont’d.)

Timeliness Standards for Standard and Non-Standard Vital Documents

The following timeliness standards apply to Blue Shield-generated non-standard and standard vital documents or IPA/MG-generated claims/UM non-standard vital documents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Type of Request</th>
<th>Timeliness Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Provider receives a request for translation of an IPA/MG-generated claim/UM non-standardized vital document from a Blue Shield enrollee | **Urgent:** Response within one business day | **Urgent:** 1. Forward the following to Blue Shield within one business day: a) Request for translation  
               2. Log the following: a) Date request was received from enrollee  
                                  b) Date request and document were forwarded to Blue Shield  
               Non-Urgent: 1. Forward the following to Blue Shield within two business days: a) Request for translation  
                            b) Copy of the document  
                             2. Log the following: a) Date request was received from enrollee  
                                               b) Date request and document were forwarded to Blue Shield |
| Blue Shield requests an IPA/MG-generated claim/UM non-standardized vital document | **Urgent:** Within one business day | **Urgent:** 1. Forward the following to Blue Shield within one business day: a) Copy of the requested document  
                                                2. Log the following: a) Date request was received from Blue Shield  
                                                                   b) Date document was forwarded to Blue Shield  
                                                Non-Urgent: 1. Forward the following to Blue Shield within two business days: a) Copy of the requested document  
                                                              2. Log the following: a) Date request was received from Blue Shield  
                                                                                 b) Date document was forwarded to Blue Shield |
| Blue Shield enrollee requests a translation of a Blue Shield standard vital document from provider | **All:** Within one business day | **All:** 1. Provider informs the member to call the Blue Shield Member/Customer Service number on the back of his/her Member ID card or (866) 346-7198. |
Language Assistance for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (cont’d.)

Training and Education

Providers are expected to ensure that all contracted or employed providers and their staffs who are in contact with LEP members receive education and training regarding Blue Shield’s LAP through formal or informal processes.

For additional information on Blue Shield’s Language Assistance Program, go to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Guidelines & resources, Patient care resources, and then Language Assistance Program.

Monitoring Compliance

Blue Shield’s LAP annual compliance audit includes:

1. Monitoring internal Blue Shield organizations, contractors, contracted health care providers, and network compliance with regulatory standards for the LAP, including the availability, quality and utilization of language assistance services.
2. Tracking grievances and complaints related to its LAP.
3. Documenting actions taken to correct problems.

References

Several websites provide guidance, tools and information that may be of help to provider offices in treating diverse populations. The following websites will provide you with resources to comply with the requirements of the LAP:

- American Academy of Family Physicians Cultural Proficiency Resources
- American Medical Association: Improving Communication-Improving Care
- Graduate School of AMA Eliminating Health Disparities
- The Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development – National Center for Cultural Competence Curricula Enhancement Module Series
  [www.necccurricula.info/sitemap.html](http://www.necccurricula.info/sitemap.html)
- The Manager’s Electronic Resource Center: The Provider’s Guide to Quality & Culture
  [http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm?file=1.0.htm&module=provider&language=English](http://erc.msh.org/mainpage.cfm?file=1.0.htm&module=provider&language=English)
  [www.thinkculturalhealth.org](http://www.thinkculturalhealth.org)
Use of Non-Preferred/Non-Participating Providers

Blue Shield requires facilities to notify members, in a manner that allows the member the opportunity to act upon such notification, when the proposed treatment includes either: (1) the use of a non-network provider or facility (e.g., non-network facility-based physician or non-network physician group providing services at the facility); or (2) the referral of a member to a non-network provider or facility for proposed non-emergent covered services.

Facility Directory

Blue Shield maintains a directory of Blue Shield Providers that is made available to members. To ensure accuracy of the information listed in the directory, Blue Shield will send to all facilities, except for general acute hospitals, the information that Blue Shield has in its directories on an annual basis. The facility is responsible, within thirty (30) business days from receipt, for confirming that all of the information is current and accurate or for updating any incorrect information.

If no response is received from the facility within the thirty (30)-business-day period, Blue Shield will attempt to contact the facility to validate the information or to get required updates. If Blue Shield is unable to verify the information or obtain updates within fifteen (15) business days following the initial thirty (30)-business-day period, Blue Shield will provide facility with a ten (10)-business-day advance notice that it will be removed from the provider directory unless the facility responds to the request during this time.
Section 3: Medical Care Solutions
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# Medical Care Solutions Program Overview

# Medical Care Solutions Program Functions

## Admission Authorization

### Prior Authorization/Elective

### Ambulatory Surgeries/Procedures

### Emergency Services

### Discharge Date Notification

### Outpatient Authorizations

# Organ and Bone Marrow Transplants

### Transplant Authorization

# Admission and Concurrent Inpatient Review

# Medical Necessity Denials

# Continuity of Care for Members by Non-Contracted Providers

# Blue Shield Medical & Medication Policies

## Medical Policy

## Medication Policy
Section 3: Medical Care Solutions

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Medical Care Solutions Program Overview

The Medical Care Solutions Program within Blue Shield’s Health Care Quality and Affordability (HCQA) division is established to provide oversight of the delivery of care to members. The Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions professional staff includes California-licensed physicians and nurses who monitor healthcare services delivered by contracted-physicians and providers for timeliness, appropriateness, and quality of care.

The Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions program consists of active ongoing coordination and evaluation of requested or provided health services to promote delivery of medically necessary, appropriate health care or services and quality, cost-effective clinical outcomes. The Medical Care Solutions Program is designed to assist Blue Shield contracted physicians, providers, and hospitals in ensuring that medical services are:

- Covered under the member’s health plan benefits
- Appropriate and medically necessary and that such determinations are made by qualified licensed health care professionals. Medically necessary services include only those services that have been established as safe and effective and are furnished in accordance with generally accepted professional standards to treat an illness, injury, or medical condition, and which, as determined by Blue Shield, are consistent with Blue Shield’s Medical Policy evidence-based criteria, approved nationally recognized medical necessity criteria, federal and state regulations
- Consistent with the symptoms or diagnosis
- Not furnished primarily for the convenience of the patient, the attending physician, or other provider
- Provided at the most appropriate level, and can be provided safely and effectively to the patient

If there are two or more medically necessary services that may be provided for the illness, injury, or medical condition, Blue Shield will provide benefits based on the most cost-effective service.

The goal of the Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions Program is to promote the efficient and appropriate utilization of medical services and to monitor the quality of care given to members. To accomplish this goal, the program requires systematic monitoring and evaluation of the medical necessity and level of care of the services requested and provided. Blue Shield determines medical necessity and the appropriateness of the level of care through the prospective review of care requested and the concurrent and retrospective review of care provided. These reviews are conducted by Blue Shield nurse reviewers, medical directors, pharmacists, peer review committees, physician peer reviewers, and other consultants.

Blue Shield may also delegate utilization management (UM) activities to subcontracted entities. Blue Shield approval of the delegated entity’s UM program is based on a review of its policies and procedures, demonstration of compliance with stated policies and procedures, and the ability to provide services to our members in keeping with various accreditation and regulatory requirements. All delegated activities are monitored and evaluated by the Blue Shield Health Care Quality and Affordability teams and the appropriate oversight committee to assist the delegated entity in improving its processes. Blue Shield retains the authority and responsibility for the final determination in UM medical necessity decisions and ensures appeals related to utilization issues are handled in a timely and efficient manner.

Blue Shield’s Medical Care Solutions Department is structured to ensure utilization management (UM) decision-making is based only on the appropriateness of care and service and existence of benefit coverage. The Medical Care Solutions Program ensures that contracting physicians are not penalized for authorizing appropriate medical care. Blue Shield does not specifically reward practitioners or providers or other individuals for issuing denials of coverage or service of care. Medical decisions are made by qualified individuals, without undue influence from management concerned with Blue Shield's fiscal operations. Financial incentives for UM decision makers do not encourage decisions that result in underutilization.
Medical Care Solutions Program Overview (cont’d.)

Medical Care Solutions Program Functions

Blue Shield has developed Medical Care Solutions processes that address inpatient and outpatient utilization, as well as monitor quality of care. Medical Care Solutions processes include, but are not limited to, the following functions:

- Prior authorization/elective admission authorization
- Prior authorization of services
- Emergency services review
- Transplant management
- Utilization management (UM)/concurrent and retrospective review (post-service review)
- Medical Care Solutions for continuity and coordination of care
- Focused ambulatory care review
- Identification and referral of potential quality-of-care issues
- Clinical claims review
- Facility claims review
- Provider compliance review
- Review of high dollar cases

In conjunction with Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions, the member, attending physician, and ancillary care providers participate in the member’s plan of care. Blue Shield’s Medical Care Solutions Department will contact the requesting provider(s) within 72 hours for urgent requests to inform them of the status of their request for care or services. The Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions staff will follow the Blue Shield Timeliness Standards for all other non-urgent requests for services. Blue Shield will also send written notification to the member and providers to confirm the request determination. Blue Shield licensed nurses engage with members to ensure care needs are coordinated prior to, during, and after a hospital confinement.

Members may self-refer or be referred for Medical Care Solutions through a variety of sources, including their physician, Social Services, family members, employers, etc.
Admission Authorization

Prior Authorization/Elective

The physician or hospital must obtain authorization (when applicable) for Blue Shield member hospital admissions from the designated Medical Care Solutions team five days prior to an elective admission. If prior authorization is not required, the physician or hospital must notify the Medical Care Solutions team at time of admission. Providers can now submit authorization requests online. Requests can be submitted for authorization directly to Blue Shield for any of the following services: inpatient hospital, outpatient services, home health care/home infusion services, residential, and DME/orthotics services. Simply go to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider and click on Authorizations. Enter necessary information and you will receive a response back in your message center advising of the status of your authorization request. Authorizations can be submitted electronically to Blue Shield. For specific guidelines, refer to Blue Shield’s 837 Companion Guide found on Provider Connection.

Additional information such as operative reports or progress reports that support the authorization can be faxed to Blue Shield. Please include a coversheet containing all the necessary information included.

Hospitals can also call the number on the member’s identification for prior authorization. Generally, for PPO products, the request for admission authorization is referred to Blue Shield or a third-party review organization. For Access+ HMO and Blue Shield Medicare Advantage (HMO), Blue Shield generally delegates the responsibility for administering the UM program to a contracted IPA/medical group; however, both the IPA/medical group and Blue Shield’s Medical Care Solutions department are to be notified of the hospital admission. The designated primary care physician is responsible for coordinating the member’s care and ensuring that appropriate authorizations are provided. For the Access+ Point of Service (POS) product, the UM responsibility may be contingent upon the type of benefit the member is seeking (i.e., HMO or opt-out). For example, if a POS member chooses the opt-out feature, the primary care physician is not involved, and Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions will review the authorization request.

In any event, including the absence of the member’s card, the Blue Shield eligibility telephone lines will direct callers to the designated Medical Care Solutions team (i.e., the IPA/medical group or Blue Shield) and the appropriate telephone number to call for authorization.

Blue Shield members are also advised in their Summary of Benefits and Evidence of Coverage (EOC) that they are responsible for obtaining or assuring that their physicians (attending or specialist) obtain prior authorization from the designated Medical Care Solutions team for specified services.

Note: If hospital fails to obtain authorization prior to providing covered services to a member, as required, or if hospital provides services outside of the scope of the authorization obtained, then Blue Shield, or its delegate shall have no obligation to compensate hospital for such services; hospital will be deemed to have waived payment for such services and shall not seek payment from Blue Shield, its delegate, or the member.
**Section 3: Medical Care Solutions**

**Admission Authorization (cont’d.)**

**Ambulatory Surgeries/Procedures**

*Facility-based* ambulatory surgeries/procedures are performed in an acute care facility on an outpatient basis or in an ambulatory surgery center. Surgical diagnostic procedures are identified as facility-based ambulatory surgeries/procedures. Unless Blue Shield and the IPA/medical group have contracted differently, Blue Shield authorization is required for facility-based ambulatory surgeries/procedures.

*Office-based* ambulatory surgeries/procedures (minor procedures) should be performed in a physician office setting. If it is medically necessary that they be performed in a facility setting, on an outpatient or inpatient basis, notification to Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions is required. If an IPA or medical group schedules an office-based surgery/procedure in an outpatient facility setting, the hospital should confirm that the IPA provided notification to Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions.

With the exception of fully capitated IPA/medical groups, all other IPA/medical groups must notify Blue Shield of any authorized ambulatory surgeries via submission of an authorization log.

A list of frequently performed office-based ambulatory surgeries/procedures (minor procedures) can be found in the Appendix 4-E of this manual or obtained electronically from your Blue Shield Network Manager.

**Emergency Services**

Prior authorization is not required for urgent and emergency services. If these services result in a hospital inpatient admission, the attending physician or the hospital must notify the designated Medical Care Solutions team within 24 hours or by the end of the first business day following the admission. The member should notify his or her primary care physician (HMO) as soon as it is medically possible for the member to provide notice.

*Note: Failure to comply may result in non-coverage for the services and/or greater out-of-pocket expense for PPO members.*

Weekend and holiday admissions require notification by the next business day. The designated Medical Care Solutions team reviews the request for admission within one day from the receipt of request and notifies the facility of the determination by phone, fax and/or in writing of the decision. Admissions are reviewed for medical necessity, level of care, appropriateness of care, and benefit determination. The hospital, member, and attending physician are also notified in writing of the determination, including the initial authorized length of stay or denial of the authorization request.

**Discharge Date Notification**

For all inpatient stays, the hospital/facility must notify Blue Shield’s Medical Care Solutions department via fax at (844) 295-4639 of a patient’s discharge date and disposition within 24 hours or by the end of the first business day following the discharge. Weekend and holiday discharges require notification by the next business day.
### Admission Authorization (cont’d.)

#### Outpatient Authorizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF SERVICE / PROCEDURE</th>
<th>ALL LINES OF BUSINESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ambulance Service</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Non-Emergency:** Blue Shield covers non-emergency ambulance services using our contracted providers. Non-emergency air ambulance requires prior authorization. Non-emergency ambulance services may include transferring a member from a non-contracted facility to a contracted facility, or between contracted facilities, in connection with an authorized confinement/admission, and under other circumstances as necessary, if medical treatment or observation is required. **Note:** Non-Emergency services provided solely for the convenience of the patient or physician would not be covered. | For PPO, Direct Contract HMO, or HMO members:  
Go to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider and click on Ancillary Providers in the Helpful Resources section on the right to view a list of contracted ambulance providers or call Provider Information & Enrollment at (800) 258-3091 for information on contracted options. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| For HMO and PPO members managed by Blue Shield’s mental health service administrator (MHSA). For Self-Insured Accounts with Expanded Clinical Management (ASO). Prior authorization for Self-Insured Accounts with Standard Clinical Management is required for:  
- Inpatient admissions  
- Partial hospitalization programs  
- Intensive outpatient programs  
- Non-routine Outpatient  
- Residential Treatment  
- Office Based Opioid Treatment | Contact MHSA (877) 263-9952  
Contact MHSA (800) 378-1109  
Contact Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions (800) 541-6652, Option 6 or Fax: (844) 807-8997 or Submit online, with attached documentation, via AuthAccel in the Authorizations section of Provider Connection at www.blueshieldca.com/provider. |

For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Group Plans (GMAPD) managed by Blue Shield’s mental health service administrator (MHSA). For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage IFP members, prior authorization is required for:  
- Inpatient admissions  
- Partial hospitalization programs  
- Intensive outpatient programs  
- Non-routine Outpatient  
- Residential Treatment  
- Office Based Opioid Treatment | Contact MHSA (800) 985 2398  
Contact Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions (800) 786-7474 or Fax: (844) 696-0975 |
## Section 3: Medical Care Solutions

### TYPE OF SERVICE / PROCEDURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radiology /Radiotherapy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radiology services for a given geographic area may be directed to specific providers. The process may differ depending upon the network structure in an individual geographic area or for procedures managed by NIA. For PPO and Direct Contract HMO members, no prior authorization is required, except for procedures managed by NIA. The following radiologic procedures are managed by National Imaging Associates, Inc. (NIA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CT, All Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MRI/MRA, All Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nuclear Cardiology Imaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PET (Positron Emission Tomography)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select radiology services provided to members in HMO and Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans continue to be reviewed by Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions. Prior authorization may be required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit requests online at <a href="http://www.RadMD.com">www.RadMD.com</a> or contact NIA at (888) 642-2583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FDA-Approved Prescription Pharmaceuticals/Drugs

| FDA-approved prescription pharmaceuticals/drugs provided as part of a medical service and administered in the physician office, outpatient facility, ambulatory infusion center, or through home health/home infusion. (Does not apply to drugs or products that are excluded from the member’s benefit.) |
| A complete list of medications and their authorization requirements for coverage in the medical benefit can be found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Authorizations, Clinical Policies and Guidelines, Medication Policy, then Medication Policy List. Faxed requests must be submitted on the California Prescription Drug Prior Authorization or Step Therapy Exception Request Form 61-211 (Revised 12/2016) |

Providers may also submit prior authorization requests online by going to blueshieldca.com/provider under Authorizations then Request Medical Authorization. An additional link to the Medication Policies User Guide is available on the Medication Policy homepage. |

Contact Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions (800) 541-6652 Option 6 or Fax: (844) 262-5611 or Submit online, with attached documentation, via AuthAccel in the Authorizations section of Provider Connection at www.blueshieldca.com/provider. |
Organ and Bone Marrow Transplants

Members referred for major organ and bone marrow transplants (excludes cornea, kidney only and skin) are evaluated within the Blue Shield Major Organ/Bone Marrow Transplant Network. Certain transplants are eligible for coverage within Blue Shield’s transplant network if specific criteria are met and prior written authorization is obtained from Blue Shield’s Medical Care Solutions Transplant Team. Only the human organ and bone marrow transplants listed below are covered. For commercial HMO and PPO members, donor costs for a member are only covered when the recipient is also a Blue Shield member. Donor costs are paid in accordance with Medicare coverage guidelines for Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members.

All transplant referrals must be to an approved network transplant facility for benefits to be paid. Contact the Blue Shield Transplant Team at (916) 841-1130 for the listing of institutions selected to participate in this network and for coordination of referrals for evaluation. Members who are in a transplant treatment continuum must be cleared by the Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions Transplant Team for change of IPA. All requests should be sent to the Transplant Medical Care Solutions Department in Rancho Cordova.

Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Plan – Prior authorization for all Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan evaluations and transplants is required and coverage subject to applicable Medicare coverage guidelines. These services must be performed at a Medicare-approved transplant facility for the specific transplant in question. The evaluation for Blue Shield Medicare Advantage members requires authorization by Blue Shield for members in a PPO product, and by the IPA/medical group for members in an HMO product.

Note: Charges incurred as a result of cadaver organ donor evaluation, donor maintenance, or organ recovery are directly reimbursable by the Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) according to federal law and therefore are not paid by Blue Shield. These charges may include but are not limited to: extended hospital stay beyond the second death note, lab studies, ultrasound maintaining oxygenation and circulation to vital organs, and the recovery surgery. Blue Shield will pay the appropriate organ acquisition fee at the time the organ is transplanted. For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan transplants, Blue Shield will pay in accordance with contractual or Medicare fee schedules in accordance with Medicare coverage guidelines.

Commercial HMO and PPO – For HMO members, both the transplant evaluation and actual transplant procedure require prior authorization. The evaluation for HMO members requires authorization by the IPA/medical group or as otherwise specified. No self-referrals for transplant evaluations will be approved under the POS. For PPO members, with the exception of IFP PPO, the evaluation requires notification only. All Blue Shield members are entitled to transplant evaluations at any Blue Shield transplant network facility approved for the specified organ or transplant type, whether or not that facility has a contractual relationship with the IPA/medical group.
Organ and Bone Marrow Transplants (cont’d.)

Transplant Authorization

When the evaluation is completed, the transplant coordinator at the transplant facility will send the transplant request to Blue Shield’s Medical Care Solutions Team for medical necessity review and authorization.

Authorizations for transplants are required from Blue Shield Transplant Team for the following major organ and bone marrow transplant types:

- Bone marrow
- Stem cell
- Cord blood
- Kidney and pancreas or kidney with another solid organ (for kidney only, see below)
- Heart
- Heart/lung
- Lung
- Liver
- Pancreas
- Small bowel with or without liver
- Multi-organ transplants (including kidney plus other organs)

The following transplants are also eligible for coverage but are handled as routine inpatient services by the designated Medical Care Solutions Prior Authorization Department for all members:

- Corneal
- Kidney only
- Skin

No special centers are required as long as a Blue Shield of California contracted facility is used, and, for kidney transplants, the facility is Medicare-certified.

Requests for transplants must include the following:

- Subscriber ID, requesting MD, applicable procedure and diagnosis codes
- Letter of request, including protocol reference
- Patient Selection/Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) Committee Minutes/Tumor Board Recommendation
- Transplant Consult (from diagnosis to current/chemosensitivity/lab/staging)
- Synopsis of psycho-social and caregiver evaluation
- Comprehensive psychiatric evaluation (history of serious/prolonged mental illness)
- Documented completion of substance abuse program (current history of substance abuse)
- Complete Transplant evaluation and workup

Fax the information to (916) 350-8865, Attn: Transplant Team
Admission and Concurrent Inpatient Review

Blue Shield applies industry standard protocols and guidelines in the admission and concurrent review process. Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions reviewers may conduct concurrent review throughout an admission to determine level of care and continued medical necessity. The reviews may be conducted telephonically, electronically (electronic medical record access), and / or with onsite reviews conducted on an as needed basis.

Note: Authorization is not needed for a maternity admission for a routine delivery. If the baby stays after the mother is discharged, then the physician must contact Blue Shield for pre-certification of additional days for the baby.

Nurse reviewers evaluate medical necessity and appropriateness of the level of care, including sub-acute care, and may require supporting medical documentation from the hospital including remote access to the hospital’s electronic medical record. Hospitals must contact Blue Shield within one business day of admission. Authorization for additional days beyond the authorized length of stay must be obtained from the designated Medical Care Solutions team one day prior to the end of the authorized length of stay. Failure to request additional days prior to rendering services may result in non-coverage. The facility is notified within 24 hours of the decision by telephone, fax, or in writing of the determination to continue the stay.

If the designated medical director or physician reviewer determines that the services are not medically necessary or at the appropriate level of care, he/she will contact the attending physician for a peer to peer discussion to develop a mutually agreed upon discharge plan.

A hospital employee, such as a Discharge Planner or Hospitalist, may request a referral for a member into one of Blue Shield’s care management programs by contacting the Medical Care Solutions Reviewer.

To complete the authorization process and enable timely claims payment, the patient’s discharge date and disposition must be communicated to Blue Shield Medical Care Solutions within one (1) business day of discharge.
Medical Necessity Denials

The Blue Shield Chief Health Officer has overall responsibility for Blue Shield’s Medical Care Solutions Program. The Blue Shield Senior Medical Director in Medical Care Solutions along with other Blue Shield Medical Directors are responsible for the implementation and providing clinical expertise of the Medical Care Solutions program. A licensed physician reviews all medical necessity denials; licensed pharmacists review medical necessity for pharmaceuticals/drugs and place of administration covered in the medical benefit. Board-certified physicians from the appropriate specialty assist in making medical necessity determinations, as needed.

When a hospital admission, continued stay, pharmaceutical/drug, or proposed service is determined to be not medically necessary or not covered under the member’s plan, the facility / attending physician is notified by phone or fax within 24 hours of the decision. Written notification of the denial is also sent to the member or responsible party, the attending physician, and the hospital. Notification for routine pre-service requests is within two business days of making the decision. For urgent requests, notification is within 72 hours of receipt of requests.

Per your Blue Shield contract, if authorization for services in an outpatient or inpatient hospital facility or an extension of days is required and not obtained or is denied by Blue Shield, neither Blue Shield nor the member is financially responsible for the denied days. The member may be held financially responsible only if the hospital obtains in writing an acknowledgment of financial liability from the member or responsible party prior to rendering the service. This acknowledgment must be specific to the admission or days denied by Blue Shield.

Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members are held financially responsible for any denied services received, only in accordance with federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations. Prior to the member’s time of discharge, if the member disagrees with the decision to discharge or the hospital is not discharging the member but the Health Plan or delegated IPA/medical group will no longer continue coverage of the inpatient hospital stay, the member must receive the CMS-required “Notice of Discharge Medicare Appeal Rights” (NODMAR) no later than the day before hospital coverage ends. A member is entitled to coverage until at least noon of the day after such notice is provided. The member or member representative must sign the letter or the hospital must document that the member refused to sign the letter. Copies of the letter must be maintained in the member’s medical record for auditing purposes.
Continuity of Care for Members by Non-Contracted Providers

Newly covered members who are being treated for acute conditions, serious chronic conditions, pregnancies (including immediate postpartum care), or terminal illness; or who are children from birth to 36 months of age; or who have received authorization from a provider for surgery or another procedure as part of a documented course of treatment can request completion of care in certain situations with a non-contracted provider who was providing services to the member at the time the member’s coverage became effective under their Blue Shield plan.

Existing Blue Shield members who are being treated for acute conditions, serious chronic conditions, pregnancies (including immediate postpartum care), or terminal illness; or who are children from birth to 36 months of age; or who have received authorization from a provider for surgery or another procedure as part of a documented course of treatment can request completion of care in certain situations with a non-contracted provider who was providing services to the member at the time the provider’s contract with Blue Shield terminated.

A member can request continuity of care services by completing Blue Shield’s Request for Continuity of Care Services form, available by calling Blue Shield Member Services or downloading from blueshieldca.com, then either mailing or faxing the completed form for review to the address or fax number listed on the form at least thirty (30) days before the health plan takes effect or as soon as the member becomes aware of the need for continuity of care services.
Blue Shield Medical & Medication Policies

Medical and medication policies are general statements of coverage for Blue Shield as a company. Unless a specific regulatory requirement (state or federal) or a plan-specific benefit or limitation applies, medical and medication policies are applied to individuals covered by Blue Shield.

The emergence of new technologies and pharmaceuticals (or new uses for existing technologies and pharmaceuticals) is monitored on an ongoing-basis to ensure timely availability of appropriate policies.

Medical Policy

The Blue Shield Medical Policy Committee reviews technologies (devices and/or procedures) for medical and behavioral health indications that are new or emerging, and new applications for existing technologies. The Committee meets at least four times per year. Experts are consulted and invited on an as-needed basis to the Committee.

The primary sources of the technology evaluations are derived from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Technology Evaluation Center (BCBSA TEC), the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Medical Policy Reference Panel (BCBSA MPP), and the California Technology Assessment Forum (CTAF).

For a recommended technology to be considered eligible for coverage, that technology must meet all of the Technology Assessment (TA) Criteria:

1. The medical technology must have final approval from the appropriate government regulatory bodies.
2. The scientific evidence must permit conclusions concerning the effectiveness of the technology on health outcomes.
3. The technology must improve the net health outcome.
4. The technology must be as beneficial as established alternatives.
5. The improvement must be attainable outside investigational settings.

Medication Policy

The Blue Shield Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee reviews pharmaceuticals. Pharmaceutical reviews are conducted using the available scientific evidence, including randomized controlled trials, cohort studies, systemic reviews, and the clinical trial data submitted to the FDA to support a new drug, abbreviated drug, or biologic license application (NDA, ANDA, BLA).

For a pharmaceutical to be considered eligible for coverage, the drug product must meet the following criteria:

1. The pharmaceutical product is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for marketing in the U.S.
2. The scientific evidence must permit conclusions concerning efficacy and safety of the pharmaceutical product on health outcomes.
3. The available scientific evidence demonstrates improved net health outcomes, and the beneficial effects outweigh the harmful effects on health outcomes.
4. The established alternatives improve net health outcomes as much as, or more than the established alternatives.
5. The health outcome improvements are attainable outside of investigational settings.
Blue Shield Medical and Medication Policies (cont’d.)

Medication Policy (cont’d.)

Only when sufficient credible evidence (such as clinical studies and trials, peer review scientific data, journal literature) has demonstrated safety and efficacy, will a technology or pharmaceutical be considered eligible for coverage, based on medical necessity.

*Note: Benefit and eligibility criteria supersede medical necessity determinations.*

Additional authorization for select medical drugs may also be required for the administration of the drug at an outpatient hospital facility site, in addition to authorization of coverage for the drug. Refer to the medication policy. For Blue Shield Medicare HMO and PPO Members, Blue Shield follows Medicare national and local coverage guidelines. For Blue Shield Medicare PPO Plans, Blue Shield Medication Policies and Step Therapy requirements may also apply for select medications.

If Blue Shield determines that a previously rendered service is not medically necessary, or does not qualify for coverage, the provider will not be paid for the service and will not be able to collect payment from the member without a signed notice of non-coverage.

Medical and medication policy information is available on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Authorizations, and then Clinical Policies and Guidelines. If questions arise about Blue Shield medical or medication policy or you require specific guidelines, please contact Provider Information & Enrollment at (800) 258-3091.

For information concerning the Blue Shield member grievance process, please refer to Section 1 of this manual.
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Section 4: Billing and Payment
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This section outlines Blue Shield’s billing procedures and requirements for submitting claims. It also describes Blue Shield claims payment policies for specific situations, such as coordination of benefits (COB), and explains Blue Shield’s process for resolving billing issues.

Claims Submission

**Note:** Hospitals billing on behalf of physicians should submit claims for physician services using a CMS 1500 electronic format, not on the UB 04 (or successor) form. These services are not contracted under the hospital agreement and, therefore, will be rejected if submitted for payment on the UB 04 (or successor) form.

Completing the UB 04 Form

**Electronic Submissions**

Hospitals and facilities are required to submit claims electronically that do not have a medical record attached and receive remittance electronically for faster and more efficient claims processing. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Refer to the HIPAA ANSI Implementation Guides, the National Uniform Billing Committee (NUBC) UB 04 Data Element Specifications, and the Blue Shield 837 Transaction Companion Guide for detailed instructions on electronically submitted claims. For specific guidelines, refer to Blue Shield’s 837 Companion Guide found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider.

For information on electronic submissions, go to Provider Connection or call the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Help Desk at (800) 480-1221. Hospitals and facilities may submit claims online through our vendor Office Ally. To learn more about Office Ally, go to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider, click on **Claims, Manage Electronic Transactions, and how to enroll in EDI.**

To ensure efficient processing, Blue Shield **may** require additional information for the following types of claims. We require all claims be submitted through your electronic connection and only submit on paper with additional documentation if the claim suspends processing or is denied for additional information.

- Exception Claims,* including, but not limited to:
  - Stop-Loss
  - Implants
  - Trauma
  - Transplants
- Medicare supplement claims
- Other Organ transplant claims
- Claims for inpatient admissions with covered and non-covered days during the same stay
- Late discharge (Documentation of medical necessity must be attached to the claim form.)

*This list of claims is not all-inclusive. For all exceptions, please refer to your hospital contract.
Section 4: Billing and Payment

Claims Submission (cont’d.)

Completing the UB 04 Form (cont’d.)

Providers should transmit their National Provider Identifier (NPI) in the billing provider segment of each claim along with their tax ID. Blue Shield will reject claims that do not contain this information. For specific information on where to input the NPI in the electronic format, providers may call the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221 or visit Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider.

Paper Submission

All claims are required to be submitted electronically unless your provider contract specifically states otherwise. Claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Electronically submitted claims will be acknowledged within 2 days and paper claims will be acknowledged within 15 days.

When paper claims forms must be used, Blue Shield requires accurately completed UB 04 (or successor) forms to process claims quickly and efficiently. Blue Shield utilizes Optical Character Recognition (OCR) which allows paper claims to be scanned and data interpreted with minimal data entry. Claims submitted on photocopied claim forms prevent the OCR process from working properly, necessitating manual data entry of the claim, which can slow processing and payment. To facilitate the efficient and accurate claims processing of paper forms, original red claim forms are required. Also, ensure:

- Data entered onto the claim form is done in Arial font, point size 10–12
- Only black ink is used
- Data is entered in CAPITAL letters
- Dot matrix printers are not used. Laser printers are recommended.
- No italics, red ink, stickers or rubber stamps are used
- No handwritten descriptions are placed on the claim
- No narrative descriptions of procedure, modifier or diagnosis are on the claim. The CPT, Modifier, ICD-10-CM, or ICD-10-PCS codes are sufficient. For drug codes, the CPT and NDC are required.
- No white correction fluid is used
- Data is not touching box edges
- No special characters are used (e.g., dollar signs, punctuation marks, parentheses)
- NPI is required for providers submitted on paper claims.

Please refer to the California UB 04 Billing Procedures Manual, available from the California Healthcare Association, for detailed instructions on this form.
Claims Submission (cont’d.)

UB 04 Form Locators

Note: Instructions specific to claims submitted electronically will be noted separately under the appropriate form locator number.

Each field on the UB 04 (or successor) form is called a “form locator.” The following form locators merit special attention:

Provider Name and address (Form Locator 1) – Submit the physical address, Provider Name, Address line 1, Address line 2, Provider City, Provider State, and Provider Zip Code.

Provider Name and address (Form Locator 2) – Required if the pay to address is different than physical address, Provider Name, Address, Provider City, Provider State, and Provider Zip Code.

Type of Bill (Form Locator 4) – Submit the type of bill. Note: This is a four-digit alphanumeric code. The 4th digit indicates the sequence of the bill in the episode of care and is referred to as a “frequency” code. If the 4th digit is billed as 0 (zero), the claim is defined as a “Nonpayment/Zero Claims” and will not be considered for payment.

Tax ID (Form Locator 5) – Submit the Federal Tax ID of the facility.

Statement Covers Period (Form Locator 6) – Enter the dates of service that correspond to the charges. Do not enter billing or posting dates. This includes outpatient claims.

Name on Baby’s Claim (Form Locator 8a) – When submitting a separate claim for a level two, three or four NICU newborn, enter the baby’s name rather than “baby boy” or “baby girl.” In the case of twins, indicate the baby’s name rather than “Baby A” or “Baby B.” Blue Shield will return the unprocessed claim if the baby’s name is missing.

Patient’s Address (Form Locators 9a-d) – Submit the Patient’s address, city, state and zip code.

Patient Date of Birth (Form Locator 10) – Submit the Patient’s date of birth.

Sex of Patient (Form Locator 11) – Submit the sex of the patient.

Admission Date (Form Locator 12) – Submit the date the patient was admitted, this includes outpatient claims.

Type of Admission (Form Locator 14) – Submit the Type of Admission.

Source of Admission (Form Locator 15) – Submit the Source of Admission.

Maternity Claims – Charges for the mother and level one NICU baby should be billed together, either on the same claim or at the same time. However, if the baby requires placement in a level two, three, or four Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) room (Revenue Code 172, 173, or 174, respectively), separate claims should be submitted for the mother and baby.
Section 4: Billing and Payment

Note: For network hospitals with negotiated per diem/case rates, only one per diem/case rate will be paid for both the mother and baby, except when the baby requires placement in level two, three or four NICU or if the baby is in a level one NICU after the mother’s discharge.

Claims Submission (cont’d.)

UB 04 Form Locators (cont’d.)

Discharge Hour (Form Locator 16) – Inpatient Claims – Late Discharge – Only medical necessity justifies an additional half-day or full-day charge on the day of discharge. Documentation of medical necessity must be attached to the claim form.

Subscriber Information (Form Locator 38) – Submit the subscriber’s name, address, city, state, and zip code. Do NOT enter Blue Cross or Blue Shield P.O. Box 1505, Red Bluff, CA address. The subscriber address should be submitted in this field.

Covered Days (Form Locators 39-41) – Submit the number of Covered Days as a value code (Qualifier 80).

Non-Covered Days (Form Locators 39-41) – Submit the number of Non-Covered Days as a value code (Qualifier 81).

Coinsurance Days (Form Locators 39-41) – Submit the number of Coinsurance Days as a value code (Qualifier 82).

Lifetime Reserve Days (Form Locators 39-41) – Submit the number of Lifetime Reserve Days as a value code (Qualifier 83).

Revenue Codes (Form Locator 42) – Submit valid Revenue Code for the services provided. Blue Shield will deny charges billed with invalid Revenue Codes.

Note: Certain billing scenarios may require Blue Shield to apply billed charges to Revenue Code 249. In some billing scenarios, Blue Shield may add Revenue Code 249 to identify combined or non-payable charges.

HCPCS Codes (Form Locator 44) – Submit valid HCPCS and appropriate modifier, rate or HIPPS Code for the services provided. Blue Shield encourages the use of modifiers in accordance with the National Uniform Billing Committee and the California UB 04 Billing Procedures Manual, as modifiers more accurately define the service(s) provided.

Note: If a deleted HCPCS Code is submitted and has been replaced by a single procedure code, then the procedure code will be recoded to the valid replacement code. If the HCPCS Code cannot be mapped to a single valid procedure code because there is either no replacement code or a one-to-many replacement code mapping for the deleted code, the procedure will be denied as a deleted procedure code.

Service Date (Form Locator 45) – When billing for outpatient services and the “Statement Covers Period” (Form Locator 6) spans multiple dates, each service must be entered on a separate line with the actual date of service performed.

Multiple room and board individual dates of service are needed to process inpatient claims within Form Locator 45 or on the itemization.
Section 4: Billing and Payment

Note: For network hospitals with negotiated per diems, additional payment for late discharges cannot be made under the terms of your contract.

Claims Submission (cont’d.)

UB 04 Form Locators (cont’d.)

Outpatient Charges and Multiple Inpatient Room & Board Charges must identify the date on each service line.

Number of Services Performed (Form Locator 46) – Submit the Number of Services provided for each revenue code.

Billed Charges (Form Locator 47) – Submit the Billed Charges for the service performed.

National Provider Identifier – NPI (Form Locator 56) – Enter the Billing Provider NPI number.

Other PRV ID (Form Locator 57) – Enter the Blue Shield Provider Identification Number (PIN), including the alpha prefix and suffix (e.g., ZZZC0406Z).

Coordination of Benefits (Form Locators 58-65) – When more than one insurance carrier is involved, enter complete information regarding the primary, secondary, and other carriers and members. Indicate the other insurance carrier’s name, address and policy number in the “Remarks” section. Also include any payment information, if known. When Blue Shield is the secondary payor, attach a copy of the primary carrier’s remittance advice or EOB. Also attach a copy of the other insurer’s identification card, if available.

- If other insurance is indicated:
  - Line A – Enter the Primary Carrier information.
  - Line B - Enter the Secondary Carrier information.
  - Line C - Enter the Tertiary information.
  - COB claims can be received electronically up to Tertiary. Blue Shield follows CMS guidelines. For facility inpatient claims, the COB is submitted at the claim level. For facility outpatient and professional claims, the COB is provided at the line level adjudication. For specific guidelines refer to Blue Shield’s 837 Companion Guide found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider.

Pre-admission Number (Form Locator 63) – Enter the reference number that Blue Shield issues to track pre-admission information. For Access+ HMO and POS patients, enter both the Blue Shield tracking number and the reference number provided by the patient’s IPA/medical group, if applicable. For emergency room visits, enter the name or license number of the authorizing physician, if the patient’s primary care physician referred or approved the admission.
Claims Submission (cont'd.)

UB 04 Form Locators (cont’d.)

Principal Diagnosis / Other Diagnosis (Form Locators 67 A-Q) – Enter all the diagnosis codes using the current ICD-10-CM Manual for accurate coding. All diagnoses must be coded to the highest level of specificity. The final diagnosis must appear on all claims. The admitting diagnosis is sufficient on interim claims. If no diagnosis is indicated, Blue Shield will be unable to process the claims; if no diagnosis is indicated on an electronic claim, it will be rejected. The Present on Admission (POA) indicator must be assigned to principal and secondary diagnoses (as defined in Section II of the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding & Reporting) on all inpatient acute care facility claims.

DRG Code (Form Locator 71) – Enter the appropriate DRG Code.

External Cause of Injury (Form Locators 72 a-c) – Inpatient acute care facility claims must contain the External Cause of Injury (ECI) ICD-10-CM Code, along with the POA indicator, when an injury, poisoning, or adverse effect occurs during the medical treatment.

Principal Procedure / Other Procedure (Form Locators 74 a-e) – ICD-10-PCS procedure codes are the standard code set for inpatient facility procedures. Facilities may capture the ICD-10-PCS procedure codes for internally tracking or monitoring facility outpatient services; however, when submitting claims, facilities must use HCPCS Codes and the appropriate modifier to report outpatient services at the service line level and the claim level, if the situation applies.

Electronic Claim Principal Procedure:

Even though an ICD-10-PCS procedure code qualifier is available, the Transactions and Code Sets regulation state that in addition to a HCPCS code qualifier, at the “situational” claim level segment, ICD-10-PCS procedure codes are the adopted standard code set for facility inpatient services.

Attending Physician (Form Locator 76) – Enter the name and NPI of the attending physician. Both name and NPI are required.

Operating Physician (Form Locator 77) – Enter the name and NPI of the operating physician.

Other Physician (Form Locator 79) – Note: Facilities rendering services to a Blue Shield POS member who has self-referred must enter the words "self-referral" in this form locator for Blue Shield to accurately identify and process the claim under the PPO benefit plan coverage.

Electronic Claim Record of Referring Physician:

Last Name Field (Claim Header Record) – Enter SELFREFERAL
First Name Field (Claim Header Record) – Leave Blank
Taxonomy Code (Form Locator 81) – Enter the GENERIC NPI = 1002233777 with qualifier “B3”.

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Blue Shield of California
Hospital and Facility Guidelines
January 2020
Claims Submission (cont’d.)

Other Required Billing Information

Outpatient Charges – Submit outpatient claims electronically or on the UB 04 (or successor) claim form if medical records are attached. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Use appropriate Revenue, CPT/HCPCS Codes and modifiers for the following outpatient services:

- Surgical Services
- Emergency Services and Urgent Care Services
- Dialysis Services
- Infusion Therapy Services
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Respiratory Therapy
- Radiology/Pathology/Diagnostic Tests
- Clinical Laboratory Services
- Pharmaceutical Services
- All Other Outpatient Services

Enter the codes in Form Locator 44. Be sure to include all applicable Revenue, CPT/HCPCS Codes and modifiers. Refer to Appendix 4-A: Reimbursement for Outpatient Services, for reimbursement details around each outpatient service. In accordance with national billing guidelines, Blue Shield requires the use of detailed, specific codes instead of generic, general codes.

Professional Charges – Facilities that act as the billing agent for hospital-based physicians (i.e., emergency room physicians, clinic physicians, anesthesiologists, radiologists, pathologists, etc.) and other allied health professionals must obtain a separate nine-digit Blue Shield professional provider identification number (PIN) for both group and individual providers to bill for these services. Services billed using Revenue Code 096X – 098X, CPT Codes with Modifier 26, and professional-only CPT Codes, will be denied if billed on the UB-04 (or successor) claim form.

Global CPT Codes – As noted above, Blue Shield does not pay for professional charges; accordingly, a global CPT Code should not be used when a technical component-only CPT Code is available. In the event a global CPT Code is billed, and a technical component-only CPT Code is available, the global CPT Code will be recoded to the technical component-only CPT Code and reimbursement will be determined based on the technical component-only CPT Code.

Facility Fees for Professional Office Visit Services – Blue Shield does not reimburse or pay facilities for clinic facility charges billed under Revenue Codes 510-529. Reimbursement for facility fees associated with office services is included in the physician professional fee and is not paid separately to facilities.

Skilled Nursing Facility Charges – Hospital and free-standing skilled nursing facility services must be billed on the UB 04 (or successor) claim form with the appropriate Revenue Code and CPT/HCPCS Codes to indicate the level of care or identified excluded service.
Claims Submission (cont’d.)

Other Required Billing Information (cont’d.)

Dialysis Charges – Free-standing dialysis center services must be billed electronically or on the UB 04 (or successor) claim form if medical records are attached with the appropriate Revenue Code, CPT/HCPCS Codes and modifiers, in order to receive payment for services rendered. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected.

Facilities must submit claims electronically for professional charges or on a CMS 1500 claim form if medical records are attached and must include not only the billing agent NPI, but also the NPI of the provider who performed the service. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Block 24J of the CMS 1500 Form or the rendering provider field of the electronic record format is the appropriate location for showing the rendering provider NPI. Please note that for Blue Shield Medicare Advantage claims, the rendering physician’s state license or UPIN must be entered in this field.

Reference Materials

In addition to the California UB 04 Billing Procedures Manual and the NEIC or NUBC Specification Manual, other reference materials are available to ensure appropriate coding. Various types of codes used in submitting claims are listed below.

Revenue Codes – Codes that identify a specific accommodation or ancillary service and used to determine payment. For appropriate coding and specific information about revenue codes, please refer to the California UB 04 Billing Procedures Manual.

Note: Certain billing scenarios may require Blue Shield to apply billed charges to Revenue Code 249. In some billing scenarios, Blue Shield may add Revenue Code 249 to identify combined or non-payable charges.

ICD-10-CM (Clinical Modification) – The ICD-10-CM List contains categories, subcategories and codes. Characters for categories, subcategories and codes may be either a letter or a number. All categories are 3 characters. A three-character category that has no further subdivision is equivalent to a code. Subcategories are either 4 or 5 characters. Codes may be 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 characters. That is, each level of subdivision after a category is a subcategory. The final level of subdivision is a code. Codes that have applicable 7th characters are still referred to as codes, not subcategories. A code that has an applicable 7th character is considered invalid without the 7th character.

ICD-10-PCS (Procedure Coding System) – ICD-10-PCS codes are composed of seven characters. Each character is an axis of classification that specifies information about the procedure performed. Within a defined code range, a character specifies the same type of information in that axis of classification (e.g., the fifth axis of classification specifies the approach in sections 0 through 4 and 7 through 9 of the system).
Claims Submission (cont’d.)

Reference Materials (cont’d.)

CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) Codes – Five-digit codes for identifying medical services and procedures performed by physicians. The American Medical Association publishes the CPT Code Manual. Use this document when billing for the following types of services:

- Surgical Services
- Emergency Services and Urgent Care Services
- Dialysis Services
- Infusion Therapy
- Immunizations
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Respiratory Therapy
- Radiology/Pathology/Diagnostic Tests
- Clinical Laboratory Services
- All Other Services

HCPCS Level II – Standardized coding system that is used primarily to identify products, supplies, and services not included in the CPT codes, such as ambulance services and durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics and supplies when used outside a physician office. Appropriate HCPCS Codes should be used to bill for outpatient pharmaceuticals including units of service based upon the HCPCS Code description.

NDC (National Drug Code) – 10- or 11-digit universal drug product identifier found in the Red Book, the Blue Book, or the National Drug Code Directory. When billing for drugs, supplies, and equipment, use HCPCS and NDC codes. NDC Codes are required for new drugs without an assigned HCPCS Code, for these services facilities must bill using the appropriate Revenue Code, unclassified J-Code (HCPCS) and the NDC Code with description in order to receive payment.

The billing document should include the following information:

- Name of patient
- Date of service
- Drug name
- Drug strength
- NDC Number and quantity

Please refer to the HIPAA ANSI Implementation Guide and Blue Shield of California 837 Transaction Companion Guide for submitting claims electronically.

AWP – AWP refers to the Average Wholesale Price of pharmaceuticals dispensed per NDC Code as set forth in a nationally-recognized pricing source such as First Data Bank and its supplements or other such sources, as determined by Blue Shield.
Claims Submission (cont’d.)

Medicare Crossover

Claims for Blue Shield Medicare Supplement plans are automatically sent to Blue Shield by the Medicare carrier. Providers do not need to submit these claims to Blue Shield for supplemental coverage processing.

Please check your Medicare Remittances for notification that your original claim has been crossed over to ensure that you do not send any duplicate claim to Blue Shield of California. If it has crossed over and you have not received a remit within 30 days, please check claim status with the appropriate Blue plan and then re-submit electronically with the local Blue plan if necessary.

When Blue Shield is the patient’s secondary carrier, submit claims electronically using the process below or contact your clearinghouse or billing system vendors for EDI Medicare secondary submission. If EDI secondary is not available, attach a copy of Medicare’s RA to the back of the UB 04 (or successor) or CMS 1500 form even if the remittance advice indicates a complete denial of payment by Medicare.

Instructions for COB Electronic Submission

837 Professional COB Claims – Secondary/Tertiary Electronic Claims to Blue Shield

- Claim level information can be submitted, Blue Shield requires line level on professional claims
- Standard list refers to HIPAA compliant codes established by CMS and other government entities
- Both 2430 segments must equal original total charge in CLM02 in order to balance

Claim Information (2300)

CLM*TERT837PDLRSNDTST*1000***23>>1*Y*A*Y*Y*B~

837 Institutional COB Claims – Secondary/Tertiary Electronic Claims to Blue Shield

- Claim level information needs to be submitted, Blue Shield may also receive line level on COB institutional claims.
- Standard list refers to HIPAA compliant codes established by CMS and other government entities.
- Both 2430 segments must equal original total chard in CLM02 in order to balance.

Claim information (2300)

CLM*COBSECTERTST*11751.32***11A>1*Y**Y********Y~
Claims Submission (cont’d.)

Instructions for COB Electronic Submission (cont’d.)

CAS Claim Level Adjustments: (Select one of the following): (Loop 2320)

• CO Contractual Obligations
• CR Correction and Reversals
• OA Other Adjustments
• PI Payor Initiated Reductions
• PR Patient Responsibility

CAS02 Claim Adjustment Reason Code: (Use appropriate adjustment reason codes)

Examples:

1 = Deductible Amount
2 = Coinsurance Amount
3= Copayment Amount

Examples

CAS*PR*1*9*7.93~
CAS*OA*93*15.06~


Call the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221 with any questions about Medicare supplemental claims that should have been forwarded but were not. Questions about the amount paid on the supplemental claim should be directed to the appropriate Blue Shield Customer Service department.
Claim Attachments

30-Day Readmission Documents

As applicable, a copy of the medical record must be submitted with acute care hospital claims for inpatient admissions that occur within thirty (30) days of the discharge of a member with a prior inpatient admission for the same diagnosis-related group (DRG) or principal ICD-10 diagnosis code.

Coordination of Benefits (COB) Documentation

When Blue Shield is the patient’s secondary carrier, submit claims electronically using your vendor’s EDI secondary process. For more information, see Blue Shield instructions for secondary COB electronic submission in the Medicare Crossover section or contact the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221.

If EDI secondary is not available, attach proof of the primary carrier’s payment or denial and a copy of the other carrier’s identification card (see Coordination of Benefits information further in this section).

Detail of Charges

Occasionally, Blue Shield may contact providers for an itemization of charges (e.g., exception claims). In those instances, prompt cooperation will expedite the payment process.

Emergency Room Visits

A copy of the emergency room report is required to be submitted upon Blue Shield’s request.

Hospital-Acquired Conditions / Never Events Documents

A copy of the medical record and an itemization of charges must be submitted with acute care hospital claims for inpatient admissions during which there was a Hospital-Acquired Condition (HAC) or Never Event (see Hospital-Acquired Conditions / Never Events information in this section).

Medicare Secondary

Please check your Medicare Remittances for notification that your original claim has been crossed over to ensure that you do not send any duplicate claim to Blue Shield. If it has crossed over and you have not received a remit within 30 days, please check claim status with the appropriate Blue plan and then resubmit electronically with the local Blue plan if necessary.

For more information, see Blue Shield instructions for secondary COB electronic submission in the Medicare Crossover section or contact the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221.

If EDI Medicare secondary is not available, attach a copy of Medicare’s RA to the back of the UB 04 (or successor) or CMS 1500 form even if the remittance advice indicates a complete denial of payment by Medicare (see the Medicare Non-Duplication of Coverage information in this section).
Claims Processing Logic and Payment Policies

The following provides a high-level, general overview of Blue Shield's payment processing logic. Please refer to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under the *Claims* tab for the full payment policies. Please call Provider Information & Enrollment at (800) 258-3091 for additional information.

**Blue Shield Claim Edits and Industry Standard Correct Coding**

Blue Shield utilizes claims editing software that uses correct coding from industry standard sources, such as Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the American Medical Association (AMA), Current Procedural Terminology (CPT), Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS), and health plan-developed policies, as applicable, during the claims adjudication process. Additional sources may be used as defined in the Claim Editing Payment Policy.

The claims editing software is also able to identify previously submitted historical claims that are related to current claim submissions, which may result in adjustments to claims previously processed.

Claims editing software will be updated periodically, without notification, to reflect the addition of newly released/revised/deleted codes and their associated claim edits, including but not limited to NCCI revisions, and health plan payment policies.

**Prescreen Claims**

Blue Shield provides web access to Clear Claim Connection, a tool that enables providers to prospectively prescreen claims. Access and training instructions for Clear Claim Connection can be found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under *Claims, Policies and Guidelines*, then *Payment Policies and Rules*.

**Payment Policies**

Blue Shield has adopted payment policies for licensed facility provider types. Blue Shield Payment Policies are updated periodically to reflect the addition of newly released/revised/deleted codes without notification and can be found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under the *Claims* tab.

**Out of Sequence (Split Claims)**

Denial of payment for “out of sequence” claims arises when two or more procedures with the same date of service that would have resulted in a denial of one of the procedures (e.g. mutually-exclusive procedures; component procedures to others) are submitted by the provider out of sequence on different dates.
Special Billing Situations

Billing of Exchange-Purchased Plans

Under California and federal law, subscribers receiving subsidies for Exchange-purchased individual plans that are delinquent in premium payments have a three-month grace period to pay all outstanding premiums due. During the first month of this grace period, Blue Shield will continue to process all appropriate claims for services rendered to the subscriber and any dependents. During the 2nd and 3rd months of the grace period, coverage for the subscriber and dependents is suspended until all outstanding premiums are paid to Blue Shield. When premiums become delinquent and the member is in the 2nd or 3rd month of the grace period, Blue Shield will provide written notification to providers advising them that the member’s eligibility has been suspended. In the event that premiums are not received by the end of the subscriber’s three-month grace period, claims will be denied.

Coordination of Benefits (COB)

Coordination of Benefit (COB) claims should be received electronically up to Tertiary. Blue Shield follows CMS guidelines. For facility inpatient claims, the COB is submitted at the claim level. For facility outpatient and professional claims, the COB is typically provided at claim line level. Please see instructions for COB electronic submission on pages 10-11 of this document or refer to Blue Shield’s 837 Companion Guide found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider.
Special Billing Situations (cont’d.)

Electronic Data Interchange Transaction Set Implementation Guide Drug Requirements

837 Institutional Claims

Home infusion services and drug claims must be billed on the 837 institutional electronic claims transaction using the following guidelines:

- Report name of the drug in the claim note (Loop 2300 NTE02). Use “MED” in NTE01.
- Report description using up to 80 bytes, placed in order of the service lines (See example below).
- Report date of service in the service line (Loop 2400 DTP03). Use “472” in DTP01.
- Use qualifier “N4” for NDC format 5-4-2 (Loop 2410 LIN02).
- Report the national drug code (Loop 2410 LIN03).
- Refer to the 5010 837 Institutional Guide, pages 43-44, for more information.

Notes:

207 2300 NTE01 Note reference - “MED” is Medications.
207 2300 NTE02 Description - Name of drugs. Use up to 80 bytes and show in order of service lines.

Example:
(NTE*MED*J9265 PACLITAXEL 30MG J1644 HEPARIN 1000UN J3490 CIMETIDINE 300MG~).
A new field is available in 5010 for description of services that can be used for drug specifics or any additional information needed for the claim. The NTE segment can also still be utilized.

Examples:

Professional Claim / SV102-7
SV1*HC>J3490>>MULTITRACE-4 10ml Conc.*11.94*UN*1.000***1~
Institutional Claim/ SV202-7
SV2*0821*HC>90999>G4>V6>>NON-SPECIFIC PROCEDURE CODE*2785*UN*1~

End Stage Renal Dialysis (ESRD) Hospital (Medicare)

ESRD claims are paid based on the End Stage Renal Dialysis Prospective Payment System (ESRD PPS).

Providers must supply the member’s weight and height to be able to determine the correct payment. Refer to the Medicare Claims Processing Manual Chapter 8 – Outpatient ESRD Hospital, Independent Facility, and Physician/Supplier Claims.
Special Billing Situations (cont’d.)

Home Health (Medicare)

Providers are required to submit claims electronically that do not have a medical record attached unless the provider contract specifically states otherwise. Claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Services requiring medical records must be billed on the CMS 1500 / UB04 (or successor) claim form.

Providers accepting Medicare rates are paid at the Home Health Prospective Payment System (HH PPS).

The following items must be included in order to determine the correct Medicare payment:

- The Episode Timing
- Severity Points
- HIPPS Codes billed with Revenue Code 0023 with zero billed amounts on the line

Refer to the Medicare Claims Processing Manual Chapter 10 – Home Health Agency Billing.

Hospice Billing (Commercial)

Hospice is a type of care that focuses on the palliative care of a terminally ill patient's pain and symptoms. Terminal illness is defined as a medical condition resulting in a prognosis of life of one year or less if the disease follows its natural course.

Authorization

All hospice services require prior authorization.

- HMO Plans – Authorization through the delegated IPA or medical group.
  - Direct Contracting IPA – Authorization through Blue Shield’s Medical Management Department.
- PPO Plans – Authorization through Blue Shield’s Medical Management Department.

Billing of Covered Services

Providers are required to submit Hospice claims electronically that do not have a medical record attached unless the provider contract specifically states otherwise. Claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Services requiring medical records must be billed on the CMS 1500 / UB04 (or successor) claim form with the appropriate Revenue Code, Type of Bill, CPT/HCPCS Codes and modifiers in order to receive payment for services rendered.

When billing for hospice care, claims should have Type of Bill (TOB) 81x or 82x and the following revenue codes:

- 651 – Routine home care
- 652 – Continuous home care
- 655 – Inpatient respite care
- 656 – General inpatient care
- 657 – Physician care
Special Billing Situations  *(cont’d.)*

**Hospice Billing (Commercial)  *(cont’d.)*

For hospice arranged services, the provider of service will bill the hospice and the hospice will reimburse the provider. The hospice will then include those services in the billing to Blue Shield. Blue Shield will reimburse the hospice for all covered services based on the contracted rates.

**Consultation Visit Prior to Hospice Care**

The hospice will bill a consultation visit prior to hospice care services using HCPCS G0337 – Hospice Evaluation and Counseling Services, Pre-election.

Please call Provider Services & Enrollment at (800) 258-3091 for additional information or for answers to questions not addressed above.

**Hospice Billing (Medicare)**

CMS issued Program Memorandum Intermediaries/Carriers – AB-02-015 (2/7/02) CMS Pub.60AB Clarification of Payment Responsibilities of Fee-for-Service Contractors as it Relates to Hospice Members Enrolled in Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) and Claims Processing Instructions for Processing Rejected Claims to clarify regulations regarding payment responsibility for hospice patients enrolled in managed care plans, as well as provide specific claims processing requirements to ensure payment for such claims. The information below is reprinted from that program memorandum:

**Covered Services**

While a hospice election is in effect, certain types of claims may be submitted by either a hospice provider, a provider treating an illness not related to the terminal condition or an MA to a fee-for-service contractor of CMS, subject to the usual Medicare rules of payment, but only for the following services:

1. Hospice services covered under the Medicare hospice benefit if billed by a Medicare hospice;
2. Services of the enrollee's attending physician if the physician is not employed by or under contract to the enrollee's hospice;
3. Services not related to the treatment of the terminal condition while the beneficiary has elected hospice; or
4. Services furnished after the revocation or expiration of the enrollee's hospice election until the full monthly capitation payments begin again. HMO monthly capitation payments will begin on the first day of the month after the beneficiary has revoked his or her hospice election.
Section 4: Billing and Payment

Special Billing Situations (cont’d.)

Hospice Billing (Medicare) (cont’d.)

Billing of Covered Services

Medicare hospices will bill the RHHI for Medicare beneficiaries who have coverage through managed care just as they do for beneficiaries with fee-for-service coverage, beginning with a notice of election for an initial hospice benefit period, and followed by claims with types of bill 81x and 82x. If the beneficiary later revokes election of the hospice benefit, a final claim indicating revocation, through use of Occurrence Code 42, should be submitted as soon as possible so that the beneficiary's medical care and payment are not disrupted. Occurrence Code 42 cannot be used in situations where the beneficiary is transferred from one hospice provider to another. The HMO may directly bill Medicare carriers for attending physician services, as listed above, in keeping with existing processes.

Medicare physicians may also bill such service directly to carriers if all current requirements for billing for hospice beneficiaries are met. Revised requirements for such billing were recently set forth in Transmittal 1728, Change Request 1910 of the Medicare Carriers Manual (MCM), Part 3, effective April 2002 and specifies use of modifiers -GW and -GV. When these modifiers are used, carriers are instructed to use an override code to assure such claims have been reviewed and should be approved for payment by the Common Working File (CWF) in Medicare claims processing systems.

For medical services for a condition not related to the terminal condition for which the beneficiary elected hospice, a claim must be submitted to the intermediary using the condition code 07. If physician services are billed to carriers, the instructions in Transmittal 1728, Change Request 1910 of the MCM should be followed and should specify the use of modifier -GW.

As specified above, by regulation, the duration of payment responsibility by fee-for-service contractors extends through the remainder of the month in which hospice is revoked by hospice beneficiaries. Managed care enrollees who have elected hospice may revoke hospice election at any time, but claims will continue to be paid by fee-for-service contractors as if the beneficiary were a fee-for-service beneficiary until the first day of the month following the month in which hospice is revoked.

Timely Filing

These instructions apply to all contractors for claims filed in the timely filing period for managed care enrollees who have elected hospice. The timely filing period extends from the date of service to the end of the calendar year after the year service was rendered. However, if a service was provided in the fourth quarter of a calendar year, the claim will be timely to the end of the second year after the year in which the service was rendered. Since there have been allegations of lack of compliance with the regulatory requirements for Medicare fee-for-service contractors to process hospice claims for managed care beneficiaries, exceptions to timely filing will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions to the timely filing requirements will be determined by Medicare contractors on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable CMS guidelines.
Special Billing Situations (cont’d.)

Hospice Billing (Medicare) (cont’d.)

Physician Billing Instructions For Non-Hospice Services

CMS has specific coverage rules that apply when an individual is covered under a Medicare hospice program. Treatment for the specific hospice related condition is covered under the scope of the hospice benefit. Treatment for non-hospice related services must be specifically billed to denote the following:

1. Services are not related to the specific terminal illness covered through hospice. For example, the hospice related illness is congestive heart failure.

2. A separate medical condition not related to treatment for hospice is eligible for payment under Medicare Part B, provided the billing is done properly (the specific codes designated by Medicare (i.e., GW modifiers) are utilized when billing). A separate medical condition not related to treatment for congestive heart failure is eligible for payment under Medicare Part B, provided the medical documentation regarding the separate medical condition is included.

3. Separate, non-hospice related treatment for things such as renal failure or related red blood cell production issues that meet Medicare criteria for Procrit injections would be distinct from the CHF condition being treated under the hospice program. As such they are eligible for coverage under Medicare Part B.

4. The billing should be done with a GW modifier and should denote that the treatment is not for the CHF condition, which is coded as covered under hospice.

Resources: Medicare Hospice Manual; discussion with the Hospice staff confirming that the Renal Failure and Red Blood cell production issues are not part of the scope of the hospice treatment for CHF; Frank Abrahamian at US Government Services; and conversations with CMS staff and NHIC staff; DHHS Program Memorandum.

Interim Billings

Interim bills for services subject to reimbursement at either a Case Rate or Per Diem Rate will be paid at the applicable Case Rate and/or Level of Care Per Diem Rate as they are received. When the final bill (type of bill 114) is received it will be paid at per diem with an EOB message that reads: “We have made a courtesy payment on this claim. Please resubmit the claim if it is determined to be a Stop Loss payment situation after the patient is discharged.”

Once Blue Shield receives the resubmitted claim, complete with admit to discharge itemization, we will verify Stop Loss contract language, review previous payments, and adjudicate the claim accordingly. Additional information may be requested before final Stop Loss payment can be determined.

Intermediate Inpatient Accommodation Services

Intermediate Inpatient Accommodation Services are considered to be Medical/Surgical Level of Care accommodation services, unless otherwise noted in the provider contract or as determined by Utilization Review.
Special Billing Situations *(cont’d.)*

Newborn Screening Program
Department of Health Services (DHS) Genetic Disease Branch (GDB)

DHS’s Genetic Disease Branch that administers the state’s mandatory Newborn Screening Program advised newborn screening providers that they will not bill patients or health plans for these services. These services must be billed by the facility collecting the specimen. Blue Shield’s payments for these services are included in the hospital’s capitated or per diem rates.

Observation Services

Blue Shield reimburses observation services pursuant to the contract, which may differ from the payment methodology used by other payors, including Medicare. These services may be included in the global case reimbursement or included in the inpatient reimbursement if the member is subsequently admitted.

Pre-Operative Testing

Pre-operative testing is defined as tests performed prior to, and required for, the surgery generally including but not limited to all clinical laboratory services and diagnostic tests. The pre-operative testing period can cover any timeframe of one hour to one month before the actual surgery.

All pre-operative testing required for the surgery should be billed on the same claim as the applicable surgery in order to receive payment. All pre-operative tests performed are considered to be included in the surgical case rate.

Present on Admission (POA)

Specific details for billing the POA indicator are available on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under the *Claims* tab. You can also send an e-mail to the EDI Operations Department directly at EDI_BSC@blueshieldca.com.

The HIPAA 5010 837 contains specific details where the POA is located. Please refer to the HIPAA Implementation Guidelines or the FAQs for EDI, ERA & EFT located on Provider Connection at https://www.blueshieldca.com/provider/claims/electronic-transactions/faq.sp

Rehabilitation Therapy Inpatient (Medicare)

Inpatient rehabilitation therapy services are paid under Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility Prospective Payment System (IRF PPS).

Payments are based on the Case-Mix Group (CMG) supplied by the provider. Providers must supply the CMG Code billed with Revenue Code 0024 with zero billed amounts on the line.

Refer to the *Medicare Claims Processing Manual Chapter 3 – Inpatient Hospital Billing*. 
Special Billing Situations (cont’d.)

Self-Referral

Billing for services that are considered “self-referred” should be billed as:

For Institutional EDI Claims

Loop 2310F NM103= SELFREFERRAL

Loop 2310F NM104= BLANK

First Name = SELFREFERRAL

Last Name = BLANK

Sample: NM1*DN*1*SELFREFERRAL****XX*1002233777~

Skilled Nursing (Medicare)

Skilled nursing inpatient services are paid under a Prospective Payment System (PPS). Providers who have language in their Agreement to pay at a percent of Provider’s billed charges in accordance to the Charge Master; the reimbursement rates set forth in the Agreement; and the reimbursement established by the Medicare program to pay at the lesser of contracted rates or at Medicare reimbursement, will be subject to claims being priced at the PPS fee schedules regulated by CMS.

Providers must supply the appropriate CMS Skilled Nursing Facility Health Insurance Prospective Payment System (“SNF HIPPS”) code and zero charges. This information is required in order to price the claim at the Medicare rates. If the SNF HIPPS(s) code is not on the claim, the claim shall default to the lowest SNF HIPPS(s) level for the provider’s locality for determining reimbursement in accordance with the Provider’s Agreement. Refer to the Medicare Claims Processing Manual Chapter 6 – SNF Inpatient Part A Billing and SNF Consolidated Billing.
Section 4: Billing and Payment

Where to Submit Claims

Commercial Exception Claims

Hospitals with negotiated exception rates should submit paper claims (manufacturer invoice, when applicable) along with the UB 04 and itemization to the following address:

Blue Shield of California
Hospital Exception Unit
P.O. Box 629010
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-9010
(800) 258-3091

For BlueCard claims, hospitals with negotiated exception rates should submit paper claims (manufacturer invoice, when applicable) along with the UB 04 and itemization to the following address:

Blue Shield of California
BlueCard Program
P.O. Box 1505
Red Bluff, CA 96080-1505
(800) 622-0632

For more detailed information about the BlueCard Program claims process, refer to Appendix 5-A of this manual or access the BlueCard Program web page at blueshieldca.com/provider.

Electronic Claims

Providers are required to submit claims electronically that do not have a medical record attached unless the provider contract specifically states otherwise. Claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Claims are submitted in the ASC X12 837 5010 format. Blue Shield has contracted with several vendors for providers to submit claims at no cost.

To enroll in electronic claim submission, providers can use any approved clearinghouse listed on Provider Connection. Provider can submit claims at no charge using vendors Office Ally, TriZetto Provider Solutions or Ability Network. These vendors can be contacted at blueshieldca.com/provider in the Claims section under How to submit claims or by contacting the EDI Department at (800) 480-1221.

The many benefits to the provider for using electronic submission include: reporting/acknowledgment of receipts, faster payment, improved accuracy, no claim forms, no postage and handling, and the ability to submit to a single location.

The creation of the National Provider Identifier (NPI) was mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The NPI is an attempt to ensure that all medical providers can be identified by a single identifier across all payor systems. To implement the NPI, Blue Shield developed a plan to cross reference the NPI to the correct provider records in our system. Providers must apply for their type 1 and/or type 2 National Provider Identifier through the CMS NPPES website. The NPI needs to be registered with Blue Shield before submitting claims.

HIPAA 5010 went into effect January 1, 2012. This federal regulation requires the use of standard X12 transactions to report and inquire about healthcare services. For questions about 5010, please contact the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221 or access https://www.blueshieldca.com/provider/claims/electronic-transactions/submit-edi-inquiry.sp
Where To Send Claims (cont’d.)

Paper Claims

Providers are required to submit claims electronically that do not have a medical record attached unless the provider contract specifically states otherwise. Claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. When medical records must be submitted, please use the post office box assigned by the member’s plan type. Claims may also be sent to Blue Shield’s central mail processing facility for appropriate distribution, although this process may cause some delay. Please refer to Appendix 4-C for a listing of these locations, as well as claims submissions locations for specific programs/accounts.

Transplant Claims*

The Transplant All-Inclusive Global Case Rate Payment Period includes all inpatient and outpatient hospital, professional, ancillary services, and products received by the patient during the Global Case Period.

Itemized institutional and professional bills must be submitted on appropriate billing forms, e.g., UB 04 (or successor) forms for institutional services or CMS 1500 claim forms for professional services and attached to the Blue Shield Organ Transplant Package Billing Form (Included in the Exhibit C of the Transplant Amendment signed by the facility) unless otherwise stated in your contract.

Hospitals that are submitting Package Billings for transplant or transplant related services should send paper claims along with the Organ Transplant Package Billing Form to the following address:

Blue Shield of California
Hospital Exception and Transplant Unit
P.O. Box 629010
El Dorado Hills, CA  95762-9010
(800) 258-3091

* This does not apply to kidney transplants unless the facility has an exception case rate specific to kidney transplants.
BlueCard® Program Claims

The BlueCard® Program is a national program that enables Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) Plan members to obtain healthcare services while traveling or living in another Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan’s service area. The program links participating healthcare providers with all independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans across the country through a single electronic network for claims processing and reimbursement. Additionally, the program links providers in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

The program allows hospitals and facilities to conveniently submit claims for patients from out-of-state Blue Plans, either domestic or international, to Blue Shield of California. Blue Shield is your primary contact for BlueCard claims processing, correspondence and provider inquiries.

Providers are required to submit BlueCard claims electronically to Blue Shield that do not have a medical record attached unless the provider contract specifically states otherwise. Claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected.

Mail hard-copy BlueCard claims that require medical records to:

Blue Shield of California  
BlueCard Program  
P.O. Box 1505  
Red Bluff, CA 96080-1505  
(800) 622-0632

For more detailed information about the BlueCard Program claims process, refer to Appendix 5-A of this manual or access the BlueCard Program web page at https://www.blueshieldca.com/bsca/bsc/wcm/connect/provider/provider_content_en/guidelines_resources/blue_card.
Facility Compliance Review (FCR)

In order to comply with our employer group and provider contract agreements and to ensure that appropriate billing practices are followed, Blue Shield has developed a comprehensive Facility Compliance Review (FCR) program that involves a comprehensive line-by-line bill audit. The program reviews inpatient and outpatient claims to validate their conformance with provisions of the facility’s agreement.

Blue Shield audits claims for billing accuracy, allowable charges, medical necessity, Hospital Acquired Conditions and Never Events to ensure consistency with currently accepted standards in the industry. These standards include but are not limited to those defined by Optum reference manuals and followed by other commercial payors, as well as the UB 04 Billing Manual guidelines and the National Uniform Billing Committee guidelines. The program encompasses Blue Shield claims for all lines of business and all facilities.

Categories of charges that are subject to review and payment denial include but are not limited to those charges that are mutually agreed to in Blue Shield’s hospital contracts; those charges that are determined to be not medically necessary; those for which there is no substantiating documentation; and those considered to be unbundling of another global charge, such as room and board charges or other facility room charges.

Precedence for denial of such charges has been established by Optum resource manuals, and other commercial payors, as well as the Uniform Bill (UB04) Billing Manual guidelines and definitions.

To complete an audit as expeditiously as possible, Blue Shield may ask a hospital to submit medical records; Emergency Room Notes, Trauma Flowsheet, Physician Progress Notes, Physician Orders, History and Physical, Consultations, Discharge Summary, Operative Report and Implant Log. Blue Shield may request a copy of the UB 04 (or successor) and a detailed itemization if the claim has been electronically submitted. Timely submission of requests will expedite claims processing.

For questions regarding this program, please contact Provider Information & Enrollment at (800) 258-3091.

Appeals to the Facility Compliance Review results must be submitted in writing and include specific detailed supporting documentation to the following address:

Blue Shield Initial Appeal Resolution Office
Attention: Hospital Exception and Transplant Team
P.O. Box 629010
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-9010

Incidental Procedures

Incidental procedures are outpatient services provided to members in conjunction with other outpatient covered services. Incidental procedure services and supplies are considered included in a global procedure charge(s).

A list of incidental procedures is provided in Appendix 4-D of this manual.
Hospital-Acquired Conditions / Never Events

Blue Shield believes that when a member enters a hospital for treatment of a medical problem, the member should not suffer or experience additional injuries, infections, or other serious conditions during the course of the member’s stay. Accordingly, Blue Shield expects all Blue Shield participating hospitals to take proper precautions to prevent unnecessary and avoidable injuries or illnesses. As part of Blue Shield’s commitment to improving the quality of care available to members, Blue Shield has adopted payment policies that encourage hospitals to reduce the incidence of certain hospital-acquired conditions (HACs) and “Never Events.”

HACs are avoidable conditions that could reasonably have been prevented through application of evidence-based guidelines. Such conditions are not present when patients are admitted to a hospital but occur during the course of the stay.

Never Events are errors or events that should never happen in a hospital. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) defines Never Events as “serious and costly errors in the provision of health care services that should never happen.”

Blue Shield will not pay or otherwise reimburse participating hospitals for inpatient services related to those HACs and Never Events listed on Provider Connection at https://www.blueshieldca.com/bsca/bsc/wcm/myconnect/provider/provider_content_en/claims/policies_guidelines/payment_policies.

Specifically:

- Blue Shield will not reimburse hospitals for services provided during an inpatient admission that would not have been provided in the absence of a HAC, including a higher level of care or additional inpatient days. Following are various reimbursement methodologies and how the presence of a HAC may modify reimbursement:

  - **Per Diem Rate Reimbursement** – If the HAC does not impact the member’s length of stay or the level of care provided to the member, no adjustment will be made to the per diem rate reimbursement otherwise payable to the hospital. If, as a consequence of the HAC, the member’s length of stay is increased, Blue Shield will not reimburse the hospital for any additional inpatient days attributable to the HAC. If, as a consequence of the HAC, the member receives services at a level of care higher than that which the member would have received in the absence of the HAC, Blue Shield will reimburse the hospital at the per diem rate applicable to the level of care that would have been necessary had the HAC not occurred.
Hospital-Acquired Conditions / Never Events (cont’d.)

- **Case Rate Reimbursement** – If the HAC does not impact the member’s length of stay or the level of care provided to the member, no adjustment will be made to the case rate reimbursement otherwise payable to the hospital. If, as a consequence of the HAC, the member’s length of stay exceeds the number of days covered by the applicable case rate, Blue Shield will reimburse the hospital at the applicable case rate only. If the HAC does not impact the member’s length of stay, but, as a consequence of the HAC, the member receives services at a level of care higher than that which the member would have received in the absence of the HAC, Blue Shield will reimburse the hospital for any days exceeding the number of days covered by the applicable case rate at the per diem rate applicable to the level of care that would have been necessary had the HAC not occurred.

- **Percent of Charge-Based Reimbursement** – Blue Shield will not pay or reimburse any charges for services related to the HAC. If, as a consequence of the HAC, the member receives services at a level of care higher than that which the member would have received in the absence of the HAC, Blue Shield will reimburse the hospital only for charges applicable to the level of care that would have been necessary had the HAC not occurred.

- **DRG Reimbursement** – Blue Shield will not pay or reimburse the hospital for any services related to the HAC. Reimbursement will be calculated as though the secondary diagnosis was not present.

- **Stop Loss Reimbursement** – For purposes of calculating stop loss reimbursement, if any, payable to the hospital, Blue Shield will disallow all charges for services related to the HAC.

- Blue Shield will not reimburse hospitals for any services related to a Never Event.

- In no event, including, without limitation, nonpayment by Blue Shield, shall a participating hospital bill, charge or seek compensation or reimbursement from a member, or any individual responsible for such member’s care, for hospital services related to a HAC or Never Event. Without limiting the foregoing, participating hospitals shall not seek payment from a member, or any individual responsible for such member’s care, for Covered Services for which payment was denied by Blue Shield because such Covered Services were related to a HAC or Never Event.

The list of Hospital Acquired Conditions (HAC)/Never Events identifying codes are listed on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider.
Blue Shield Explanation of Payments (EOP)

Blue Shield pays participating hospitals directly for covered services provided to our members. Providers are required to receive claims payments electronically via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Providers are required to receive Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA) showing how the claim was processed or view Explanation of Payment (EOP) using Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider. An Explanation of Benefits (EOB) is also provided to members advising them of their financial responsibility, if any.

When a Blue Shield network hospital provides services, we base payment on allowed amounts according to negotiated per diems, case rates, or percentage discounts (unless the hospital is a capitated HMO facility). These negotiated rates are based on the contract in effect on the day the patient is admitted to the hospital. These amounts provide the basis of the patient’s liability. The EOB message on the member’s copy will vary slightly from what appears on the hospital’s copy and will indicate Blue Shield’s payment to the hospital.

Tools at Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider allow registered billing providers to find claim and payment details and generate claims reports. Providers can download a copy of the printed EOP from Provider Connection. The information displayed on the claims details section of the website is the same information found on the provider’s printed EOP.

Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA)

Utilizing Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA) allows providers to reconcile their accounts receivable in a timely manner.

ERA data is used for automatic posting of claim payments. Auto-posting of payments requires assistance from your practice management system vendor.

ERA is an electronic version of an explanation of medical payment in HIPAA-compliant files. Providers are required to receive ERA files or view Explanation of Payment (EOP) using the Blue Shield’s Provider Connection site at blueshieldca.com/provider. The ERA files are transmitted to vendors or providers in the ASC X12 835 5010 format. The ERA replaces the paper Explanation of Payment. To enroll for the ERA, providers must complete an enrollment form found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider in the Claims section under Enroll in EDI or by contacting the EDI Department at (800) 480-1221.

Once ERAs are set up, paper EOEs will be discontinued. However, you can always retrieve copies of EOEs from Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider.

To enroll in the ERA/EFT program, please complete the enrollment forms found on Provider Connection. Input ERA Enrollment form in the search tool bar and hit the link for enrollment forms. Email completed forms to Blue Shield at BSC_835_Support@blueshieldca.com or fax them to (866) 276-8456.

For questions regarding the ERA/EFT enrollment process, please call the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221.

Note: When enrolling in the ERA/EFT program, you must register your National Provider Identifier (NPI) with Blue Shield of California.
Blue Shield Explanation of Payments (EOP) (cont’d.)

Calculating Member Liability

Blue Shield is in compliance with California Senate Bill 1085 (also known as the Mello Bill), which requires that the member copayment be based on the negotiated (allowed) or billed amount, whichever is less.

The following is an example of how payment is calculated for an inpatient claim. For questions or clarification about the payment or the EOB, call the member’s service center number that appears on the EOB.

Step 1: Calculate the Negotiated amount

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Per Diem} & = 755.00 \\
\text{Days} & = 6 \\
\text{Total} & = 4530.00
\end{align*}
\]

Step 2: Calculate member liability (deductible, coinsurance, copayment, and sanction) based on the billed charges or negotiated amount, whichever is less.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Billed Charges} & = 5255.95 \\
\text{Negotiated Amount} & = 4530.00
\end{align*}
\]

Because the negotiated amount is less than the total billed charges, the member liability is calculated using the negotiated amount.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Deductible} & = 4530.00 \\
\text{Deductible Amount} & = 100.00 \\
\text{Copayment} & = 886.00 \\
\text{Copayment Amount} & = 20% \\
\text{Total Member Liability} & = 986.00
\end{align*}
\]

Payment Totals:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Blue Shield payment} & = 3544.00 \\
\text{Member liability} & = 986.00 \\
\text{Total payment to facility} & = 4530.00
\end{align*}
\]

See Appendix 4-A for examples of payment calculations for outpatient services.
Contractual Adjustment Amount

EOBs report the contractual adjustment dollars to any participating provider. Contractual adjustment is the difference between the total billed charges and Blue Shield's allowed amount or contracted rate amount or usual and customary fee (a write-off amount). Having the contractual adjustment on the EOB will give an accurate amount for the provider’s accounts receivable department. Also, along with the contractual adjustment amount, the EOB will have a message explaining what the amount is.

The new messages are as follows:

1. (Adjusted claim) - Your contractual adjustment is <insert #>
2. Your contractual adjustment is <insert #>

See examples for computing contractual adjustment:

**Example 1: Negotiated Rate Facility**

Claim billed amount: $1500.00  
Contracted Allowed Amount: $1250.00  
Total Contractual Adjustment: $250.00  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facility’s billed amount</td>
<td>$1500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracted allowed amount</td>
<td>$1250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual adjustment amount</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allowed amount</td>
<td>$1250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coinsurance</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Shield payment</td>
<td>$1125.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 2: Negotiated Rate Facility**

Claim billed amount: $4000.00  
Contracted Allowed Amount: 20% discount  
Total Contractual Adjustment: $800.00  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facility’s billed amount</td>
<td>$4000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracted allowed amount</td>
<td>$3200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual adjustment amount</td>
<td>$800.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allowed amount</td>
<td>$3200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coinsurance</td>
<td>$320.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Shield payment</td>
<td>$2880.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Blue Shield Explanation of Payments (EOP) (cont’d.)

Check Issuance

Please notify Blue Shield immediately, in writing to the address below, if the remittance address of your hospital changes.

Blue Shield of California
Provider Information & Enrollment
P.O. Box 629010
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-9010

Be sure to include your Blue Shield provider number on all billings and correspondence with us. Payments can be received electronically through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Contact the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221 for more information.

Calculating Allowed Amounts

In calculating allowed amounts, Blue Shield may round the figure to the nearest whole dollar.

Third Party Liability (TPL)

If a member is injured or becomes ill due to the act or omission of another person (a “third party”), Blue Shield and the hospital or facility will provide the necessary treatment according to plan benefits. If the member receives a related monetary award or settlement from the third party, third party insurer or from uninsured or underinsured motorist coverage, Blue Shield and the hospital or facility have the right to recover the cost of benefits paid for treatment of the injury or illness. The total amount of recovery will be calculated according to California Civil Code Section 3040.

The member is required to:
1. Notify Blue Shield and the hospital or facility in writing of any claims or legal action brought against the third party as a result of their role in the injury or illness within 30 days of submitting the claim or filing the legal action against the third party;
2. Agree to fully cooperate and complete any forms or documents needed to pursue recovery from the third party;
3. Agree, in writing, to reimburse Blue Shield for benefits paid from any recovery received from the third party;
4. Provide a lien calculated according to California Civil Code Section 3040. The lien may be filed with the third party, the third party’s agent or attorney, or the court, unless otherwise prohibited by law; and,
5. Respond to information requests regarding the claim against the third party and notify Blue Shield and the hospital or facility in writing within ten (10) days of any recovery obtained.

If this plan is part of an employee welfare benefit plan subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), the member is also required to do the following:
1. Ensure that any monetary recovery is kept separate from the member’s other assets and agree in writing that the amount necessary to satisfy the lien is held in trust for Blue Shield; and,
2. Instruct legal counsel retained by the member to hold the portion of the recovery to which Blue Shield is entitled in trust for Blue Shield.
Coordination of Benefits (COB)

Coordination of Benefits (COB) is utilized when a member is covered by more than one group health plan. Payments for “allowable expenses” will be coordinated between the plans up to the maximum benefit value or amount payable by each plan separately.

COB ensures that benefits paid by multiple group health plans do not exceed 100% of eligible expenses and the plans follow a consistent order of payment.

Determining the Order of Payment

When a plan does not have a COB provision, that plan will provide its benefits first. Otherwise, the plan covering the person as an employee will provide its benefits before the plan covering the person as a dependent.

The following applies to coverage for dependent children:

- When the parents are not divorced or separated, the group health plan of the parent whose date of birth (month and day) occurs earlier in the year is primary. If either parent’s plan does not have a COB provision regarding dependents, this rule does not apply. The rule established by the plan without a COB provision determines the order of benefits.

- When the parents are divorced or separated and the specific terms of the court decree state that one of the parents is responsible for the health care expenses of the child, that parent’s group health plan is primary. The group health plan of the other parent is secondary.

- When the parents are not married, or are divorced or separated and there is no court order which would otherwise establish coverage for the child, primary responsibility is determined in the following order:
  1. The group health plan of the custodial parent.
  2. The group health plan of the spouse of the custodial parent.
  3. The group health plan of the non-custodial parent.

- When the parents are divorced or separated and there is a court decree that the parents share joint custody, without specifying which parent is responsible for the health care expenses of the child, the group health plan of the parent whose date of birth (month and day) occurs earlier in the year is primary.

If the above rules do not apply, the plan that has covered the person for the longer period of time is the primary plan provided that:

- The group health plan covering the person, or the dependent of such person, as an active employee provides benefits before the group health plan that covers the person, or the dependent of such person, as a laid-off or retired employee. If either plan does not have a COB provision regarding laid-off or retired employees, this rule does not apply.
Section 4: Billing and Payment

Coordination of Benefits (cont’d.)

When Blue Shield is the Primary Plan

The hospital or facility will provide Blue Shield Plan benefits without considering the existence of any other group health plan.

Upon request, the hospital or facility will provide the member or the secondary group health plan with a statement documenting copayments paid by the member or services denied so the member may collect the reasonable cash value of those services from the secondary group health plan. It is not necessary to provide the member with an itemized billing.

When Blue Shield is the Secondary Plan

If, as the secondary plan, the hospital or facility covers a service that would otherwise be the primary group health plan’s liability, the hospital or facility may collect the reasonable cash value of that service from the primary group health plan.

When a disagreement exists as to which group health plan is secondary, or the primary group health plan has not paid within a reasonable period of time, Blue Shield will provide benefits as if it were the primary group health plan, provided the member:

- Assigns to Blue Shield the right to receive benefits from the other group health plan;
- Agrees to cooperate with Blue Shield in obtaining payment from the other group health plan; and
- Allows Blue Shield to verify benefits have not been provided by the other group health plan.

References

Additional information regarding COB is available through the following references:

- California Code of Regulations, Title 28, Section 1300.67.13
- The member’s Evidence of Coverage
- Coordination of Benefits Handbook, Thompson Publishing Group [www.thompson.com](http://www.thompson.com)
Limitations for Duplicate Coverage (Commercial)

Veterans Administration (VA)

The member’s primary plan is required to pay the Veterans Administration (VA) for medically necessary plan benefits provided to the member who is a qualified veteran at a VA facility for a condition unrelated to military service (based on the reasonable value or Blue Shield’s allowable amount). The VA claims cannot be denied solely because the member failed to obtain a referral or authorization.

If an issue arises as to whether an illness or injury is related to military service, the VA determination prevails. While the VA determination is not subject to review, the VA will, upon request, provide documentation to substantiate its decision.

If the member is treated by the VA, the VA notifies Blue Shield by sending a copy of an assignment of benefits and will cooperate with requests for medical records. The VA will accept payment equal to what would ordinarily be paid to other providers in its geographic area. Regular administrative procedures should be followed, as if the VA were part of the member’s IPA/medical group.

Department of Defense (DOD) – TRICARE/CHAMPVA

Blue Shield is always primary (unless another group plan is primary) for covered services provided at a Department of Defense (DOD) facility when the member is not on active duty, even if for a condition related to military service. Payment is based on the reasonable value or Blue Shield’s allowable amount. TRICARE - CHAMPVA will not provide payment if the services are a benefit through Blue Shield but were not paid because the member did not comply with service delivery rules (e.g., non-authorized out of network non-emergency/urgent services). TRICARE - CHAMPVA may cover other services excluded by Blue Shield.

Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal is considered a payor of last resort.
Limitations for Duplicate Coverage (Commercial) (cont’d.)

Medicare Eligible Members

1. Blue Shield will provide benefits before Medicare in the following situations:
   a. When the Member is eligible for Medicare due to age, if the subscriber is actively working for a group that employs 20 or more employees (as defined by Medicare Secondary Payor laws).
   b. When the Member is eligible for Medicare due to disability, if the subscriber is covered by a group that employs 100 or more employees (as defined by Medicare Secondary Payor laws).
   c. When the Member is eligible for Medicare solely due to end stage renal disease during the first 30 months that the Member is eligible to receive benefits for end-stage renal disease from Medicare.

2. Blue Shield will provide benefits after Medicare in the following situations:
   a. When the Member is eligible for Medicare due to age, if the subscriber is actively working for a group that employs less than 20 employees (as defined by Medicare Secondary Payor laws).
   b. When the Member is eligible for Medicare due to disability, if the subscriber is covered by a group that employs less than 100 employees (as defined by Medicare Secondary Payor laws).
   c. When the Member is eligible for Medicare solely due to end stage renal disease after the first 30 months that the Member is eligible to receive benefits for end-stage renal disease from Medicare.
   d. When the Member is retired and age 65 years or older.

When Blue Shield provides benefits after Medicare, the combined benefits from Medicare and the Blue Shield group plan may be lower but will not exceed the Medicare Allowed charges. The Blue Shield group plan Deductible and Copayments or Coinsurance will be waived.

Services for Members in Custody of the Penal System

Section 1374.11 of the Health & Safety code prohibits health care plans from denying hospital, medical, or surgical services for the sole reason that the individual served is confined in a city or county jail, or is a juvenile detained in any facility if the individual is otherwise entitled to receive services. Blue Shield health plans are also required to provide covered services when the member is injured during the act of committing a crime.
Transition of Care / Financial Responsibility Upon Enrollment/Disenrollment for Medicare Advantage Members

The following language is taken from the Code of Federal Regulations §422.322 Source of payment and effect of election of the MA plan election on payment, Federal Regulation §422.318, and Federal Register Part 412 - Prospective Payment Systems for Inpatient Hospital Services.

Transfers/Discharges

If a transfer from one inpatient area or unit within a facility to another unit within the same facility occurs during a member’s hospitalization, this is a continuous admission and the source of coverage and financial responsibility typically remains unchanged. (Does not apply for transfers to acute rehab, TCU, or SNF level of care.)

If a member is discharged from one facility and admitted to another during his/her hospitalization, the financial responsibility depends on the source of coverage at the time of the second admission.

A discharge indicates that one of the following has occurred:

- The member moves from a PPS level of care to a non-PPS level of care, such as to an acute rehab, TCU or SNF facility.
- The member is transferred to another PPS facility, typically representing a change in the level of care.
- The member is discharged from the acute inpatient facility.

Prospective Payment System (PPS) Participating Hospitals, Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF), Home Health Agency (HHA), etc.

Members hospitalized prior to their Effective Date with the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan.

- If a member is an inpatient in an acute hospital facility prior to his or her effective date with the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan, the member’s current source of coverage at the time of admission is financially responsible for all medically necessary Medicare Part A (hospital) services through the date of discharge or through the date of transfer to an alternate facility. Blue Shield is not required to provide nor assume responsibility to pay for any inpatient services covered under Medicare Part A during the inpatient stay. Part B or physician services become a responsibility of the IPA/PCP/delegated group as of the member’s effective date.
- Under the above circumstances Blue Shield Plan Providers will assume responsibility for inpatient hospital services under Part A on the day after the day of discharge from the inpatient stay. Discharge to a skilled nursing facility is considered as an inpatient hospital discharge.

Caution: Under the above rules, CMS has viewed a "transfer to an in-plan hospital" as a discharge in the past. This makes the Health Plan liable for the admission from the date of the transfer and Medicare pays the "transfer payment" to the facility to which the member was an inpatient at the time of admission.
Transition of Care / Financial Responsibility Upon Enrollment/Disenrollment for Medicare Advantage Members
(cont’d.)

Prospective Payment System (PPS) Participating Hospitals

Coverage Terminates While the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Plan Member is Hospitalized.

If Blue Shield coverage terminates while the member is hospitalized, regardless of the reason for the termination, and the admission was authorized by the member’s IPA/PCP, Blue Shield liability for inpatient hospital services will continue until the member is discharged. Responsibility for Part B/physician services ends on the member’s disenrollment effective date.

Non-Prospective Payment System (PPS) Hospitals

Although most hospitals are part of the Medicare Prospective Payment System, there are limited facilities, such as Children’s hospitals that are excluded from PPS reimbursement. Should that be the case, the above rules do not apply if the hospital is not a PPS hospital. In cases where the member is in a non-PPS hospital the member’s new source of coverage is financially responsible for all medically necessary services as of the enrollment/disenrollment date.

Skilled Nursing Facility

If a member is in a skilled nursing facility on the effective date of his/her enrollment/disenrollment, the member’s new source of coverage is financially responsible for all medically necessary services as of the enrollment/disenrollment date.

Claim Inquires and Adjustments

Claim Inquiries

Blue Shield is committed to making payment within 30 days of receipt of a properly completed claim form. To check the status of an unpaid claim, refer to the following sections.

You can check the status of claims by accessing Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider or, you can check the status of a claim by transmitting a 276 electronic claim status transaction. Initial enrollment and testing are required for submitting electronic transactions. Please contact the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221 or EDI_BSC@blueshieldca.com.
Claim Inquiries and Adjustments (cont’d.)

Electronic Claim Submission

Blue Shield can acknowledge receipt of a claim within two calendar days of the receipt of the claim. If you do not receive payment or notification after 10 days from the original claim submission, you can:

- Check the status of claims by accessing Provider Connection;
- Transmit a 276 electronic claim status transaction; (for more information on transmitting 276 transactions please contact the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221); or
- Call the member’s assigned service center (shown on the member’s ID card). For claims with dates of service less than 30 days old, Customer Service will refer the provider to Provider Connection where this information is readily accessible.

If Blue Shield cannot locate the claim, check your Blue Shield of California EDI Reports (i.e., TA1, 999, 277CA, Submitter reports) or your clearinghouse/billing service proprietary reports subsequent to the date you transmitted your claim to determine if the claim was rejected prior to entering Blue Shield’s processing system.

- Create another claim (include any late charges with this copy of the claim) and resubmit claim electronically.
- Blue Shield will process your tracer for payment if we check our files and are unable to find any record of your original billing.
- Please contact our EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221 or email bsc_edi@blueshieldca.com first before resubmitting a claim if not found rejected on reports.

Paper Submission (When Medical Records are Required)

Providers can, within 15 calendar days of Blue Shield’s receipt of the claim, verify receipt of a claim by contacting Customer Services. If you do not receive payment or notification within 30 days from the original claim submission, you can:

- Check the status of claims by accessing Provider Connection
- Transmit a 276 electronic claim status transaction; or
- Call the member’s assigned service center (shown on the member’s ID card).
Claim Inquiries and Adjustments (cont’d.)

Paper Submission (When Medical Records Required) (cont’d.)

If Blue Shield cannot locate the claim, providers may wish to submit a tracer. Please allow a minimum of 30 days from the original submission date before sending a tracer as the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) and the inquiry may simply have crossed in the mail. To initiate a tracer, providers must:

- Prepare a legible copy of the original claim and check it for clerical errors or omissions, which may have delayed payment. Add any late charges to this copy of the claim and include detailed supporting information.
- Mail the tracers in an envelope, separate from your regular claims, to the member’s assigned service center or the appropriate regional service center.

Providers may use their own tracer form if it contains the following information:

- Facility name
- Blue Shield provider number
- Member name
- Member ID number
- Date of admission
- Patient name
- Date Blue Shield was billed
- Dates of service on your claim
- Total dollars billed

It is always best to attach a legible copy of the original billing in case Blue Shield cannot find a record of the original claim.

Late Charges

Electronic Submission

Submit late charges and adjustment/corrected claims electronically.

- Wait until the original claim is finalized.
- Create a new line with the date the late charges were incurred by entering the value of “5” in the third digit of the Type of Bill field (Form Locator 4). This identifies the claim as late charges only.
- Resubmit the claim electronically.

Paper Submission (When Required)

- Wait until the original claim is finalized.
- Print a legible copy of the late charges indicating type of bill xx5 for late charges.
- Submit the claim(s) to the appropriate address.
- Ensure the request is within the timely filing period as specified in the contract.
Claim Inquiries and Adjustments (cont’d.)

Resubmissions or Corrected Claims/Adjustments

Resubmission

If a claim needs to be resubmitted because you have not received notice of adjudication, use the following steps:

- Confirm that the claim has not been received by accessing Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider
- Transmit a 276 electronic claim status transaction
- If the original claim was not received, resubmit the claim electronically.

Corrected Claims

Submit corrected claims electronically to Blue Shield. Please wait for the original claim to finalize before sending a corrected claim to avoid denial as a duplicate.

Once the initial claim has finalized in our system, resubmit the corrected claim with the appropriate adjustment bill type. You will also need to include the following EDI segments on the adjusted claim:

- Send "7" in CLM*05-3 (Loop 2300) to indicate Replacement of Prior Claim
  Sample: CLM✽12345656✽500✽✽11:A:7✽Y✽A✽Y✽I~
- Send "F8" in REF01 (Loop 2300)
- Send the 12-digit claim number from the incorrect original claim in REF02 (Loop 2300).
  Sample: REF✽F8✽12345678912345~
  Note: 12345678912345 should be replaced with the original claim number. Obtain the Blue Shield claim number via the claim status option on Provider Connection, from the explanation of benefits (EOB), or from the electronic remittance advice (ERA).

Ensure the request is within the timely filing period as specified in the contract.

Note: Submit corrected claims originally processed by a Foundation for Medical Care directly to that Foundation.

Important Information

Corrected claims submitted with no documentation clearly describing the correction being made may be processed as a raw claim or returned with a request for additional information regarding the change(s).
Timely Submission of Claims and Appeals

Claims appeals by providers must be in writing and must specify the basis for the appeal. Particular payment or procedural issues that are in question must be cited. Unless otherwise specified in your contract, the following time frames for submission of claims and appeals will apply:

- **New claims**: Within 180 calendar days, or the time specified in your contract, whichever is greater, from the last date of service or discharge date.
- **Claims requiring coordination of benefits with another carrier**: Within 120 calendar days of the primary carrier’s payment determination.
- **Initial Appeals**: Within 365 calendar days of the last Blue Shield payment or decision, or the time specified in your contract, whichever is greater.
- **Final Appeals**: Within 65 working days of Blue Shield’s initial determination or the time specified in your contract, whichever is greater.

*Note: Blue Shield will deny any claims or appeals that are not submitted within these time frames.*

Provider Inquiries

A provider inquiry is a telephonic or written request to explain the rationale for a decision to reduce, delay, or deny services or benefits. An inquiry may also include questions or clarifications regarding proposed services or treatments, administrative procedures or claims payment. Issues or questions may be resolved at the inquiry level. An inquiry may or may not alter the original decision.

Providers may initiate inquiries regarding a decision by Blue Shield, including but not limited to a claims processing determination.

Inquiries may focus upon areas such as:

- Payment Methodology
- Multiple Surgeries
- Corrected Billings
- Medical Policy
- Coordination of Benefits (COB)
- Third Party Liability (TPL)
- Utilization Denials

Inquiries can be generated by either a telephone call or written correspondence to the member’s appropriate Customer Service Department. For claims with dates of service less than 30 days old, visit Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider where this information is readily accessible. Information about the Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution Process and where to direct an inquiry can be found in this manual or by contacting the member’s Customer Service Department.
Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution

Blue Shield has established fair, fast and cost-effective procedures to process and resolve provider appeals. Blue Shield’s Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution Process is accessible to both contracting and non-contracting providers.

Definitions

Appeal

A written notice to Blue Shield, submitted to the designated provider appeal address, challenging, appealing or requesting reconsideration of a claim that has been denied, adjusted (paid at less than billed charges), or contested, or requesting resolution of billing determinations, such as bundling/unbundling of claims/procedures codes or allowances, or disputing a request for reimbursement of an overpayment of a claim; and a written notice to Blue Shield, submitted to the designated provider appeal address, disputing administrative policies and procedures, administrative terminations, retro-active contracting, or any other contract issue.

Bundled Appeal

A written notice to Blue Shield, submitted to the designated provider appeal address, identifying a group of substantially similar multiple claims challenging, appealing, or requesting reconsideration of claims that have been previously denied, adjusted (paid at less than billed charges), or contested, that are individually numbered using the Blue Shield assigned claim number to identify each claim contained in the bundled appeal; or a written notice, submitted to the designated provider appeal address, identifying a group of substantially similar contractual appeals that are individually numbered using the section of the contract and sequential numbers that are cross-referenced to a document or spreadsheet. (For example, Section I A #1, Section I A #2, etc.)

Provider Inquiry

A telephone or written request for information, or question regarding claim status, submission of corrected claims, member eligibility, payment methodology rules (bundling/unbundling logic, multiple surgery rules), Medical Policy, coordination of benefits, or third party liability/workers compensation issues submitted by a provider to Blue Shield, or a telephone discussion or written statement questioning with the way Blue Shield processed a claim (i.e. wrong units of service, wrong date of service, clarification of payment calculation).

Receipt Date

The working day when the provider appeal, whether by physical or electronic means, is first delivered to the designated provider appeal office or post office box.

Appeal Determination Date

The working day when the written provider dispute determination or amended provider dispute determination is delivered by physical or electronic means.
Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution (cont’d.)

Definitions (cont’d.)

Date of Contest, Denial, Notice, or Payment

The date Blue Shield's claim decision, or payment, is electronically transmitted (835) or deposited in the U.S. mail (Explanation of Benefits).

Unjust or Unfair Payment Pattern

Any practice, policy, or procedure that results in repeated delays in the processing and/or correct reimbursement of claims as defined by applicable regulations.

Unfair Billing Pattern

Engaging in a demonstrable and unjust pattern of bundling/unbundling or up-coding of claims, and/or other demonstrable and unjustified billing patterns.

Good Cause for Untimely Submission of Claims

Circumstances reasonably beyond the control of the provider that prevented the timely submission of a claim would be considered “good cause.”

Examples of circumstances beyond the control of the provider, include, but are not limited to:

- Patient gave incorrect health coverage/insurance information (copy of an incorrect ID card);
- Patient was unable to provide health coverage/insurance information (patient was comatose, the patient expired before the information could be obtained, etc.);
- Natural disaster/acts of nature (fire, flood, earthquake, etc.);
- Acts of war/terrorism;
- System wide loss of computer data (system crash);
- BlueCard claims sent to the wrong Blue Plan.

Examples of Circumstances That Do Not Constitute “good cause”:

- Claim was sent to the wrong carrier (Blue Cross instead of Blue Shield), but the provider had the correct health coverage/insurance information for Blue Shield of California membership.
- The claim was submitted timely, but Blue Shield was unable to process because the claim was not a complete claim (did not contain the minimum data elements to enter the claim into the system, i.e., missing a subscriber number).

Providers have an obligation to be responsible for appropriate timely billing practices. Provider requests to review a claim timely filing denial because the provider believes there was good cause for the delay, will be handled as a provider appeal.
Section 4: Billing and Payment

Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution (cont’d.)

Unfair Billing and Payment Patterns

Reporting Unfair Billing Patterns

Blue Shield may report providers Blue Shield believes are engaging in unjust billing patterns to the DMHC.

Toll-free provider line (877) 525-1295
E-mail: plans-providers@dmhc.ca.gov

Providers may report instances in which the provider believes a plan is engaging in an unfair payment pattern to the DMHC’s Office of Plan and Provider Relations.

Toll-free provider line (877) 525-1295
E-mail: plans-providers@dmhc.ca.gov

Unfair Payment Patterns

Unjust payment patterns include:

- Imposing a claim filing deadline on three or more claims over the course of any three-month period, or less than 90 days for contracting providers; 180 days for non-contracting provider; 90 days from the primary payor’s determination, when paying as a secondary/tertiary payor
- Failing to forward at least 95% of misdirected, capitated claims to the appropriate capitated entity within 10 working days of receipt, over the course of any three-month period
- Failing to accept at least 95% of late claim submissions, over the course of any three-month period, when the provider submits proof of Good Cause
- Failing to notify providers at least 95% of the time, in writing and within 365 days of the payment date, of intent to recover an overpayment, over the course of any three-month period
- Failing to notify providers, at least 95% of the time over the course of any three-month period, of the claim, name of the patient, date of service and a clear explanation of the basis upon which an overpayment was made.
- Failing to allow providers 30 working days, at least 95% of the time over the course of any three-month period, of their right to appeal a request to recover an overpayment
- Failing to acknowledge at least 95% of claims within 2 working days for electronic submissions, or 15 working days for paper submissions
- Failing to provide an accurate and clear written explanation of the specific reasons for denying, adjusting or contesting a claim at least 95% of the time over any three-month period
- Including provider contract provision inconsistent with any of the applicable regulations of the Health and Safety Code or CCR, title 28 on three (3) or more occasions over the course of any three-month period
- Requesting medical records on more than 3% of claims, excluding professional emergency services and care claims, over the course of any 12-month period
Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution (cont’d.)

Unfair Billing and Payment Patterns (cont’d.)

Unfair Payment Patterns (cont’d.)

- Requesting medical records on professional emergency services and care claims on more than 20% of the claims, over the course of any 12-month period
- Failing to process PPO and POS II, III claims within 30 working days or HMO and POS I claims within 45 working days at least 95% of the time over the course of any three-month period
- Failing to automatically pay interest penalties when processing exceeds the specified time frames at least 95% of the time over the course of any three-month period
- Failing to notify providers of the appeal process when a claim is denied, adjusted or contested at least 95% of the time over the course of any three-month period
- Failing to acknowledge initial provider appeals within 15 working days of receipt at least 95% of the time over the course of any three-month time period
- Failing to resolve and provide written determination of initial provider appeals within 45 working days of receipt
- Rescinding or modifying an authorization for health care services after the provider has rendered the service on three or more occasions over the course of any three-month period

Provider Contracts

Blue Shield informs contracting providers and capitated entities, initially upon contracting, or upon change of the Provider Appeal Resolution Process, of the procedures for submitting a provider appeal, including:

- Identity of the office responsible for receiving and resolving provider appeals
- Mailing address
- Telephone number
- Directions for filing an appeal
- Directions for filing bundled appeal
- The timeframe in which Blue Shield will acknowledge receipt of the appeal. The disclosures are made in contracts, in the various provider manuals and on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider.

Explanation of Benefits

An Explanation of Benefits (EOB) informs providers of the availability of Blue Shield's Provider Appeal Resolution Process and provide instructions for filing a provider appeal. An EOB is sent each time Blue Shield processes a provider submitted claim unless a provider is enrolled with Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA). Providers can retrieve a copy of the EOB from Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider. The provider appeal resolution information is printed on page two of the provider's EOB. EOBs are issued to both contracted and non-contracted providers.
Section 4: Billing and Payment

Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution (cont’d.)

Unfair Billing and Payment Patterns (cont’d.)

Online Access

The Provider Appeal Resolution Process is available to registered users on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider.

Provider Manuals


Blue Shield's Appeal Process

The following information outlines the process Blue Shield has established to allow providers and capitated entities to submit appeals.

Blue Shield's Provider Dispute and Resolution Department is responsible for the Provider Appeal Resolution Process.

Blue Shield's Senior Management is responsible for:

- The maintenance of the Provider Appeal Resolution Process;
- Review of the Provider Appeal Resolution operations;
- Noting any emerging patterns to improve administrative capacity, Blue Shield Provider Relations, claim payment procedures and patient care; and
- Preparing the required reports and disclosures.

Provider Appeals – Reports

Blue Shield will track each provider appeal and will report the following information in the Annual Plan Claims Payment and Dispute Resolution Mechanism Report:

- Information on the number and type of provider appeals received.
- A summary of the disposition of all provider appeals, including a description of the types, terms and resolution.

Internally, Blue Shield will review the provider appeal data to identify emerging patterns and trends and initiate the appropriate action.
Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution (cont’d.)

Unfair Billing and Payment Patterns (cont’d.)

Levels

Blue Shield's Provider Appeal Resolution Process consists of two levels: Initial and Final.

CCR, title 28, Section 1300.71.38 requires health plans to offer an appeal process. State law does not require health plans to offer two levels.

Address For Submission of an Initial Appeal

Initial Appeals must be submitted in writing to the following address:

Blue Shield Initial Appeal Resolution Office
P.O. Box 272620
Chico, CA 95927-2620

Initial appeals regarding facility contract exception(s) must be submitted in writing to the following address:

Blue Shield Initial Appeal Resolution Office
Attention: Hospital Exception and Transplant Team
P.O. Box 629010
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-9010

Required Information/Appeal

An appeal must be submitted in writing and contain the following information:

- The provider's name
- The provider's identification number and/or the provider's tax identification number
- Contact information - mailing address and phone number
- Blue Shield's claim number, when applicable
- The patient's name, when applicable
- The patient's Blue Shield subscriber number, when applicable
- The date of service, when applicable
- A clear explanation of issue the provider believes to be incorrect, including supporting medical records when applicable

As applicable, bundled appeals must identify individually each item by using either the claim number or the section of the contract and sequential numbers that are cross-referenced to a document or spreadsheet.
Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution (cont’d.)

Unfair Billing and Payment Patterns (cont’d.)

Appeals Submitted With Incomplete Information

Appeals that are lacking the required information will be returned to the provider or capitated entity.

Blue Shield will return the appeal and notify the provider or capitated entity of the missing information necessary to categorize the submission as a provider appeal.

The original appeal, along with the additional information identified by Blue Shield, should be resubmitted to Blue Shield within 30 working days of the provider's receipt of the notice requesting the missing information.

Blue Shield will not require the provider to resubmit claim information or supporting documentation that has been previously received as part of the claims adjudication process.

Timeframe for Submitting Appeal

Initial appeals must be submitted within 365 days or the time specified in the provider's contract, whichever is greater, of Blue Shield's date of contest, denial, notice or payment.

In the event the appeal is regarding the lack of a decision, the appeal must be submitted within 365 days, or the time specified in the provider's contract, whichever is greater, after the time for contesting or denying a claim has expired.

Appeals alleging a demonstrable and unfair payment pattern by Blue Shield must be submitted within the timeframes indicated above, based on the date of the most recent action or inaction by Blue Shield.

Timely Filing of Appeals

If a contracted provider or capitated entity fails to submit an initial appeal or final appeal within the required timeframes, the provider or capitated entity:

- Waives the right for any remedies to pursue the matter further
- May not initiate a demand for arbitration or other legal action against Blue Shield
- May not pursue additional payment from the member.

In instances where the provider's contract specifies timeframes that are greater than the timeframes specified in Blue Shield's Provider Appeal Resolution process, the provider's contract takes precedence.

Blue Shield will review the untimely submission of a provider appeal when the provider's contract includes a good cause clause for the untimely submissions of provider appeals.
Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution (cont’d.)

Unfair Billing and Payment Patterns (cont’d.)

Timeframe for Providers to Contest Blue Shield's Request to Refund an Overpayment

Providers must submit notice contesting Blue Shield's refund request within 30 working days of the receipt of the notice of overpayment.

The provider's notice contesting Blue Shield's refund request must include the required information for submitting an appeal as well as a clear statement indicating why the provider believes that the claim was not overpaid. A provider's notice that it is contesting Blue Shield's refund request will be identified as an appeal and handled in accordance with Blue Shield's Provider Appeal Resolution Process.

Timeframe for Acknowledgement of Appeals

Blue Shield will acknowledge the receipt of each paper appeal within 15 working days of the receipt of the written appeal.

Timeframe for Resolving Appeals

Blue Shield will resolve appeals within 45 working days of the receipt of the appeal.

In the event the original appeal was returned to the provider due to missing information, the amended appeal will be resolved within 45 working days of the receipt of the amended appeal.

If the resolution of the appeal results in additional monies due to the provider, Blue Shield will issue payment, including interest when applicable, within 5 working days of the date of the written response notifying the provider of the appeal resolution.

Resolution

Blue Shield will provide a written determination to each appeal, stating the pertinent facts and explaining the reason(s) for the determination.

The written determination of an initial appeal will notify providers and capitated entities of their right to file a final appeal.

Submitting Appeals on a Member's Behalf

 Appeals submitted on a member's behalf will be treated as a member grievance and handled within the member grievance process.

Blue Shield will verify with the member that the provider has been authorized to submit an appeal (member grievance) on the member's behalf.
Provider Appeals and Dispute Resolution (cont’d.)

Unfair Billing and Payment Patterns (cont’d.)

Final Appeals

Provider or capitated entities that disagree with Blue Shield's written determination may pursue the matter further by initiating a final appeal.

To initiate a final appeal, providers and capitated entities must, within 65 working days of Blue Shield's initial determination, or the time specified in the provider's contract, whichever is greater, submit a written request to the following address:

Blue Shield of California
Final Provider Appeal and Resolution Process
P.O. Box 629011
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-9011

Commercial Appeals regarding facility contract exception(s) must be submitted to:

Blue Shield Initial Appeal Resolution Office
Attention: Hospital Exception and Transplant Team
P.O. Box 629010
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-9010

The final appeal must be submitted in accordance with the required information for an appeal.

Blue Shield will, within 45 working days of receipt, review the final appeal and respond in writing, stating the pertinent facts and explaining the reason(s) for the determination.

Arbitration

If, after participating in the initial and final levels of the Provider Appeal Resolution Process, the provider or capitated entity continues to disagree with Blue Shield's payment or determination, the provider or capitated entity may submit the matter to binding arbitration as applicable and outlined in the provider's contract.
Capitated Entity (IPA/MG/Capitated Hospitals) Appeal Resolution Requirements

IPA/Medical Group and Capitated Hospital Responsibilities

In accordance with state law, IPA/medical groups and capitated hospitals are required to establish a fair, fast, cost-effective provider dispute resolution process.

In the event an IPA/medical group or a capitated hospital fails to resolve provider disputes in a timely manner, consistent with state law, Blue Shield may assume responsibility for the administration of the IPA/medical group’s or capitated hospital’s dispute resolution mechanism.

Blue Shield Contracts

Blue Shield contracts require the IPA/medical group and capitated hospitals to establish and maintain a fair, fast, and cost-effective dispute resolution to process and resolve provider appeals.

The IPA/medical group and capitated hospital’s dispute resolution process must be in accordance with Sections 1371, 1371.1, 1371.2, 1371.22, 1371.35, 1371.36 1371.37 1371.38, 1371.4, and 1371.5 of the Health and Safety Code, and Sections 1300.71, 1300.71.38, 1300.71.4 and 1300.77.4 of the CCR, Title 28.

Quarterly Reports

IPAs, medical groups and capitated hospitals are required to create and retain for audit a tabulated report of each provider dispute received and/or reported. The report must be categorized by receipt date, and include the identification of the provider, type of appeal, disposition and outcome of the appeal and number of work days to resolve the appeal. A summary statistical report will be submitted quarterly in accordance with ICE-standardized formats.

Each individual appeal in a bundled appeal is reported separately.

Provider Appeal Documentation

Upon request, the IPA/medical group and capitated hospital will make available to Blue Shield, or the DMHC, all records, notes and documents regarding their provider dispute resolution mechanism and the resolution of provider appeals.

Medical Necessity Denials

Blue Shield’s Provider Appeal Resolution Process includes a process to allow any provider submitting a claim dispute to the IPA/medical group and/or capitated hospital’s dispute resolution mechanism involving an issue of medical necessity or utilization review and unconditional right of appeal for that claim dispute.

Providers must submit their request to Blue Shield within 60 working days from the date they received the IPA/medical group and/or capitated hospital’s determination.
Section 4: Billing and Payment

Provider Appeals of Medicare Advantage Claims

Contracted

Contracted providers have the right to file an appeal related to any initial claim decision by filing a request for redetermination. Medicare Advantage Appeals (for individual or group Medicare Advantage members) must be submitted to:

Blue Shield of California
Medicare Provider Appeals Department
P.O. Box 272640
Chico, CA 95927

Required Information/Appeal

An appeal must be submitted in writing and contain the following information:

- The provider’s name
- The National Provider Identifier (NPI) and/or the provider’s tax or social security number
- Contact information – mailing address and phone number
- Blue Shield’s Internal Control Number (ICN)/Claim number, when applicable
- The patient’s name
- The patient’s Blue Shield subscriber number
- The date of service
- A clear explanation of issue the provider believes to be incorrect, including supporting medical records, when applicable
- Proof of participation in the IPA’s provider appeal process and when the original determination was made by the IPA (such as a copy of the IPA Appeal denial letter and/or denial letter EOB).
Provider Appeals of Medicare Advantage Claims (cont’d.)

Contracted (cont’d.)

Timeframe for Submitting Appeal

Initial appeals must be submitted within 365 days, or the time specified in the provider’s contract, whichever is greater, of Blue Shield’s date of contest, denial, notice or payment.

If a contracted provider or capitated entity fails to submit an initial appeal within the required timeframes, the provider or capitated entity:

- Waives the right for any remedies to pursue the matter further
- May not initiate a demand for arbitration or other legal action against Blue Shield
- May not pursue additional payment from the member

In instances where the provider’s contract specifies timeframes that are greater than the timeframes specified in Blue Shield’s Provider Appeal Resolution process, the provider’s contract takes precedence.

Blue Shield will review the untimely submission of a provider appeal when the provider’s contract includes a good cause clause for the untimely submissions of provider appeals.

Resolution

Blue Shield will, within 60 days of receipt of the provider request for redetermination, review the appeal and respond to the physician or provider using the Provider Appeal Resolution letter or the Remittance advice with either additional payment or an explanation for upholding the original claim determination.

The provider must have a process in place to handle all contracted provider requests for redetermination, resolving them in a timely manner, and in accordance with contractual agreements following CMS regulations.

Non-Contracted

CMS requires Medicare Advantage Organizations (MAO) to apply the provider dispute resolution process for payment disputes between non-contracted and deemed providers. Non-contracted and deemed providers are defined as follows:

- A non-contracted provider is one that was not aware the patient was a private fee-for-service member at the time of service, e.g., an emergency situation.
- A deemed provider is one who was aware that the patient was a private fee-for-service member at the time of service, and therefore had the ability to view the plan’s terms and conditions of payment.

Note: The provider dispute resolution process for payment disputes between non-contracted and deemed providers does not include Part D claims.
Provider appeals of Medicare Advantage Claims (cont’d.)

Non-Contracted (cont’d.)

Provider disputes include any decisions where a non-contracted/deemed provider contends that the amount paid by the organization (MAO and/or delegated entity) for a covered service is less than the amount that would have been paid under original Medicare. The disputes may also include instances where there is a disagreement between a non-contracted/deemed provider and the organization about the plan and/or delegated entity’s decision to pay for a different service than that billed. An example would include down-coding.

A provider or supplier has the right to dispute a reimbursement decision made by a MAO Plan and/or delegated entity. The time frame for disputing a reimbursement issue to the MAO Plan and/or delegated entity is 125 days from the initial determination date.

The provider payment dispute process cannot be used to challenge denials by organizations that result in zero payment being made to the non-contracted provider. The payment dispute process may not be used to resolve payment disputes between contracted network providers and organizations covered by this process.

If the required information to process the dispute has not been submitted, Blue Shield will send a letter to the provider requesting the necessary documentation. If the additional documentation is not received within 14 calendar days from the date of request, Blue Shield will conduct a review based on the information that is available.

Blue Shield will resolve the dispute within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the dispute. In the event that the additional payment is warranted in favor of the provider and was due to an error by Blue Shield, interest will be included along with the additional payment.

In the event that the payment dispute is resolved not in the favor of the provider, the non-contracted appeals language directive noted below must be included on the determination.

Provider has the right to request a reconsideration of the denial of payment within 60 calendar days after the receipt of notice of initial determination/decision. Provider who wishes to submit an appeal must also submit a signed Waiver of Liability statement holding the member harmless regardless of the outcome of the appeal. Provider should include documentation such as a copy of the original claim, remittance notification showing the denial and any clinical records and other documentation that supports the provider’s argument for reimbursement.

After the MAO Plan and/or delegated entity makes its payment review determination (PRD) decision, if a deemed or non-contracted provider or supplier still disagrees with the pricing decision of a MAO Plan and/or delegated entity, a second level review may be requested in writing within 180 days of written notice from the MAO Plan and/or delegated entity of its payment review determination.

To appeal the provider organization and/or delegated entity’s decision upholding initial payment, the provider must submit a written request to:

Blue Shield of California
Medicare Provider Appeals Department
P.O. Box 272640
Chico, CA 95927
Section 5: Blue Shield Benefit Plans and Programs
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# Section 5: Blue Shield Benefit Plans and Programs

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Blue Shield Benefit Plans

Blue Shield offers a variety of benefit plans representing a cross section of financing and delivery systems to meet the various health care needs and budgets for subscribers of both group plans and individual plans.

This section gives a brief description of the following Blue Shield plans. More detailed plan information, including plan networks, can be found on blueshieldca.com/provider.

- HMO Plans
- PPO Plans
- Medicare Advantage Plans
- Point of Service (POS) Plans
- Federal Employee Program (FEP)
- Medicare Supplement Plans
- The BlueCard® Program
- Other Payors

Blue Shield HMO Plans

Blue Shield offers the Access+ HMO® Plan and Local Access+ HMO Plan to Small Business and Core Account groups. Point-of-service (POS) and SaveNet HMO plans are included in the Core HMO family of products. Blue Shield offers Trio HMO plans to Small Business, Core, and IFP (on-exchange and mirrored only).

Blue Shield Access+ HMO is Blue Shield’s commercial HMO plan, which includes a unique direct access feature called Access+ Specialist®, which allows a member to access a specialist within his or her assigned medical group or IPA.

Custom employer groups may choose not to offer this direct access feature. The member’s identification card will designate if the member has the Access+ direct access feature. An "A+" appearing next to the network name on the card indicates that the subscriber has the Access+ Specialist feature.
Blue Shield HMO Plans (cont’d.)

Access+ SpecialistSM Feature

Access+ HMO members with the Access+Specialist feature can self-refer directly to any primary care physician (PCP) or specialist (M.D. or D.O.) for a consultation, as long as that physician is in the same IPA/medical group as the member’s PCP.

The members simply present their ID card at the specialist’s office and pay their Access+ office visit copayment, which is generally higher than the standard office visit copayment.

After the consultation, if additional services or procedures are recommended, the specialist coordinates care with the member’s PCP and follows Blue Shield’s authorization process. If Blue Shield authorizes additional services/procedures, the HMO member may go back to the specialist for the authorized services and pay the usual office visit copayment.

An Access+Specialist visit does not include:

- Any services which are not covered or which are not medically necessary
- Services provided by a non-Access+ provider (such as podiatry and physical therapy), except for the X-ray and laboratory services described above
- Allergy testing
- Endoscopic procedures
- Any diagnostic imaging, including CT, MRI or bone density measurements
- Injectables, chemotherapy or other infusion drugs, other than vaccines and antibiotics
- Infertility services
- Emergency services
- Urgent services
- Inpatient services, or any services which result in a facility charge, except for routine X-ray and laboratory services
- Services for which the IPA/medical group routinely allows the member to self-refer without authorization from the primary care physician
- OB/GYN services by an obstetrician/gynecologist or family practice physician within the same IPA/medical group as the member’s PCP
Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Plans

Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans are open to all Medicare beneficiaries, including those under age 65 who are entitled to Medicare on the basis of Social Security disability benefits, who meet all of the applicable eligibility requirements for membership, have voluntarily elected to enroll in a Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan, have paid any premiums required for initial enrollment to be valid, and whose enrollment in a Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan, has been confirmed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans are offered to individual Medicare beneficiaries and to group Medicare beneficiaries retired from employer groups/ unions who have selected the product as an option.

To be eligible for enrollment in a Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan program, the member must have both Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B and live within the CMS-approved Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan service area. Patients diagnosed with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) prior to signing an enrollment application, who have ongoing dialysis, are not eligible to join Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan, unless they are already a Blue Shield commercial plan member and within their 30-month coordination period or were previously enrolled with another Medicare Advantage HMO that has subsequently withdrawn from their county. Once a kidney transplant has occurred and the individual no longer needs dialysis, he or she is eligible to enroll in Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan. All other pre-existing conditions are covered without a waiting period.

The Blue Shield 65 Plus plan provides comprehensive coordinated medical services to members on a prepaid basis through an established provider network. Members must choose a primary care physician (PCP) and have all care coordinated through this physician. The Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans are regulated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the same federal agency that administers Medicare. Please contact Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Member Services (877) 654-6500 (for Providers), (800) 776-4466 (for Members), if you have questions about benefit information, eligibility, claims, and/or billing.
Medicare Part D

The Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act (MMA) introduced the Medicare Advantage Program and the Prescription Drug Benefit. The prescription drug benefit, as well as an employer subsidy for qualified retiree health plans, is referred to as Medicare Part D. Coverage for the drug benefit is being provided by private prescription drug plans (PDPs) that offer drug-only coverage, or through Medicare Advantage plans that offer both prescription drug and health care coverage (known as Medicare Advantage – Prescriptions Drug Plans (MA-PD)).

Part D Eligibility

In general, an individual is eligible to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan (PDP) if:

1. The individual is entitled to Medicare Part A and/or enrolled in Part B, provided that he/she will be entitled to receive services under Medicare Part A and/or Part B as of the effective date of coverage under the plan; and

2. The individual permanently resides in the service area of a PDP.

Other eligibility requirements and exclusions include:

- An individual who is living abroad or is incarcerated is not eligible for Part D.
- For individuals whose Medicare entitlement determination is made retroactively, Part D eligibility begins with the month the individual receives the notice of the Medicare entitlement determination.
- A PDP sponsor may not deny enrollment to otherwise eligible individuals covered under an employee benefit plan. If the individual enrolls in a PDP and continues to be enrolled in his/her employers or spouse’s health benefits plan, then coordination of benefits (COB) rules will apply.
- A Part D eligible individual may not be enrolled in more than one Part D plan at the same time.

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Requirements and Training

Blue Shield has a comprehensive program in place to detect, prevent and control Part D Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (FWA) as part of the General Compliance Plan Requirements (42 C.F.R. § 423.504(b)(4)(vi)(H)).

The Medicare Part D FWA training is a requirement under CMS for anyone who works with Medicare Part D. Blue Shield’s Medicare Part D Compliance training is for contracted pharmacies to ensure these providers have a thorough understanding of federal and state regulations around Medicare Part D. Successful completion is required of anyone involved with the administration or delivery of the Part D benefit. The training focuses on how to detect, correct, and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse surrounding Medicare Part D. To access the online training, please go to http://www.blueshieldca.com/provider/about-this-site/announcements/medicare-compliance-training.sp.

A statement of attestation is required annually by all network pharmacies contracted with Blue Shield for the Medicare Prescription Drug Plans. The compliance statement of attestation indicates that the pharmacy staff completed the Medicare Part D Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Compliance training.
Medicare Part D (cont’d.)

Exclusion Lists

CMS prohibits any employee, provider, contractor, or subcontractor from performing any activity related to Medicare Part D or other federal programs if they are listed in the General Services Administration (GSA) database of excluded individuals/entities, located online at epls.gov or the Office of Inspector General’s (OIG) database of excluded individuals or entities, located at oig.hhs.gov under Exclusions.

CMS requires that all entities review the list for all employees and at least once a year thereafter to ensure that its employees, board members, officers, and first tier entities, downstream entities, or related entities that assist in the administration or delivery of Part D benefits are not included on such lists. If the first tier entities, downstream entities, or related entities are on such lists, the Sponsor’s policies shall require the immediate removal of such employees, board members, or first tier entities, downstream entities, or related entities from any work related directly or indirectly on all Federal health care programs and take appropriate corrective actions.

Medicare Part D Prescriber Preclusion List

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is eliminating the prescriber and provider enrollment requirement for Part C and Part D and instead is compiling a “Preclusion List” of prescribers, individuals, and entities that fall within either of the following categories: (a) are currently revoked from Medicare, are under an active reenrollment bar, and CMS determines that the underlying conduct that led to the revocation is detrimental to the best interests of the Medicare program; or (b) have engaged in behavior for which CMS could have revoked the prescriber, individual, or entity to the extent applicable if they had been enrolled in Medicare, and CMS determines that the underlying conduct that would have led to the revocation is detrimental to the best interests of the Medicare program. CMS will make the Preclusion List available to Part D prescription drug plans and Medicare Advantage plans. Plans are required to deny payment for claims submitted by, or associated with, prescriptions written by prescribers and providers on the list. Full enforcement of the Part C and D prescriber exclusion list requirement will begin on January 1, 2019.

Additionally, the added provisions require organizations offering Part D to cover a three-month provisional supply of the drug and provide beneficiaries with individualized written notice before denying a Part D claim or beneficiary request for reimbursement on the basis of a prescriber’s being neither enrolled in an approved status nor validly opted out. The three-month provisional supply is intended to give the prescriber time to enroll in Medicare or opt-out and ensure beneficiary access to prescribed medication.
Medicare Part D (cont’d.)

Medication Therapy Management Program (MTMP)

Blue Shield provides a Medication Therapy Management Program (MTMP) for its Medicare Part D members to assist them in managing their chronic conditions. The Blue Shield MTMP is for members meeting all of the following criteria:

- Have two of the following conditions:
  - Respiratory Disease
  - Chronic Heart Failure (CHF)
  - Diabetes
  - Dyslipidemia
  - Hypertension
  - Osteoporosis
- Receive seven or more different covered Part D prescriptions monthly
- Likely to incur an annual cost threshold established by CMS each calendar year for Medicare covered prescriptions

Members meeting these criteria will be automatically enrolled in the MTMP at no additional cost relating to the program and they may opt-out if they desire.

Members have the option to speak with a designated pharmacist to discuss their medication therapy issues. The pharmacist consultations are designed to improve member health while controlling out-of-pocket costs and may include topics such as:

- Drug adverse reactions
- Drug side-effects
- Drug-drug interactions
- Drug-disease interactions
- Medication non-compliance and non-adherence
- Duplicate therapy
- Dosing that can be consolidated
- Non-prescription drug use

A written summary of the consultation with relevant assessments and recommendations will be provided to the member. The member’s prescribing physician or primary care physician may be contacted by the pharmacist to coordinate care or recommend therapy changes when necessary.
Blue Shield PPO Plans

Under a Blue Shield PPO plan, members may self-refer to any provider. The highest benefits level (i.e., lowest out-of-pocket costs) will be paid when a Blue Shield Preferred Provider is used.

A member’s copayments and deductible amounts for covered services will vary depending on whether he or she selects a preferred hospital provider or a non-network hospital provider. Therefore, there is a financial incentive for members to use Blue Shield preferred hospital providers.

If a member chooses to go to a non-network hospital provider, Blue Shield’s payment for a service by that non-network hospital provider may be substantially less than the amount billed. The member is responsible for the difference between the amount Blue Shield pays and the amount billed by non-network hospital provider. It is therefore to the member’s advantage to obtain medical and hospital services from preferred hospital providers.

Our PPO Savings Plans (PSP) are PPO plans with a choice of deductibles, designed to allow qualified individuals to establish a tax advantaged account under federal guidelines. Most services provided by a preferred hospital provider require a percentage copayment.

All PSP plans function very differently than regular PPO plans. All benefits (including pharmacy) must accrue to the deductible. The only benefits that can be paid by Blue Shield prior to the deductible being met is preventive care. If a member chooses to go to a non-network hospital provider, Blue Shield’s payment for a service by that non-network hospital provider may be substantially less than the amount billed. The member is responsible for the difference between the amount Blue Shield pays and the amount billed by non-network hospital provider. It is therefore to the member’s advantage to obtain medical and hospital services from preferred hospital providers.
Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) (Medicare Advantage)

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) is Blue Shield’s Medicare Advantage-Prescription Drug (MA-PD) plans. These plans are open to all Medicare beneficiaries, including those under age 65 who are entitled to Medicare on the basis of Social Security disability benefits, who meet all of the applicable eligibility requirements for membership, have voluntarily elected to enroll in Blue Shield Medicare (PPO), have paid any premiums required for initial enrollment to be valid, and whose enrollment in Blue Shield Medicare (PPO), has been confirmed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) is offered to individual Medicare beneficiaries and to group Medicare beneficiaries retired from employer groups/ unions who have selected the product as an option.

To be eligible for enrollment in the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) program, the member must have both Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B and live within the CMS-approved Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) service area. Patients diagnosed with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) prior to signing an enrollment application, who have ongoing dialysis, are not eligible to join Blue Shield Medicare (PPO), unless they are already a Blue Shield commercial plan member and within their 30-month coordination period or were previously enrolled with another Medicare Advantage PPO that has subsequently withdrawn from their county. Once a kidney transplant has occurred and the individual no longer needs dialysis, he or she is eligible to enroll in Blue Shield Medicare (PPO). All other pre-existing conditions are covered without a waiting period.

The Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan members may self-refer to any provider. The highest benefits level (i.e., lowest out-of-pocket costs) will be paid when a Blue Shield Medicare Preferred Provider is used. A member’s copayments and deductible amounts for covered services will vary depending on whether he or she selects a preferred hospital provider or a non-network hospital provider. Therefore, there is a financial incentive for members to use Blue Shield Medicare preferred hospital providers.

The Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan is regulated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the same federal agency that administers Medicare. Please contact Blue Shield Medicare Member Services (877) 654-6500 (for Providers), (800) 776-4466 (for Members), if you have questions about benefit information, eligibility, claims, and/or billing.

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Service Area

The definition of a service area, as described in the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Evidence of Coverage (EOC), is the geographic area approved by the CMS in which a person must permanently reside to be able to become or remain a member of a Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan. Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) has one service area within the state. The specific service area in which the member permanently resides determines the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan(s) in which the member may enroll. Members who temporarily move outside of the service area (as defined by CMS as six months or less) are eligible to receive emergency care and urgently needed services outside the service area.

Individual Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Service Area

Alameda
Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) (Medicare Advantage) (cont’d.)

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Benefits

Premiums and Copayments or Coinsurance

Medicare Premiums

All Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) members (individual and group) must continue paying their Medicare Part B premium. The Medicare Part B premium is either deducted from their monthly Social Security or Railroad Retirement Board annuity check, or is paid directly to Medicare by the member or someone on his/her behalf (i.e., the Medi-Cal program).

The Affordable Care Act requires Part D enrollees with higher income levels to pay a monthly adjustment amount, the Part D Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA). This IRMAA applies to all Medicare beneficiaries, both group and individual, who fall into higher income levels. The Part D IRMAA is paid directly to the government and, like the Part B premium, may be deducted from the monthly Social Security or Railroad Retirement Board annuity check or paid directly to Medicare by the member or someone on his/her behalf.

Failure to pay either the Medicare Part B premium or Part D IRMAA will result in the member being involuntarily disenrolled from Blue Shield’s Medicare Advantage plan, both individual and group.

Plan Premiums

For the 2020 contract year, the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual plans have a monthly plan premium. Please refer to the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual Summary of Benefits for additional plan premium information.

For the 2020 contract year, the monthly plan premium for Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) group plans are determined through an actuarial-based pricing process and model which Underwriting uses to develop the rates. Plan premiums vary by employer group.

Copayments or Coinsurance

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) members must pay a copayment or coinsurance for certain services. Please refer to the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual or group Summary of Benefits for additional copayment or coinsurance information.

Pharmacy Copayments or Coinsurance

Copayment or coinsurance amounts vary by the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual or group plan, as well as by the tier placement of the covered medication and whether the member obtains the medications from a network pharmacy with preferred cost-sharing, an out-of-network pharmacy, a network pharmacy with standard cost-sharing, or the mail service pharmacy.
Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) (Medicare Advantage) (cont’d.)

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Benefits (cont’d.)

Inpatient Benefits

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual and group plans provide benefits for treatment in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and extend the basic benefits provided by Medicare. Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual and group plans provide coverage according to Medicare guidelines.

In addition to hospital care, Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual and group members who meet Medicare guidelines for skilled nursing facility care have coverage for SNF benefits. Please refer to the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Summary of Benefits for the number of days covered for care provided by a skilled nursing facility.

Outpatient Benefits

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual and group plans cover all outpatient medical services according to Medicare guidelines. Outpatient medical services are provided and paid for the diagnosis or treatment of illness and injury, when they are considered to be reasonable and medically necessary. Please refer to the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Summary of Benefits (sent separately to IPA/medical groups) for a list of covered outpatient services.

Outpatient Prescription Drugs

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual and group plans provide coverage for plan-approved generic and brand name prescription medications included in the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Drug Formulary. The formulary may vary by plan, by plan service area, or by employer group. The formulary for group plan members includes some drugs that are “excluded” drugs per CMS. The employer groups may choose to cover some of these excluded drugs as part of their additional supplemental coverage. Some formulary medications may require prior authorization or step therapy. The Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) utilization management criteria can be found within the plan drug search tools located at blueshieldca.com/medFormulary2020. Prescriptions from non-plan providers are covered only if issued in conjunction with covered emergency services and filled through a network pharmacy.

The formulary contains medications approved by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) which are subject to a rigorous clinical review by clinical pharmacists and physicians to evaluate comparative safety, comparative efficacy, likelihood of clinical impact, cost-effectiveness when safety and efficacy are similar. The Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) Committee determines formulary decisions and medication coverage policies consistent with the currently accepted medical evidence and standards. The Blue Shield P&T Committee has oversight responsibility for pharmaceutical utilization management programs, drug utilization review programs, and other drug-related matters impacting patient care. The voting members of the P&T Committee include actively participating network physicians and clinical pharmacists who are not employees of Blue Shield. The P&T Committee determines formulary status and/or medication coverage policies for drugs covered in the prescription benefit on at least a quarterly basis.
Section 5: Blue Shield Benefit Plans and Programs

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) (Medicare Advantage) (cont’d.)

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Benefits (cont’d.)

Outpatient Prescription Drugs (cont’d.)

In general, outpatient prescription drugs are covered under Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) when they are:

- Included in the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Drug Formulary. (Blue Shield may periodically add, remove and/or make changes to coverage limitations on certain drugs, or alter the member price of a drug. If Blue Shield implements a formulary change that limits member ability to fill a prescription, Blue Shield will notify affected enrollees in advance of the change.)
- Prescribed by a provider (a doctor, dentist or other prescriber) who either accepts Medicare or has filed documentation with CMS showing that he or she is qualified to write prescriptions.
- Filled at a Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) network pharmacy.
- Used for a medically accepted indication. A “medically accepted indication” is a use of the drug that is either approved by the Food and Drug Administration or supported by the following CMS-approved references: the American Hospital Formulary Service Drug Information; the DRUGDEX Information System; the USPDI; and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network and Clinical Pharmacology, or their successors.

Network Retail Pharmacy – A pharmacy where members can get their prescription drug benefits. They are termed “network pharmacies” because they contract with our plan. In most cases, member prescriptions are covered only if they are filled at one of our network pharmacies.

Standard Cost-Sharing – Standard cost-sharing is cost-sharing other than preferred cost-sharing offered at a network pharmacy.

Preferred Cost-Sharing – Preferred cost-sharing means lower cost-sharing for certain covered Part D drugs at certain network pharmacies.

Out-of-Network Pharmacy – A pharmacy that does not have a contract with our plan to coordinate or provide covered drugs to members of our plan. Most drugs that members get from out-of-network pharmacies are not covered by our plan unless certain conditions apply.

Non-Formulary Outpatient Prescription Drugs

If a drug is not listed in the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual or group drug formulary, the prescriber or member may contact Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Member Services to confirm the drug’s coverage status.

If Member Services confirms that the drug is not part of the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual or group drug formulary and not covered, the member has two options:

- The member can ask the prescriber to prescribe a different drug, one that is part of the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual or group drug formulary.
- The member can request that Blue Shield make a Formulary Exception (a type of Coverage Determination) to cover the specific drug.

If a member recently joined Blue Shield and is taking a drug not listed in the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Drug Formulary at the time he/she joined, the member may be eligible to obtain a temporary supply. For more information, please refer to the next section, which reviews the rules that govern dispensing temporary supplies of a non-formulary drug.
Section 5: Blue Shield Benefit Plans and Programs

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) (Medicare Advantage) (cont’d.)

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Benefits (cont’d.)

Non-Formulary Outpatient Prescription Drugs (cont’d.)

Transition Policy

New Blue Shield members may be taking drugs not listed in the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual or group drug formulary, or the drug(s) may be subject to certain restrictions, such as prior authorization or step therapy. Members are encouraged to talk to their doctors to decide if they should switch to an appropriate drug in the plan formulary or request a Formulary Exception (a type of Coverage Determination) in order to obtain coverage for the drug. While these new members may discuss the appropriate course of action with their doctors, Blue Shield may also cover the non-formulary drug or drug with a coverage restriction in certain cases during the first 90 days of new membership.

For each of the drugs not listed in the formulary or that have coverage restrictions or limits, Blue Shield will cover a temporary 30-day supply (unless the prescription is written for fewer days) when the new member goes to a Network Pharmacy (and the drug is otherwise a “Part D drug”). After the first 30-day supply, Blue Shield will not pay for these drugs, even if the new member has been enrolled for less than 90 days.

If a member is a resident of a long-term-care facility (LTC) such as a nursing home, Blue Shield will cover supplies of Part D drugs in increments of 14 days or less for a temporary 31-day transition supply (unless the prescription is written for fewer days) during the first 90 days a new member is enrolled in our Plan beginning on the member’s effective date of coverage. A transition supply notice will be sent to the member within 3 business days of the first incremental transition fill. If the LTC resident has been enrolled in our Plan for more than 90 days and needs a non-formulary drug or a drug that is subject to other restrictions, such as step therapy or dosage limits, Blue Shield will cover a temporary 31-day emergency supply of that drug (unless the prescription is for fewer days) while the new member pursues a formulary exception. For members being admitted to or discharged from a LTC facility, early refill edits are not used to limit appropriate and necessary access to the formulary, and such enrollees are allowed to access a refill upon admission or discharge.

Prescribers should submit persuasive evidence in the form of studies, records, or documents to support the existence of the situations listed above. To request prior authorization, please contact:

Blue Shield of California
Pharmacy Services
601 12th Street, 21st Floor
Oakland, California 94607

Pharmacy Services is available by phone at (800) 535-9481, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. PST, excluding holidays. Faxed requests may be sent to (888) 697-8122 at any time or requests may be submitted electronically through the electronic health record, if available. Prescribers who have questions regarding formulary or non-formulary drugs and/or need a copy of the formulary can call the number above or go to blueshieldca.com and navigate to the Provider Connection or Pharmacy page.

Once all required supporting information is received, a coverage decision based upon medical necessity is provided within 24 hours for an expedited review and 72 hours for standard requests.
Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) (Medicare Advantage) *(cont’d.)*

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Benefits *(cont’d.)*

**Vision Services**

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual and group plans cover vision services that meet Medicare guidelines.

In addition to Medicare-covered services, some Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual and group plans cover routine (non-Medicare covered) eye examinations/screenings. For individual plans, services are provided through EyeMed Vision Care. For group plans, services are provided through MES. Refer to the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Summary of Benefits for benefit guidelines.

**Hearing Services**

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual and group plans cover hearing exams in accordance to Medicare guidelines. Please refer to the member’s Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Summary of Benefits for additional information. Hearing aid examinations and fittings are provided by EPIC Hearing Healthcare.

**Optional Buy-Up Services (Group Members Only)**

Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) also offers optional buy-up benefits for hearing, vision, podiatry, chiropractic, and acupuncture that offer routine coverage beyond what is covered by Medicare. In addition, SilverSneakers Fitness is available. These benefits are not part of the standard plan offering and may be available at an additional cost when selected by the employer group/union. If purchased, they must be made available to all Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) GMAPD members within that employer group/union. (There are also optional buy-up dental plans being offered to Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) individual plan members.)
Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) (Medicare Advantage) *(cont’d.)*

Exclusions to Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Benefits

**General Benefit Exclusions**

Blue Shield files benefits with CMS on an annual basis. Coverage for the following benefits, services, and conditions are **excluded** from coverage under the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Plan, effective January 1, 2020:

- Services considered not reasonable and necessary, according to the standards of Original Medicare, unless these services are listed by our plan as covered services.
- Experimental medical and surgical procedures, equipment and medications, unless covered by Original Medicare or under a Medicare-approved clinical research study or by our plan. Experimental procedures and items are those items and procedures determined by our plan and Original Medicare to not be generally accepted by the medical community.
- Private room in a hospital, except when it is considered medically necessary.
- Private duty nurses.
- Personal items in a member’s hospital room or a skilled nursing facility room, such as a telephone or a television.
- Full-time nursing care in the member’s home.
- Custodial care, unless it is provided with covered skilled nursing care and/or skilled rehabilitation services. Custodial care, or non-skilled care, is care that helps members with activities of daily living, such as bathing or dressing.
- Homemaker services include basic household assistance, including light housekeeping or light meal preparation.
- Fees charged by the member’s immediate relatives or members of their household.
- Elective or voluntary enhancement procedures or services (including weight loss, hair growth, sexual performance, athletic performance, cosmetic purposes, anti-aging and mental performance), except when medically necessary.
- Cosmetic surgery or procedures, unless because of an accidental injury or to improve a malformed part of the body. However, all stages of reconstruction are covered for a breast after a mastectomy, as well as for the unaffected breast to produce a symmetrical appearance.
- Routine chiropractic care, other than manual manipulation of the spine consistent with Medicare coverage guidelines, unless specifically indicated as covered by the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan in which the member is enrolled.
- Unless the member has enrolled in the optional supplemental dental PPO benefit, routine dental care, such as cleanings, fillings or dentures, unless specifically indicated as covered by the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan in which the member is enrolled. Non-routine dental care received at a hospital may be covered.
Exclusions to Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Benefits (cont’d.)

General Benefit Exclusions (cont’d.)

- Routine foot care, except for the limited coverage provided according to Medicare guidelines or as specifically indicated as covered by the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan in which the member is enrolled.
- Orthopedic shoes unless the shoes are part of a leg brace and are included in the cost of the brace, or the shoes are for a person with diabetic foot disease.
- Supportive devices for the feet, except for orthopedic or therapeutic shoes for people with diabetic foot disease.
- Routine hearing exams, hearing aids, or exams to fit hearing aids, unless specifically indicated as covered by the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan in which the member is enrolled.
- Eyeglasses, routine eye examinations, radial keratotomy, LASIK surgery, vision therapy, and low vision aids unless specifically indicated as covered by the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan in which the member is enrolled.
- Reversal of sterilization procedures, sex change operations, and non-prescription contraceptive supplies.
- Acupuncture, unless specifically indicated as covered by the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) plan in which the member is enrolled.
- Naturopath services (uses natural or alternative treatments).
- Services provided to veterans in Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities. However, when emergency services are received at a VA hospital and the VA cost-sharing is more than the cost-sharing under our plan, Blue Shield will reimburse veterans for the difference. Members are still responsible for our cost-sharing amounts.
- Immunizations for foreign travel purposes.

The plan will not cover the excluded services listed above. Even if members receive the services at an emergency facility, the excluded services are still not covered.
Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) (Medicare Advantage) (cont’d.)

Exclusions to Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) Benefits (cont’d.)

Prescription Drug Benefit Exclusions

Blue Shield files benefits with CMS on an annual basis. The following exclusions apply to the Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) prescription drug benefits:

- Part D drug coverage cannot cover a drug that would be covered under Medicare Part A or Part B.
- Drugs purchased outside the United States and its territories are not covered.
- Off-label use of prescription drugs is usually not covered. “Off-label use” is any use of the drug other than those indicated on a drug’s label as approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Generally, coverage for “off-label use” is allowed only when the use is supported by the following CMS-approved references: the American Hospital Formulary Service Drug Information, the DRUGDEX Information System, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network and Clinical Pharmacology, and LexiDrug or their successors. If the use is not supported by one of these reference sources, then our plan cannot cover its “off-label use.”
- By law, the following categories of drugs are not covered by Medicare drug plans:
  - Non-prescription drugs (also called over-the-counter drugs)
  - Drugs when used to promote fertility
  - Drugs when used for the relief of cough or cold symptoms
  - Drugs when used for cosmetic purposes or to promote hair growth
  - Prescription vitamins and mineral products, except prenatal vitamins and fluoride preparations
  - Drugs when used for the treatment of sexual or erectile dysfunction (ED).
  - Drugs that are prescribed for medically-accepted indications other than sexual or erectile dysfunction (such as pulmonary hypertension) are eligible for Part D coverage.
  - Drugs when used for treatment of anorexia, weight loss, or weight gain
  - Outpatient drugs for which the manufacturer seeks to require that associated tests or monitoring services be purchased exclusively from the manufacturer as a condition of sale
National Medicare Coverage Determinations

A National Coverage Determination (NCD) is a national policy determination made by CMS regarding the coverage status of a particular service under Medicare. A NCD does not include a determination of what code, if any, is assigned to a service or a determination about the payment amount for the service.

National Medicare Coverage Determinations that arise between contract years allow Medicare Advantage Organizations and contracted providers to bill Medicare on a fee-for-service basis for newly covered items that exceed the significant cost criterion.

When the significant cost criterion is not met:

- The MAO is required to provide coverage for the NCD or legislative change in benefits and assume risk for the costs of that service or benefit as of the effective date of the NCD or as of the date specified in the legislation/regulation.

When the significant cost criterion is met:

- The MAO is not required to assume risk for the costs of that service or benefit until the contract year for which payments are appropriately adjusted to take into account the significant cost of the service or benefit. However, a plan must pay for the following:
  - Diagnostic services related to the NCD item, service, or legislative change in benefits and most follow-up services related to the NCD item, service, or legislative change (42 CFR § 422.109(c)(2)(i),(ii));
  - NCD items, services, or legislative change in benefits that are already included in the plan’s benefit package either as Original Medicare benefits or supplemental benefits.

Billing to Medicare must include a notice that the item being billed involves a new coverage issue and that the person or organization submitting the bill is requesting fee-for-service reimbursement.

For select medications, Blue Shield Medicare PPO Medication Policies and Step Therapy requirements may also apply. The Blue Shield Medicare (PPO) benefit for medication coverage under the benefit can be found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Authorizations, Clinical policies and guidelines, and then Medication Policy.

Blue Shield Point-of-Service (POS) Plans

The POS plans combine both HMO and PPO service delivery features. At the time services are needed, or at the point of service, the member may choose to receive benefits under the HMO network or PPO network option. Under the latter option, the member may receive covered services from either a Blue Shield preferred hospital provider or non-network hospital provider. The choice determines the member’s level of financial responsibility.

Point-of-Service (POS) Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>How Care is Accessed</th>
<th>Financial Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HMO Network</td>
<td>Member’s care is coordinated through the primary care physician who makes any necessary specialist referrals.</td>
<td>Physician and hospital services: Applicable HMO office visits and other copayments apply. No deductible unless the plan has a facility deductible which would be applied for applicable inpatient admissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPO In-network</td>
<td>Member self-refers to a Blue Shield Preferred Provider.</td>
<td>Applicable PPO copayment and deductible applies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Network PPO (non-preferred or non-participating)</td>
<td>Member self-refers to a non-network provider.</td>
<td>Applicable PPO copayment and deductible applies. Member may be balance-billed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon enrollment in the POS Plan, all members must select a primary care physician (PCP). Services rendered by the PCP or specialist and facility care authorized by the PCP are deemed to be provided under the HMO option. Facility claims for such HMO options should be submitted on a UB 04 (or successor) form.

Services provided on a “self-referred” basis – either by a physician who is not the member's PCP, by a specialist, or other provider without a referral from the member’s PCP – will be paid according to the provider’s agreement with Blue Shield.

When hospital services are provided under the PPO option, the facility should use the UB 04 (or successor) form for submitting a claim, mark it “self-referred” and send it to the appropriate Service Center. Blue Shield physicians should admit patients to a select or preferred hospital and follow the PPO pre-admission guidelines (refer to Section 3: Medical Care Solutions).
Federal Employee Program (FEP)

About the BlueCross and BlueShield Service Benefit Plan

The local BlueCross and BlueShield Plans underwrite and administer the BlueCross and BlueShield Service Benefit Plan, the largest privately underwritten health insurance contract under the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. Sixty-four percent of all federal employees and retirees who receive their health care benefits through the government’s FEHB Program are members of the Service Benefit Plan.

Federal Employee Program (FEP) Preferred Providers include Blue Shield’s Preferred Physicians and Blue Cross’ Preferred Hospitals. FEP members may select the FEP Blue Focus, Basic Option or Standard Option benefit level. Under the Standard Option, members can seek care from any covered provider they want, however, in some cases, they must get advance approval of care from Blue Shield. FEP Blue Focus Members and Basic Option Member’s must seek care from in network providers to be covered for any services. The Blue Cross Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan Brochure is located at FEPBlue.org as well as medical and medication policies. Important FEP phone numbers are as follows:

- Blue Shield of California FEP Customer Service (800) 824-8839.
- Blue Shield of California FEP Integrated Care Management (800) 995-2800
- Blue Shield of California FEP Utilization Management and Prior Authorization (800) 633-4581
- Anthem Blue Cross FEP Customer Service (800) 322-7319

Under both the FEP Blue Focus and Basic Option plans, members must use Preferred providers in order to receive benefits, except under the following special circumstances. In addition, certain types of care must be approved in advance.

- Medical emergency or accidental injury care in a hospital emergency room and related ambulance transport as described in Section 5(d) Emergency services and accidents
- Professional care provided at preferred facilities by non-preferred radiologists, anesthesiologists, certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), pathologists, emergency room physicians, and assistant surgeons
- Laboratory and pathology services, X-rays and diagnostic tests billed by non-preferred laboratories, radiologists and outpatient facilities
- Services of assistant surgeons
- Special provider access situations, other than those described above. We encourage the member to contact Blue Shield of California for more information in these types of situations before they receive services from a non-preferred provider.
- Care received outside the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Unless otherwise noted above, when services of non-preferred providers are covered in a special exception, benefits will be provided based on the plan allowance. Members are responsible for the applicable coinsurance or copayment and may be responsible for any difference between Blue Shield’s allowance and the billed amount.

Note: Please refer to Section 3 of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan Contract Brochure for more information on special circumstances.
Precertification for Inpatient Hospital Admissions

Preferred providers are responsible for obtaining precertification for all inpatient admissions to preferred hospitals. Precertification requires notification prior to scheduled admissions or within two business days after an emergency admission, even if the member has been discharged from the hospital within those 2 days. The member will be subject to the $500 benefit reduction if admitted to a preferred hospital and precertification is not obtained. The member is ultimately responsible for ensuring that precertification has been completed. If the precertification is not obtained, the member’s inpatient hospital benefit for covered services will be reduced by $500. (For specific rules, please refer to Section 3 the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan Contract Brochure located at FEPBlue.org).

Precertification is not needed for a maternity admission for a routine delivery. However, if the mother’s medical condition requires her to stay more than 48 hours after a vaginal delivery or 96 hours after a cesarean section, the physician or the hospital must contact Blue Shield for precertification of additional days. Further, if the baby stays after the mother is discharged, then the physician or the hospital must contact Blue Shield for precertification of additional days for the baby.

Note: When a newborn requires definitive treatment during or after the mother’s confinement, the newborn is considered a patient in his or her own right. If the newborn is eligible for coverage, regular medical or surgical benefits apply rather than maternity benefits.

Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Behavioral Health Services for FEP

It is important to follow these policies to help ensure your patient’s needs for mental health services are met efficiently. Please use the following information to request assistance:

- For any services that are to be rendered in a residential treatment center (RTC), please call (800) 995-2800 before services are rendered. Services in a RTC are a covered benefit, when medically necessary, for members who are enrolled and actively participating in the care management program at Blue Shield. A case manager will be able to assist you and the member to develop a plan that meets the member’s needs.

- For Behavioral Health Inpatient Hospitalizations call (800) 633-4581. If the admission is emergent due to a condition that puts the member’s life in danger or could cause serious damage to bodily function, the member, the member’s representative, the physician, or the hospital must telephone us within two business days following the day of the emergency admission, even if the member has been discharged from the hospital. If we are not telephoned within two business days, a $500 penalty may apply.

No prior authorization is required for outpatient professional services, including individual or group therapy, outpatient partial hospitalizations, intensive outpatient programs, office and home visits for FEP PPO members. For questions regarding coverage, please call FEP Customer Services at (800) 824-8839. For questions regarding prior authorization, call the FEP Prior Authorization Department at (800) 633-4581.
Federal Employee Program (FEP) \( (cont’d.) \)

**Required Prior Authorization**

Members must obtain prior approval for these services under both the Standard and Basic Option. Precertification is also required if the service or procedure requires an inpatient hospital admission. Contact Blue Shield at the prior authorization number (800) 633-4581 before receiving these types of services. Find more information about the services below in the BCBSA Service Benefit Plan (SBP) Brochure at [https://www.fepblue.org/benefit-plans/benefit-plans-brochures-and-forms](https://www.fepblue.org/benefit-plans/benefit-plans-brochures-and-forms).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior Approval is required for:</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outpatient sleep studies performed outside the home</td>
<td>Prior approval is required for sleep studies performed in any other location that is not the member’s home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied behavior analysis (ABA)</td>
<td>Prior approval is required for ABA and all related services, including assessments, evaluations, and treatments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender reassignment surgery</td>
<td>Prior to surgical treatment of gender dysphoria, the provider must submit a treatment plan including all surgeries planned and the estimated date each will be performed. A new prior approval must be obtained if the treatment plan is approved and is later modified. Modification can be to the type of treatment, date, time or location of the service/surgery to be provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| BRCA testing and testing for large genomic rearrangements in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes | Prior approval is required for BRCA testing and testing for large genomic rearrangements in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes whether performed for preventive or diagnostic reasons.  
*Note:* Necessary medical evidence for BRCA related genetic testing includes the results of genetic counseling. Genetic counseling and evaluation services are required before preventive BRCA testing is performed. |
| Surgical services | Morbid Obesity- See the Blue Cross Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan Brochure for requirements.  
Surgical correction of congenital anomalies (see definition in the Service Benefit Plan Booklet); and oral maxillofacial surgery needed to correct accidental injuries to jaws, cheeks, lips, tongue, roof and floor of mouth (see definition in the Service Benefit Plan Brochure).  
Orthognathic surgery procedures, bone grafts, osteotomies and surgical management of the temporomandibular joint (TMJ).  
Breast reduction or augmentation not related to treatment of cancer.  
Reconstructive surgery for conditions other than breast cancer.  
Orthopedic procedures: hip, knee, ankle, spine, shoulder and all orthopedic procedures using computer-assisted musculoskeletal surgical navigation.  
Rhinoplasty, Septoplasty and Varicose vein treatment.  
Separate Inpatient (IP) Authorization is needed for all IP admissions. |
| Hospice care | Prior approval is required for home hospice, continuous home hospice, or inpatient hospice care services. Blue Shield will advise you which home hospice care agencies we have approved. Please contact FEP Care Management at (800) 995-2800. |
### Prior Approval is required for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transplants – Prior approval is required for both the procedure and the facility</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior Approval is required for all transplants, except cornea and kidney. Covered Organ/tissue Transplants - See the list of covered transplant services in the Blue Cross Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan Brochure. If you travel to a Blue Distinction Center for Transplants, prior approval is also required for travel benefits. The organ transplant procedures must be performed in a facility with a Medicare-Approved Transplant Program. For Medicare’s approved programs, go to <a href="https://qcor.cms.gov/main.jsp">https://qcor.cms.gov/main.jsp</a>. If Medicare does not offer an approved program for a certain type of organ transplant procedure, this requirement does not apply, and you may use any covered facility that performs the procedure. <em>Note:</em> For the purposes of the blood or marrow stem cell clinical trial transplants covered under this Plan, a clinical trial is a research study whose protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the FACT-accredited facility, Blue Distinction Center for Transplants, or Cancer Research Facility where the procedure is to be performed. Clinical trials for certain blood or marrow stem cell transplants – See the list of conditions covered only in clinical trials in the Blue Cross Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan Brochure. All members (including those who have Medicare Part A or another group health insurance policy as their primary payor) must contact Blue Shield at the customer service telephone number listed on the back of their ID card before obtaining services.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

| Prescription drugs and supplies | Contact CVS Caremark, our Pharmacy Program administrator, at (800) 624-5060 (TTY: 800-624-5077 for the hearing impaired) or visit the [FEP CareMark website at](https://www.caremark.com/wps/portal/WEBSUPPORT_FAQS?cms=CMS-PWCM-2034779) to request prior approval, or to obtain a list of drugs and supplies that require prior approval. *Note:* Updates to the list of drugs and supplies requiring prior approval are made periodically during the year. New drugs and supplies may be added to the list and prior approval criteria may change. |

| Mail Order Prescription Drug Program | Standard Option members may use our Mail Service Prescription Drug Program to fill their prescriptions. Basic Option members with primary Medicare Part B coverage also may use this program once prior approval is obtained. |

| Medical foods covered under the pharmacy benefit | Contact CVS Caremark, our Pharmacy Program administrator, at (800) 624-5060 (TTY: 800-624-5077 for the hearing impaired) to request prior approval. |

| Specialty DME | Specialty hospital beds, deluxe wheelchairs, power wheelchairs and mobility devices including scooters and related supplies. |

| Gene Therapy and Cellular Immunotherapy | Including Car-T and T-cell receptor therapy. |

| Air Ambulance Transport (Non-Emergent) | Air ambulance transport related to immediate care of a medical emergency or accidental injury does not require prior approval. |
### Prior Approval is required for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outpatient Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT)</strong></td>
<td>Prior approval is required for all outpatient IMRT services except IMRT related to the treatment of head, neck, breast, prostate or anal cancer. Brain cancer is not considered a form of head or neck cancer; therefore, prior approval is required for IMRT treatment of brain cancer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rehabilitation Services</strong></td>
<td>Cardiac Rehab and Pulmonary Rehab.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Devices</strong></td>
<td>Cochlear implants and external prosthetic devices, including microprocessor-controlled limb prosthesis and electronically and externally powered prosthesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outpatient Residential Treatment Center Care</strong></td>
<td>For any condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High tech Radiology</strong></td>
<td>MRI, CT and PET scans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* High technology radiology related to immediate care of a medical emergency or accidental injury does not require prior approval.
Federal Employee Program (FEP) (cont’d.)

Integrated Care Management Program for FEP

Nurses who are licensed and familiar with California resources will be assisting your patients with obtaining the resources they require to maintain their optimum health. The referral phone number is (800) 995-2800.

Our Integrated Care Management program offers a systematic application of processes and shared information to optimize the design and coordination of benefits and care for members identified with acute or complex conditions. Through comprehensive, high-touch, coordinated care management delivered in partnership with providers, clients, and members, the program promotes improved health outcomes, quality of life, and member satisfaction.

Conditions managed through our Integrated Care Management Program include:

- **Acute Catastrophic** – Includes members with immediate needs relating to an acute episode of care for conditions such as stroke, septicemia, spinal cord injury, trauma, amputation, open wounds, newly diagnosed cancer, or complications from surgeries characterized by readmission to the hospital.

- **Disease Management** – Blue Shield provides disease management services to our members identified with chronic medical conditions, such as; Asthma, Diabetes, CHF, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Coronary Artery Disease (CAD). Chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes, are the leading causes of death in California and are among the most common, costly and often preventable of health problems. Disease management is an approach to reach members with chronic conditions and provide them with the necessary tools to minimize the impact of their condition.

- **Post-neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)/Pediatrics** – Focuses on premature or medically complex neonates being discharged home from the hospital after birth, as well as pediatric members with special needs.

- **Behavioral Health** – Assists members with Mental Health and Chemical Dependency diagnosis. Participates in discharge planning for all inpatient psychiatric and substance abuse admissions, including detoxification.

- **Oncology** – Focuses on members with cancer diagnoses to manage them through the health care continuum.

- **Palliative Care** – Provides a care management option for patients that includes symptom control in addition to curative therapy. A combination of palliative care while curative care is ongoing has been shown to improve quality of life, reduce inpatient stays, increase choice of hospice and the results have been demonstrated in both a care delivery locus and in a health plan setting. The intent of the program is to permit the use of palliative care, for severe chronic conditions one year in advance of the patient’s likely end of life.
Federal Employee Program (FEP) *(cont’d.)*

**Transitions of Care Program for FEP**

Blue Shield’s Transitions of Care program focuses on members and caregivers who need guidance on the transition to and from hospital and home. Unplanned readmissions are prevented by completing a safety risk assessment with the member, discussing follow-up plans, medication reconciliation, and facilitating adherence to the prescribed treatment plan. Length of hospital stay is decreased by preparing member for hospital stay and development of a discharge plan. The referral phone number is (800) 995-2800.

The Transitions of Care program has four primary components:

- A telephone call to the member by a Transitions of Care Nurse (TCN) to discuss the surgery/acute condition, what to expect, what to ask their physician, and how to prepare for the return home.

- A complimentary Guided Imagery Toolkit mailed to members prior to or following surgery that contains an instructional letter and an audio tape or compact disc of recordings that weave together inspirational music, healing images, and positive statements to help add to a member’s sense of safety and comfort prior to and following surgery.

- A recovery guide that provides members with useful information regarding what to ask their physician such as pre- and post-operative testing and preparation, expected post-operative recovery milestones, and information regarding return to work.

- A post-hospitalization call to identified patients who are urgently or emergently admitted to an acute care hospital. The TCN will discuss adherence to the discharge plan, provide medication reconciliation, and conduct a needs assessment for any unmet needs the patient may have post discharge. Additionally, the TCN may engage in care coordination efforts with the member when any unmet needs that have been identified that may need further intervention.
Medicare Supplement Plans

Claims Assignment

For physician providers who accept assignment, Blue Shield pays contract benefits up to Medicare's approved amounts. Patients are responsible for payment of services not approved by Medicare. For physician providers who do not accept assignment, Blue Shield will pay according to the following structure for Medicare Supplement Plans and Group plans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan and Group Numbers</th>
<th>Medicare Unassigned Claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefit Plan A, B, C, D, H, K</td>
<td>Patients pay balance of billed charges (limiting charge).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit Plan F, I, J</td>
<td>Blue Shield pays 100% of the difference between Medicare's payment and billed charges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit Plan G</td>
<td>Blue Shield pays 80% of the difference between Medicare's payment and billed charges. Patients pay balance of billed charges.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Coronet Senior</td>
<td>Blue Shield pays 80% of the difference between Medicare's payment and billed charges. Patients pay balance of billed charges.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronet Major Medicare</td>
<td>Patients pay balance of billed charges (limiting charge).*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronet Senior</td>
<td>Patients pay balance of billed charges (limiting charge). *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Senior</td>
<td>Patients pay balance of billed charges (limiting charge).*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not to exceed the Medicare limiting charge or billed charge, whichever is less.

Note: Preferred Senior contracting physicians agree to accept Medicare assignment for Preferred Senior Plan members. Contracting Preferred Senior Anesthesiologists bill the Preferred Senior Plan directly under the Advance Pay System.
The BlueCard® Program

The BlueCard® Program is a national program that enables Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) Plan members to obtain healthcare services while traveling or living in another Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan’s service area. The program links participating healthcare providers with all the independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans across the country through a single electronic network for claims processing and reimbursement. Additionally, the program links providers in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

The BlueCard Program allows providers to conveniently submit claims for members from out-of-state Blue Plans, including international Blue Plans, directly to Blue Shield of California. Blue Shield offers you a one-payor solution for submitting your BlueCard claims, and a point of contact for your claims-related questions, through the convenience of Blue Shield.

For more detailed information about the BlueCard Program, refer to Appendix 5-A of this manual or access the BlueCard Program web page at https://www.blueshieldca.com/blueshieldca/blueshieldca/wcm/myconnect/provider/provider_content_en/guidelines_resources/bluedeard.

Other Payors

Blue Shield and its affiliates may contract with employers, insurance companies, associations, health plans, health and welfare trusts or organizations, other payors, and administrators (collectively, “Other Payors”) to provide administrative services for plans provided by those entities which are not underwritten by Blue Shield. Such administrative services may include offering access to the physician and provider networks under contract to Blue Shield or its affiliates. In general, Other Payors must meet financial and administrative criteria established by Blue Shield, and their health programs must encourage the use of contracting providers. In the event that Blue Shield is not the underwriter of the health plan, the Other Payor shall be responsible for payment or covered services. Refer to Appendix 5-B for the Other Payor Summary list.

Blue Shield or its affiliates may adopt the policies and procedures of the Other Payors for services rendered for these members. Claims for Other Payors’ members should be sent according to the Where to Send Claims link on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider or the member ID cards, which will generally identify where claims are to be submitted. Providers must look solely to the Other Payor for payment for covered services rendered to Other Payors’ members (except for copays, coinsurance and deductibles which may be collected from members). Payments and allowances will be clearly shown on the Other Payors’ Explanation of Benefits (EOBs).
Blue Shield Benefit Programs

Care Management

Shield Support is Blue Shield’s comprehensive, integrated care management program that includes member-focused clinical interventions to optimize health and quality of life. The program offers a personalized, coordinated approach to care, encouraging members to be active participants in the management and improvement of their own health. Through shared decision making and a whole-person approach, the goal is for each member to receive care that is customized to their specific needs and preferences.

The Shield Support experienced care teams include registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, behavioral health clinicians, social workers, dietitians, physicians and pharmacists who provide long and short-term support, including:

- **Case management** for acute, long-term, and high-risk conditions, designed to help members live better with illness, recover from acute conditions, and develop self-management skills

- **Care coordination** services to help members navigate the healthcare system and access care, and to facilitate information sharing among the healthcare team involved in the member’s care

Through skilled interviewing, the care team empowers members to take action and choose their own health goals. A personalized care plan is developed to help ensure that member’s needs and preferences are known and communicated. The care team maintains frequent contact with members, their caregivers and providers in order to help assure the provision of safe, appropriate and effective care and provides support by coordinating the wide range of specialized care from numerous providers to help prevent duplicate or unnecessary treatments and tests. The care team also provides coaching on medical conditions as well as behavioral health support and lifestyle modifications for an optimal quality of life.

The Shield Support care team works to prevent readmissions by completing safety risk assessments, discussing follow-up care plans, reconciling medication and facilitating adherence to prescribed treatment plans. Shield Support prepares members in advance for hospital stays, including guided imagery recordings to assist members in preparing for surgery or dealing with other health issues. The program is supported by medical directors who provide clinical direction and oversight to the care team.

Shield Support is designed to allow the member to better manage their medical treatment, their health condition, and the many related issues that may impact their quality of life.

Member identification for Shield Support is based on a customized predictive risk score. This predictive risk score was developed to optimize outreach to those members who are likely to become high risk and are most likely to benefit from care management support. Additionally, condition specific triggers and utilization patterns are used to identify members for Shield Support.
Members may also be identified from an acute event or hospital admission or discharge. Shield Support encompasses a broad spectrum of interventions that provide support for short-term care coordination as well as ongoing complex case management for the following conditions or utilization (including but not limited to):

- Behavioral health
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular, e.g., Coronary Artery Disease, Heart Failure
- Catastrophic injury
- Diabetes
- Musculoskeletal
- Chronic Pain
- Respiratory, e.g., Asthma, COPD
- End-stage renal disease
- Stroke
- Transgender
- Transplant (solid organ and bone marrow)
- Pre-term infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and post NICU
- Plus: ER utilization, post-discharge from hospital, opioid use, high cost and direct referrals

The following services are offered through the Shield Support Care Management Program:

- Telephonic coaching from nurses, behavioral health clinicians, social workers and pharmacists
- Home visits (as needed)
- Biometric home monitoring (for some members with diabetes, coronary artery disease, COPD, and heart failure)
- In-person self-management community workshops (for members 18+ years of age)
- Virtual health coaching and cognitive behavioral therapy modules
- Online self-management workshops and educational materials (for members 18+ years of age)

In addition to Shield Support, the following discrete Prenatal case management program is offered:

- **Prenatal Program.** This program is designed to improve the quality of care received before and during pregnancy and to reduce the costs associated with high-risk pregnancies, while helping women have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies. The Prenatal Program utilizes a whole-person approach by addressing our members’ physical health and mental well-being throughout her pregnancy.

Physician referrals are an important component of Blue Shield’s Care Management Programs and may allow for identification of a member more quickly. Blue Shield providers may refer Blue Shield members to our Care Management Programs by submitting the referral form via secure email to bscliaison@optum.com or fax to (877) 280-0179. To download an electronic copy of the referral form, please visit www.blueshieldca.com/provider/guidelines-resources/patient-care/programs.sp. Each referral will be evaluated for eligibility and appropriateness.
Section 5: Blue Shield Benefit Plans and Programs

Care Management (cont’d.)

Additional Care Management Programs

The following programs are available to certain Blue Shield members depending on their plan design:

- **Shield Advocate.** The Shield Advocate program provides a designated team of registered nurses to a client's membership to provide a proactive, member-focused approach to navigate the healthcare system, resolve problems, answer health and treatment related questions, provide health counseling, and support coordination of care.

- **Shield Concierge.** Shield Concierge is an integrated service designed to provide a customer-specific, personalized service experience for members covered by Blue Shield. This program strives to improve and expand the member experience by resolving more inquiries during the first contact with the member and proactively identifying services specifically beneficial to the member. A team of professionals consisting of Shield Concierge representatives, registered nurses, social workers, health coaches, pharmacy technicians and pharmacists provide information to a member regarding benefits, doctors and specialists, coordination of care, case management, and questions on formulary and drug authorizations.

- **Expanded Managed Behavioral Health.** Administered by Blue Shield’s Mental Health Service Administrator (MHSA), our Expanded Managed Behavioral Health program provides a sophisticated approach to managing inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services. The program employs specially trained behavioral health clinicians to assess a member’s situation and direct him/her to the most appropriate care setting.

- **Landmark Home-Based Care.** The Landmark program offers participating chronically ill members 24/7 access to medical professionals and in-home urgent care. Community-based, physician-led medical teams specializing in house calls and home-based care deliver medically needed services to chronically ill patients. Landmark does not replace patients’ primary care providers but rather supports the work of patients’ existing providers. Landmark clinicians communicate and collaborate with the patients’ PCPs and specialists to reinforce the PCP’s in-office care plan and provide the attention and care that chronically ill patients with complex health needs may require. Blue Shield identifies eligible members for the Landmark program based on their health and the number and type of chronic conditions they have.
Wellness and Prevention Programs

Blue Shield offers member-directed health improvement programs. Our mission is to support a member’s access to high quality care and facilitate participation in managing his or her own health. Blue Shield actively encourages providers to become familiar with these programs so they can assist members in learning about and taking advantage of these services. Blue Shield offers the following preventive health and wellness initiatives:

CareTips Clinical Messaging

CareTips is a clinical messaging program designed to help improve quality of care and yield cost-of-healthcare savings. Members receive CareTips communications that are based on nationally-recognized clinical practice guidelines and focus on quality improvement topics, many of which are drawn from HEDIS clinical measures. CareTips messages are derived from a systematic analysis of Blue Shield’s medical, pharmacy, and lab claims that identifies potential gaps in care and medication-related issues.

The messages are intended to encourage preventive care and support improvement in treatment outcomes for patients with chronic conditions. We encourage members to bring these communications to their provider for further discussion and possible coaching and follow up.

Diabetes Prevention Program

The Diabetes Prevention Program helps members who are at risk of type 2 diabetes lose weight and adopt healthy habits. The program includes 16 weekly sessions over the span of six months followed by monthly maintenance sessions during which members will learn new ways to eat healthier, increase activity, and manage challenges with help from a personal health coach and a small support group. The program is embedded in the Wellvolution platform can be accessed by enrolling in Wellvolution at wellvolution.com.

LifeReferrals 24/7SM

A phone call connects members with a team of advisers who can help them with personal, family, and work issues. They’ll be guided to the appropriate professional, depending on their needs. Some of the services offered are:

- **Legal and financial** – Members can connect with a financial adviser on money matters or an attorney on a variety of legal services. Members may be eligible to receive a 60-minute consult at no cost to them.

- **Personal challenges including relationship problems or coping with grief** – Members can talk to a referrals specialist and set up face-to-face sessions with licensed therapists at no cost to them.

- **Work/life resources** – Members can consult with a specialist who can provide useful information and referrals to a wide range of resources, such as educational programs, day care, meal programs, transportation, and more.

The LifeReferrals 24/7 team is available to discuss your patients’ concerns and guide them to possible solutions anytime, day or night, at (800) 985-2405. All of the services and referrals to resources are treated confidentially.
Wellness and Prevention Programs (cont’d.)

LifeReferrals 24/7SM (cont’d.)

Blue Shield offers information on a broad range of services that help members manage the impact of home, health and career. These include:

- **Adult and Elder Support Services** – Help with aging parents and family, including in-home and long-term care, transportation, and housing.
- **Child and Parenting Support Services** – Resources for meeting parenting challenges, day care, tutoring, pregnancy, adoption, and child development.
- **Family and Relationship Services** – Information to help deal with parent-child conflicts, single parent challenges, and better communication.
- **Lifelong Learning** – Information about schools, classes, and other opportunities for growth.
- **Financial Assistance** – Consultations with financial advisers on money matters.
- **Legal Assistance** – Consultations and discounts on a variety of legal services.
- **Domestic Relocation** – Resources and support for members moving into a new community.

NurseHelp 24/7SM

Members can access a registered nurse anytime, day or night, seven days a week, 365 days a year at no cost by phone at (877) 304-0504 or online at blueshieldca.com. Experienced nurses are ready to answer questions, listen, and provide members with information that can help them choose the most appropriate level of care for their situation. The nurses are trained to offer callers:

- **Health information** – Better understanding of health concerns and chronic conditions, education about possible treatment options to help patients make informed decisions and suggestions for preparing for doctor appointments.
- **Healthcare assistance** – Guidance in understanding and choosing the most appropriate types of health care such as hospital, urgent care center, doctor visit, or home treatment. Assistance with questions about medical tests, medications and living with chronic conditions.
- **Preventive and self-care measures** – Helpful tips for taking care of minor injuries at home, such as a twisted ankle or a common illness like a cold or the flu.
- **Online nurse help** – One-on-one personal Internet dialogue with a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Members get immediate answers to their general health questions and research assistance. The online nurses can also refer members to health information, resources and member programs on blueshieldca.com.

LifeReferrals 24/7 and NurseHelp 24/7 are designed to complement, not replace the care you provide to your patients.
Wellness and Prevention Programs (cont'd.)

Preventive Health Guidelines

Blue Shield’s Preventive Health Guidelines are based on nationally recommended guidelines for screening examinations, immunizations, and counseling topics for healthy individuals, as well as for individuals at risk for disease. These guidelines are updated and distributed annually to members via blueshieldca.com. Clinical reference sources include the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) Guide to Clinical Preventive Services, American Academy of Pediatrics, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice, and the Health Resources and Services Administration Women’s Preventive Services Guidelines.

Guidelines available in both English and Spanish are located on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Eligibility & benefits, then Preventive health guidelines.

Preventive Health Services Policy

Blue Shield has developed a Preventive Health Services Policy as a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) of the health reform legislation, adopting United States (US) Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations; the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recommendations for infants, children, adolescents, and women; immunizations recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); American Academy of Pediatrics/Bright Futures/Recommendations for Pediatric Preventive Healthcare; and additional requirements mandated by the state of California. This policy applies to new and renewing members.

These services, when criteria are met and the primary reason for the visit is preventive care, will be provided under the preventive care services benefits with no cost-sharing to the member when applicable procedure and diagnosis codes are billed together. When a preventive service is provided during a non-preventive visit, the entire visit will be provided under the medical benefit of the member’s plan, and cost-sharing may apply per member benefits.

The Preventive Health Services Policy is located on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under Eligibility & benefits, then Preventive health guidelines.
Wellness and Prevention Programs (cont’d.)

Wellness Discount Programs

To make it easier for members to take care of themselves, Blue Shield offers a wide range of member discounts on popular programs that can help them save money while they get healthier, including:

- **Fitness Your Way by Tivity** – gives members access to over 10,000 gyms nationwide for a low cost of $25 initiation fee and $25/month. Simply visit [fitnessyourway.tivityhealth.com/bsc](http://fitnessyourway.tivityhealth.com/bsc) to enroll.

- **Alternative Care Discounts** – 25% off on acupuncture, chiropractic services, and therapeutic massage services from practitioners participating with the ChooseHealthy® program. The program also offers members to get discounts up to 55% or more on popular health and fitness brands and access to online health classes and articles offered at no additional cost for members.

- **Discount Vision Program** – Discounts on vision exams, frames and lenses, contacts lenses, and more.

- **LASIK surgery** – Discounts on LASIK surgery through QualSight LASIK, and LASIK and PRK surgery through NVISION, Inc.

Wellvolution

Wellvolution has been redesigned to give members the tools for obtaining optimal health, whether that means staying fit, preventing disease, or treating existing conditions. Members simply log on to [wellvolution.com](http://wellvolution.com), create a new account and sets health goals. Wellvolution customizes the path to better health, matching the member with programs and popular apps that are personalized and have proven results.

At no extra cost, members get access to easy, customized plans and popular apps, like Pacifica, Yes Health and Weight Watchers, that fit their path. No matter where they are on their health journey, Wellvolution will help members reach their goals.

The following programs are offered through Wellvolution:

1. **Wellvolution Lifestyle programs** – a hand-selected set of proven general well-being programs, designed to help generally healthy members achieve their health goals of sleeping better, lowering stress, exercising more, eating better or quitting smoking. Many of these programs are available in their market ‘free’ version, with upgrades available at the member discretion.

2. **Wellvolution Disease prevention programs** – high touch programs, often incorporating in-person or digital coaching options, digital tools and frequent engagement are geared toward prevention of diseases like type 2 diabetes or heart disease using proven lifestyle medicine methodology. These programs are fully covered by Blue Shield.

3. **Wellvolution Condition reversal programs** – high touch programs, often incorporating in-person or digital coaching options, digital tools and frequent engagement are geared toward reversal and treatment of existing chronic conditions using proven lifestyle medicine methodology. These programs are fully covered by Blue Shield.
Section 6: Capitated Hospital Requirements
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Overview

The following information applies only to hospitals with Blue Shield capitated payment arrangements.

In addition to the responsibilities described in Section 2: Hospital and Facility Responsibilities, capitated hospitals must also adhere to the requirements outlined in this section.

Capitated hospitals have Blue Shield contracts under which they are paid on a per member or percentage of revenue basis to provide, or assure provision of, an identified spectrum of services to eligible HMO members. When hospitalization is needed, the member is required to secure services from the capitated hospital to which they are assigned.

For assigned HMO members, capitated hospitals or facilities are obligated to provide, or to arrange for the provision of and payment for all medically necessary services specified in the Capitated Hospital Agreement. These services usually include, but are not limited to:

- Inpatient hospital services
- Facility services for facility-based (hospital or ambulatory surgery center) outpatient surgeries/procedures
- Skilled nursing facility (SNF) services
- Home health agency/hospice services
- Ambulance services
- Durable medical equipment (DME)
- Emergency services, as specifically defined in the hospital’s Blue Shield Agreement

The capitated hospital must either provide these services or have a written agreement with another licensed healthcare provider to render necessary services that the hospital itself is unable to provide. The capitated hospital must accept Blue Shield’s monthly capitation payment, along with the member’s applicable copayment, as payment in full for covered services provided either directly by the capitated hospital or through arrangements with other healthcare providers.
Section 6: Capitated Hospital Requirements

Monthly Eligibility Reports

As a cost-effective measure, Blue Shield provides the Combined Eligibility/Capitation Report and the Eligibility Adds and Termination Report only in electronic format. Receiving eligibility information electronically enables capitated hospitals to use and sort the information in many ways to meet their specific reporting needs.

The monthly Combined Eligibility/Capitation Report shows capitation details for all capitated hospitals for a specific reporting period. It includes the calculated payment amounts for all currently-eligible capitated members. This file is the supporting documentation for the Monthly Capitation Reconciliation Report for the HMO and POS products. For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage, the Combined Eligibility/Capitation Report is the supporting documentation for the hospital’s wire transfer payment.

Blue Shield distributes these eligibility reports via Blue Shield secure email, or via SFTP to all capitated hospitals for the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO plans (Individual and Group-MAPD), HMO, and Point-of-Service (POS) products no later than the 10th calendar day of each month. For details on the file formats, refer to Appendix 6-A and 6-B in the back of this manual.

Both reports include the member’s name and identification number as well as the activity code for all member status changes. The files also include the member’s group number and Product ID. The Product IDs are codes that identify the member’s standard office visit copayments. Product IDs and Physician Office Copayment Guides for commercial HMO plans and for the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO (Individual and Group MAPD) plans are forwarded each month along with the Combined Eligibility/Capitation Reports.
Capitation

For each Blue Shield commercial (non-Medicare) plan in which the capitated hospital participates, Blue Shield pays a negotiated age/sex-adjusted per-member-per-month (PMPM) capitation amount for each member who is assigned to the hospital, as of the first of the month. Capitation for Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members are based on a percentage of the monthly Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) revenue paid to Blue Shield for assigned members. (Refer to the Blue Shield contract for actual age/sex-based rates and percentages.)

If payments are accepted by the group electronically, such capitation shall be paid for members not enrolled in the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan Benefit Program no later than the fifteenth (15th) day for the month. For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members, Blue Shield pays capitation by the 20th day of the month or five business days after Blue Shield receives the CMS capitation payment, whichever occurs later. Each month’s capitation payment may include retroactive adjustments. Blue Shield follows CMS guidelines with regard to retroactive adjustments.

Retroactive Changes

Note: Blue Shield discourages retroactive cancellations and additions of members by employer groups, however, exceptions may occur that require adjustments to the capitation payments.

Retroactive Cancellation/Ineligible Member

If a member is cancelled retroactively, Blue Shield will deduct capitation retroactively from the hospital not to exceed 90 days for commercial members and 365 days for FEHBP or Medicare Advantage members. Depending on the contract, retroactive cancellation of members may be limited to a predetermined period. (Please refer to the Blue Shield contract for the limitation.)

For Commercial HMO and POS members, Blue Shield will be financially responsible for all covered services provided by a capitated hospital to an ineligible person or a retroactively cancelled member for the period of time for which capitation was retroactively adjusted and who had been previously verified as eligible by Blue Shield, as long as the capitated hospital has:

- Provided documentation to Blue Shield of the eligibility error, along with the claim for services.
- Provided documentation that payment was made by the capitated hospital to the provider of service, if applicable. Documentation should include:
  - Member name
  - Member ID number
  - Place, date, and provider of service
  - A claim showing the services provided and the billed/paid amount

If the member is determined to be ineligible or retroactively cancelled, Blue Shield will reimburse the capitated hospital using the payment methodology described in the Blue Shield contract.

However, if the member was covered by another health plan during the time period involved and the service is covered by that health plan, insurer, or third party payor, the capitated hospital must first bill the other payor for those services. If no payment is received from or the claim is denied by the other carrier, please submit a copy of the other carrier’s claim determination (e.g., letter or EOB) along with the information described above for payment under eligibility guarantee. If the patient is covered by another health care service plan during the time period involved and the other plan has paid capitation for the patient, no eligibility guarantee payment will be due from Blue Shield.
Capitation (cont’d.)

Retroactive Changes (cont’d.)

Retroactive Additions

If a member is added retroactively, Blue Shield will pay capitation retroactively to the capitated hospital not to exceed 90 days for commercial members and 365 days for FEHBP or Medicare Advantage members. Depending on the contract, retroactive addition of members may be limited to a predetermined period. (Please refer to the Blue Shield contract for the limitation.) Any payments collected for covered services by the capitated hospital and/or its providers from the member must be refunded, minus any applicable copayments. For the period of time beyond which capitation was paid for retroactively added eligible members, Blue Shield shall compensate Group for provided covered services pursuant to the provider’s contracted rates.

For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members (Individual and Group Medicare Advantage), Blue Shield follows Medicare guidelines and adjusts eligibility consistent with CMS reporting.

Retroactive Payment Adjustments

For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members (Individual and Group Medicare Advantage), CMS routinely makes retroactive adjustments to the revenue paid to Blue Shield based on changes to member status, risk scores, or other factors. Because IPA/medical group capitation payments are based on a percentage of CMS revenue, Blue Shield passes on a portion of the CMS revenue adjustment to the IPA/medical group, in accordance with the terms and conditions of their contract. This includes both positive and negative adjustments and is generally limited to 36 months (although CMS reserves the right to go beyond 36 months). Blue Shield follows CMS guidelines for all retroactive adjustments affecting payments.
Section 6: Capitated Hospital Requirements

Capitated Services Claims Processing

Commercial

A capitated hospital is delegated the responsibility for timely and accurate processing/payment of all capitated service claims to its providers.

Section 1371 of the Knox-Keene Act requires health care service plans and their subcontracted hospitals to reimburse all claims, professional or institutional, within 45 working days after receipt of the claim unless the claim or portion thereof is contested. If contested, the health plan or their contracted hospital must notify their claimant in writing within 45 working days as to why the claim was contested. If the uncontested claim or contested claim (after the receipt of necessary information) is not paid within the specified time period, interest shall accrue at the rate of 15% per annum for all non-emergency care, or the greater of $15.00 for each 12-month period or portion thereof or 15% per annum for emergency care beginning with the first calendar day after the 45 working day period.

All interest due should be automatically included with the claim payment. Interest must be issued within five working days of the payment of the claim without the need for any reminder or request by the provider. If the interest is less than $2.00 at the time that the claim is paid, the health plan or the plan’s capitated provider may pay the interest on that claim along with interest on other such claims within 10 calendar days of the close of the calendar month in which the claim was paid as long as a statement identifying the specific claims for which the interest was paid is included. If interest is not paid “automatically”, the required interest and a $10.00 penalty would be warranted. Delegation continues as long as processing and payment remain compliant with statutory, regulatory, and Blue Shield standards.

Medicare Advantage/Group Medicare Advantage

A capitated hospital is delegated the responsibility for timely and accurate processing/payment of all capitated service claims to its providers. Hospitals are required to reimburse all clean unaffiliated claims, professional or institutional, within 30 calendar days after receipt of the earliest received date of the claim. If the unaffiliated clean claim is not paid within the specified time period, interest shall accrue at the applicable current prompt payment rate. All interest due should be automatically included with the claim payment. Hospitals are required to reimburse all affiliated and unclean unaffiliated claims, professional or institutional, within 60 calendar days after receipt of the earliest received date of the claim. If unclean, the health plan or their contracted hospital must develop the claim for the missing information from their claimant. Payment/denial must be made on all unclean claims within 60 calendar days.
Section 6: Capitated Hospital Requirements

Capitated Services Claims Processing (cont’d.)

Balance Billing

For detailed information, please refer to Appendix 6-C: Claims Compliance and Monitoring of this manual.

Incorrect Claims Submissions

Incorrect claims submissions, also known as misdirected claims, are claims for capitated services that providers erroneously submit to Blue Shield for processing/payment instead of submitting appropriate claims or encounter reports to the capitated hospital.

Commercial

In accordance with Section 1300.71, California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 28, Blue Shield must forward non-contracted provider service claims and/or emergency service claims that are the responsibility of the capitated hospital to the correct hospital within ten (10) working days of the original receipt date. For all other capitated hospital claims in which the provider is contracted with the hospital and that are the responsibility of the capitated hospital, Blue Shield may either send the claimant a notice of denial, with instructions to bill the capitated provider or forward the claim to the appropriate capitated provider. Blue Shield has developed a process to allow us to forward applicable claim information, for paper- and electronically-submitted claims, to the appropriate capitated hospital in the form of a facsimile. Facsimiles forwarded to the capitated hospital must be treated as a claim. If additional information is required to make the determination to pay or deny, the capitated hospital may either develop or contest the claims for the missing information. Claims may only be contested if information is missing that is necessary to process the claim. Claims cannot be contested solely because the claim is submitted on a UB 04 or CMS 1500 facsimile claim form. If a claim that is payable by Blue Shield is submitted to the capitated hospital in error, the capitated hospital must forward the claim to Blue Shield within 10 working days.

Medicare Advantage/Group Medicare Advantage

Any claim misdirected must be forwarded to the appropriate payor. The claim processing cycle begins with the received date of the forwarding entity (earliest received date). Health plans should forward claims within eight (8) calendar days of initial receipt and the hospital should forward within 10 calendar days of receipt.

If the delegated hospital is receiving a significant number of claims that are forwarded late by any entity and the volume of those late claims is enough to impair the delegated hospital’s timeliness performance, Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan will work with the entity forwarding the late claims. Documentation should be sent to your Provider Claims Compliance Auditor for support.

Third-Party Organization or Administrator Services

Capitated hospitals may elect to use the services of a third-party organization (TPO) or third-party administrator (TPA) to handle claims, encounter data collection, and reimbursement responsibilities. In such instances, the capitated hospital is responsible for ensuring that the TPO/TPA complies with Blue Shield’s compliance standards and encounter data submission requirements.
Capitated Services Claims Processing (cont’d.)

Claims Compliance and Monitoring

For detailed information, please refer to Appendix 6-C: Claims Compliance and Monitoring of this manual.

If medical services (that are the financial responsibility of the capitated hospital) are not covered because they were performed without proper authorization from the member’s IPA/medical group, or are considered non-covered under Blue Shield plan benefits, or fail to meet several other criteria, the capitated hospital must notify the member or responsible party in writing of the denial. The notice must indicate the specific reason for the denial and outline the appeals process in accordance with detailed regulatory and industry standards. If the hospital issues the notice instead of the IPA/medical group, it should consult Appendix 6-C: Claims Compliance and Monitoring for more details. Only one denial notice may be issued for each service rendered. All secondary claims for the same service should be denied as duplicates.

Prepayment Claim Review

Blue Shield providers are expected to follow accepted ethical billing practices. Blue Shield is committed to high quality, cost-effective care and monitors the coding and billing patterns of health care providers. Our monitoring program is designed to detect billing irregularities, including “unbundling” of services and procedure coding inconsistent with current standardized guidelines.

Blue Shield strives to make its claim payment policies transparent to providers. Blue Shield has implemented claims editing software systems based on industry standards, in order to pay providers fairly, accurately, consistently and in a standardized manner. Our claims editing software systems provide additional levels of automated claims adjudication.
Capitated Services Claims Processing (cont’d.)

Billing for Copayments

Commercial

With the exception of authorized copayments, billing a member for covered benefits is absolutely prohibited under the Knox-Keene Act for contracted providers of all services and non-contracted providers of emergency services. The provider of services is responsible for collecting the applicable copayments from members. Whenever the provider fails to collect the copayment at the time of service and bills the member, the bill should clearly indicate that the amount due is for the copayment only. Copayments may not be waived. Providers or the sub-contracted hospital must issue receipts to members whenever copayments are collected.

Copayment amounts are detailed in the Summary of Benefits and Coverage documents found on Provider Connection at https://www.blueshieldca.com/provider/eligibility-benefits/hmo-benefitsummaries/home.jsp.

Members are informed of their copayment responsibility in the Blue Shield Evidence of Coverage (EOC) provided to all Blue Shield members.

Medicare Advantage/Group Medicare Advantage

With the exception of authorized copayments and/or coinsurance, billing a member for covered benefits is absolutely prohibited under federal law. Whenever the provider fails to collect the copayment or coinsurance at the time of service and bills the member, the bill should clearly indicate that the amount due is for the copayment or coinsurance only. Copayments and coinsurances may not be waived. Providers or the sub-contracted hospital must issue receipts to members whenever copayments or coinsurance are collected.

Members are informed of their copayment and coinsurance responsibility in the Blue Shield Evidence of Coverage (EOC) provided to all Blue Shield members.

Paper Submissions

For compliance review, submission of claim information for denied services is not required for routine review purposes unless the hospital has been directed to do so by a Blue Shield auditor or the service falls into classifications that Blue Shield’s Medical Care Solutions staff requires 100% submission. For more details, please refer to Section 3: Medical Care Solutions of this manual. For encounter data submission, if the hospital submits its encounter data on paper, denied claims should be marked as such and included with those encounter claim documents for reporting purposes only.

Electronic Submissions

Claim information for denied services must not be included in the capitated hospital’s approved monthly encounter reports, since Blue Shield is unable to identify them in the electronic format and thus cannot record them correctly for reporting purposes. Denied claim information should be sent on paper or in pre-approved report format to the address listed in the next section for all encounter submissions, along with the reason for denial.
Encounter Data Submission

Blue Shield Organization and Procedures

Capitated hospitals are required to submit all encounter data to Blue Shield for Access+ HMO and Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members. This includes encounters for inpatient, outpatient, and other facility-based services for which they are capitated. This also includes information on purchased services and any downstream sub-contracted services.

Denied encounters must also be sent to Blue Shield. In addition to all allowable inpatient and hospital outpatient encounter data, denied encounter information must be forwarded by Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan to CMS for Medicare Advantage members.

For both commercial and Medicare encounter data, submissions may be made directly to Blue Shield or via a vendor. Regardless of the route of submission, providers may request further information on facility encounter data specifications and procedures from Blue Shield at one of the contacts listed below. Encounter data must be submitted in HIPAA compliant ANSI 837P and 837I formats.

Commercial and Medicare Encounter Data

For EDI questions, contact the EDI Help Desk (800) 480-1221. For encounter processing questions, call the Customer Service number on back of the member’s card.

A list of approved vendors can be found on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider. Click on Claims, Manage Electronic Transactions, then Enroll in Electronic Data Interchange.

Performance – Regular and Complete Submission of Encounter Data

Monthly Submission

Blue Shield requires encounter data be submitted at least once each month and each submission must be in the correct HIPAA-compliant electronic format with usable data. Files with significant data quality problems may be rejected and require correction of problems.

Complete Submission

Blue Shield measures encounter submissions on a rolling 12 months of utilization. For Medicare Advantage encounter data submissions to the federal government (CMS), there is also a compliance measurement reflecting the data collection period. The Medicare benchmark is modified periodically to reflect changes in CMS’ expectations for Medicare encounter data. Contact the appropriate Blue Shield unit to inquire about specific benchmarks.

Blue Shield requires that, on a periodic basis, an officer of the capitated facility attest to the completeness and truthfulness of encounter data submission.
Table of Contents

A. Glossary
Access+ Provider Group

A medical group or IPA that participates in the Access+ HMO program. The features of the Access+ Program include Access+ Satisfaction and Access+ Specialist.

Access+ Satisfaction®

A feature of the Access+ HMO program that allows HMO members to provide feedback regarding services received from HMO network physicians and their office staff.

Access+ SpecialistSM

A feature of the Access+ HMO program that allows HMO members to self-refer, for an increased copayment, to a specialist within their IPA/medical group for Access+ Specialist services without a referral from their primary care physician.

Access+ Specialist Services

Services covered under the Access+ Specialist option of the Access+ HMO Program.

Activities of Daily Living

Mobility skills required for independence in normal everyday living. Recreational, leisure, or sports activities are not included.

Acute Care

Care rendered while treating an illness, injury or condition that is marked by a sudden onset or abrupt change of status requiring prompt attention. It may include hospitalization, but of limited duration and not expected to last indefinitely. Acute care is in contrast to chronic care. See Chronic Care.

Advance Directives

Documents signed by a member that explain the member’s wishes concerning a given course of medical care should a situation arise where he/she is unable to make these wishes known. Advance directives must be documented in a prominent place in the medical record for all Blue Shield members 18 years and older.

Affordable Care Act

The comprehensive healthcare reform law enacted in March 2010. The law was enacted in two parts. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law on March 23, 2010, and was amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act on March 30, 2010. The name “Affordable Care Act” is used to refer to the final, amended version of the law.

Allowed Amount

The adjudicated claim cost for covered benefits at the contracted rate, including the member’s copayment/co-insurance portion.
Glossary

Alternate Care Services Provider
Home health care agencies, pharmacy home infusion suppliers, home infusion suppliers and home medical equipment suppliers.

Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC)
Any ambulatory surgical center that is certified to participate in the Medicare program under Title XVII (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1395 et seq.) of the federal Social Security Act, or any surgical clinic accredited by an accrediting agency as approved by the Licensing Division of the Medical Board of California pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 1248.15 and 1248.4. It is also known as a “surgicenter.”

Appeal, Member
A request for Blue Shield’s or Blue Shield’s Life’s reconsideration of an initial determination (either verbal or written) which resulted in the following:
- Complete denial of service, benefit or claim
- Reduction of benefits or claim payment
- Redirection of service or benefits
- Delay of prospective authorization for service or benefits
- Underwriting Investigation Unit (UIU) cancellation of coverage or enrollee underwriting denials

Appeal, Provider
A written statement from a provider disputing the decision to reduce, delay, or deny services or benefits, requesting the original decision is altered or overturned.

AuthAccel
A tool that allows providers to submit authorization requests to Blue Shield online, via Provider Connection, instead of calling or faxing to obtain authorization. This tool may only be used to request authorizations for services where Blue Shield is responsible for providing authorization. Requesting providers may use AuthAccel to complete, attach documentation, submit, track and receive determinations for applicable medical and pharmacy prior authorizations. Registered users at Provider Connection may access the tool, in the Authorizations section, after logging into the website at blueshieldca.com/provider.

When providers submit requests for pharmacy authorizations via AuthAccel, it is not necessary for them to complete a separate California Prescription Drug Prior Authorization or Step Therapy Exception Request Form (61-211), as the required information is built into the tool.

Authorization
A process required for certain services in order to be reimbursed (e.g., approval to receive care from a provider other than the member’s primary care physician). There are two types: pre-certifications or utilization reviews (URs). All non-capitated services require one or the other. Inpatient facility claims, and outpatient surgeries require an UR. Ambulance, home medical equipment and home health care require a pre-certification. Authorizations are performed by the Medical Operations team at each core site.
Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA)

Legislation signed into law by President Clinton in August 1997. This legislation enacts the most significant changes to the Medicare program since its inception 30 years ago.

bcbs.com

Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association’s website, which contains useful information for providers.

Benefits

Covered health care services pursuant to the terms of the member’s health services contract.

Benefit Period (Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Plan)

A way of measuring the use of services under Medicare Part A. A benefit period begins on the first day of a Medicare-covered inpatient hospital stay and ends when a member has been out of the hospital (or other facility that primarily provides skilled nursing or rehabilitative services) for 60 consecutive days, including the day of discharge.

BlueCard Access®

A toll-free number – (800) 810-BLUE – for you and members to use to locate healthcare providers in another Blue plan’s area. This number is useful when you need to refer the patient to a physician or healthcare facility in another location.

BlueCard Eligibility®

A toll-free number – (800) 676-BLUE – for you to verify eligibility, benefits coverage, share of cost information, and prior authorizations on patients from out-of-state Blue plans.

BlueCard National Doctor and Hospital Finder

https://www.bcbs.com/find-a-doctor

A website you can use to locate healthcare providers in another Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plan’s area. This is useful when you need to refer the patient to a physician or healthcare facility in another location. If you find that any information about you, as a provider, is incorrect on the website, please contact Blue Shield Provider Information & Enrollment at (800) 258-3091.

BlueCard PPO

A national program that offers members traveling or living outside of their Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plan’s area the PPO level of benefits when they obtain services from a physician or hospital designated as a BlueCard PPO provider.
BlueCard PPO Basic

A national program that offers members traveling or living outside of their Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plan’s service area the PPO basic level of benefits when they obtain services from a physician or hospital designated as a BlueCard PPO Basic provider.

When you see the “PPOB” in a suitcase logo on the front of the member’s Blue plan ID card, it means the member has selected a PPO plan product from a Blue Cross Blue Shield plan. Since Blue Shield of California does not have a BlueCard PPO Basic network, providers will be reimbursed for covered services in accordance with your PPO contract with Blue Shield of California.

BlueCard PPO Member

A Blue plan patient who carries an ID card with a suitcase symbol containing “PPO” in it. Only members with this identifier can access the benefits of the BlueCard PPO.

BlueCard PPO Network

The network comprising those physicians, hospitals and other healthcare providers PPO members may elect to use to obtain the highest level of PPO benefits.

BlueCard PPO Provider

A doctor, hospital or other healthcare entity enrolled in a network of designated PPO providers.

BlueCard Routing Logic

A streamlined IT solution that Blue Shield of California developed that integrates with a provider’s clearinghouse and/or eligibility and benefits verification vendor’s system to simplify and automate selecting the correct California Blue plan for processing BlueCard claims. The BlueCard routing logic is an alternative to using our Claims Routing Tool on the Blue Shield Provider Connection website.

BlueCard Traditional

A national program that offers members traveling or living outside of their Blue plan’s service area the traditional, or indemnity, level of benefits when they obtain services from a physician or hospital outside of their Blue plan’s service area. These members will carry an ID card featuring an “empty” suitcase logo.

Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Plans

Blue Shield’s Medicare Advantage plans: Blue Shield 65 Plus (HMO), Blue Shield Plus Choice Plan (HMO), Blue Shield Trio Medicare (HMO), Blue Shield Inspire (HMO), Blue Shield Vital (HMO) and Blue Shield Medicare (PPO). The terms “Medicare Advantage” and “MA-PD” may be used interchangeably throughout this manual.

Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Plan Member

An individual who meets each of the applicable eligibility requirements for membership, has voluntarily elected to enroll in Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO or PPO plan, has paid any premiums required for initial enrollment to be valid, and whose enrollment in Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO or PPO plan has been confirmed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).
Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Plan HMO Network

A group of physicians, hospitals, and other healthcare providers that contracts with Blue Shield to provide medical and facility-based care to Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO plan members. When the member selects a Primary Care Physician (PCP), he or she is also choosing the hospital and specialty network associated with his/her PCP. This is different than the Access + HMO network.

Blue Shield Global Core®

A program that allows Blue plan members traveling or living abroad to receive nearly cashless access to covered inpatient hospital care, as well as access to outpatient hospital care and professional services from healthcare providers worldwide. The program also allows members of international Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plans to access domestic (U.S.) Blue provider networks.

California Children’s Services (CCS)

California Children’s Services (CCS), formally known as the Crippled Children’s Services, was introduced by the California Legislature in 1927. This program was developed to provide medical treatment and rehabilitation to children who suffer from catastrophic medical conditions. CCS is funded through county, state and federal tax dollars, as well as through some fees paid by the families receiving care. CCS is not a Medi-Cal or Medicare program.

Capitation

A prepaid monthly fee paid to the IPA-medical group for each Blue Shield member in exchange for the provision of comprehensive health care services.

Case Rate

The all-inclusive rate paid, in accordance with the hospital contract Exhibit C, for specified types of care that are paid regardless of the type or defined duration of services provided by the hospital. For specified care/diagnoses, Blue Shield pays the stated Case Rate in lieu of the Per Diem rate.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

An agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services which administers the Medicare Program and with whom Blue Shield has entered into a contract to provide healthcare and Medicare prescription drug coverage to Medicare beneficiaries.

Chronic Care

Care (different from acute care) furnished to treat an illness, injury, or condition, which does not require hospitalization (although confinement in a lesser facility might be appropriate), that may be expected to be of long duration without any reasonably predictable date of termination, and which may be marked by a recurrence requiring continuous or periodic care as necessary. See Acute care.
COBRA

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. It provides for the continuation of group health benefits for certain employees and their dependents (applies to groups of 20 or more employees). A member may elect to continue coverage under COBRA if coverage would continue as a result of a “qualifying event”. (A qualifying event may be termination of employment or reduction of hours, etc.)

Coinsurance

The percentage amount that a member is required to pay for covered services after meeting any applicable Deductible. Specific coinsurance information is provided in the member’s Summary of Benefits.

Coinsurance (Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO Plans)

The percentage of the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO plans contracted payment rate or Medicare payment rate that a member must pay for certain services.

Commercial Plans or Programs

All plans other than Medicare Advantage plans, including, but not limited to, Blue Shield Preferred Plans, Access+ HMO group benefit plans, Access+ HMO Plan for Individuals and Families, HMO POS plans, BlueCard, and government-sponsored programs (i.e., Healthy Families and Major Risk Medical Insurance).

Consumer Directed Healthcare/Health Plans (CDHC/CDHP)

Consumer Directed Healthcare (CDHC) is a broad umbrella term that refers to a movement in the healthcare industry to empower members, reduce employer costs and change consumer healthcare purchasing behavior. CDHC plans provide the member with additional information to make an informed and appropriate healthcare decision through the use of member support tools, provider and network information and financial incentives.

Contracted Provider

A credentialed health care professional or facility that has a contract with Blue Shield to provide services to members.

Contract Year (Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO Plans)

The contract year for Medicare beneficiaries begins on January 1st and continues for a 12-month period. Note: the contract year for Group MA-PD members could begin at varying times of the year (for example July 1st or October 1st) and continues for a 12-month period.

Coordination of Benefits (COB)

A term used to describe a process to determine carrier responsibility when a member is covered by two or more group health plans. One of the carriers is considered the primary carrier and its benefits are paid first. Any balance is then processed by the secondary carrier, up to the limit of its contractual liability.

Copayment

The fixed dollar amount that a member is required to pay for covered services after meeting any applicable deductible. Specific copayment information is provided in the member’s Evidence of Coverage or Summary of Benefits.
Glossary

Cosmetic Procedure

Any surgery, service, drug or supply designed to improve the appearance of an individual by alteration of a physical characteristic within the broad range of normal, but which is considered unpleasing or unsightly.

Covered Services

Those services provided to a member pursuant to the terms of a group or individual health services contract and noted in the member’s Evidence of Coverage. Medically necessary health care services, which a member is entitled to receive pursuant to the Health Services Contract and Evidence of Coverage applicable to the member. Except as otherwise noted in the member’s Health Services Contract and Evidence of Coverage, covered services must generally be referred and authorized in conformity with Blue Shield’s Utilization Management programs.

Credentialing

The process in which Blue Shield verifies the evidence of a physician’s education, residency training, clinical capabilities, licenses, references, board certification, state and federal disciplinary sanctions and other components of the physician’s professional abilities and history.

Custodial Care

Care furnished in the home primarily for supervisory care or supportive services, or in a facility primarily to provide room and board (which may or may not include nursing care, training in personal hygiene and other forms of self-care and/or supervisory care by a physician); or care furnished to a member who is mentally or physically disabled, and who is not under specific medical, surgical or psychiatric treatment to reduce the disability to the extent necessary to enable the patient to live outside an institution providing such care; or when despite such treatment, there is no reasonably likelihood that the disability will be so reduced.

Delegation

The process by which Blue Shield allows the IPA/medical group to perform certain functions that are considered the responsibility of Blue Shield for the purpose of providing appropriate and timely care for Blue Shield members.
Dependent (Commercial Only)

A dependent is an individual who is enrolled and maintains coverage in the Plan, and who meets one of the following eligibility requirements, as:

1. A dependent spouse is an individual who is legally married to the Subscriber, and who is not legally separated from the Subscriber.

2. A Dependent Domestic Partner is an individual who meets the definition of Domestic Partner in the member’s plan.

3. A Dependent child is a child of, adopted by, or in legal guardianship of the Subscriber, spouse, or Domestic Partner, and who is not covered as a Subscriber. A child includes any stepchild, child placed for adoption, or any other child for whom the Subscriber, spouse, or Domestic Partner has been appointed as a non-temporary legal guardian by a court of appropriate legal jurisdiction. A child is an individual less than 26 years of age (or less than 18 years of age if the child has been enrolled as a result of a court-ordered non-temporary legal guardianship. A child does not include any children of a Dependent child (i.e., grandchildren of the Subscriber, spouse, or Domestic Partner) unless the Subscriber, spouse, or Domestic Partner has adopted or is the legal guardian of the grandchild.

4. If coverage for a Dependent child would be terminated because of the attainment of age 26, and the Dependent child is disabled and incapable of self-sustaining employment, benefits for such Dependent child will be continued upon the following conditions:
   a. the child must be chiefly dependent upon the Subscriber, spouse, or Domestic Partner for support and maintenance;
   b. the Subscriber, spouse, or Domestic Partner must submit to Blue Shield a Physician's written certification of disability within 60 days from the date of the Employer's or Blue Shield's request; and thereafter, certification of continuing disability and dependency from a physician must be submitted to Blue Shield on the following schedule:
      i. within 24 months after the month when the Dependent child’s coverage would otherwise have been terminated; and
      ii. annually thereafter on the same month when certification was made in accordance with item (1) above. In no event will coverage be continued beyond the date when the Dependent child becomes ineligible for coverage for any reason other than attained age.

Direct Contract

An executed agreement between Blue Shield and an individual or group of individual providers for the purpose of providing health care services to Blue Shield enrollees.

Domestic Partner (California Family Code)

An individual who is personally related to the Subscriber by a registered domestic partnership. Both persons must have filed a Declaration of Domestic Partnership with the California Secretary of State. California state registration is limited to same sex domestic partners and only those opposite sex partners where one partner is at least 62 and eligible for Social Security based on age. The domestic partnership is deemed created on the date the Declaration of Domestic Partnership is filed with the California Secretary of State.
**Downstream Entity**

All participating providers or other entities contracted or subcontracted with the IPA/medical group, including but not limited to individual physicians, ancillary providers, subcontracted administrative services vendors, third party administrators or management companies, as defined by CMS and the Medicare Advantage regulations.

**Durable Medical Equipment (DME)**

Equipment designed for repeated use, which is Medically Necessary to treat an illness or injury, to improve the functioning of a malformed body member, or to prevent further deterioration of the patient’s medical condition. Durable Medical Equipment includes wheelchairs, hospital beds, respirators, and other items that the Plan determines are Durable Medical Equipment such as oxygen ostomy and medical supplies.

**Durable Power of Attorney**

See *Advance Directives*.

**Electronic Claim Submission**

Electronic claim submission is the paperless submission of claims generated by computer software that is transmitted electronically to Blue Shield. Claim files are submitted to Blue Shield in the ASC X12 835 5010 format.

**Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)**

A computer-to-computer exchange of information between businesses. Use of electronic data interchange is considered an industry best-practice to optimize administrative efficiency, lower cost and reduce overall revenue cycle time.

**Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)**

EFT is the electronic transfer of claim payments into a designated bank account based on information submitted by the provider. The EFT process is set up to ensure privacy in addition to being quick and efficient.

**Electronic Provider Access (EPA)**

Electronic Provider Access (EPA) is an online tool giving providers the ability to access out-of-area member’s Blue plan provider websites to request medical authorization and pre-service review. To access the EPA tool, log into Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider and click on the Pre-Service Review for Out-of-area Members within the Authorizations section. Choose the Electronic Provider Access option and you will be connected directly to the Blue plan within a secured routing mechanism to begin your request.

**Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA)**

ERA is an electronic version of an explanation of medical payment in HIPAA-compliant files. ERA files are transmitted to vendors or providers in the ASC X12 835 5010 format.

**Eligibility Report**

A report of members determined by Blue Shield to be eligible for benefits and for whom Blue Shield providers are compensated.
Glossary

Emergency Services

Services necessary to screen and stabilize members in cases where an enrollee reasonably believed he/she had an emergency medical or psychiatric condition given the enrollee’s age, personality, education, background and other similar factors.

Employer Group

The organization, firm, or other entity that has at least two employees and who contracts with Blue Shield to arrange health care services for its employees and their dependents.

Essential Community Providers

Healthcare providers that serve predominately low-income, high-risk, special needs and medically-underserved individuals. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) proposes to define essential community providers as including only those groups suggested in the ACA, namely those named in section 340B(a)(4) of the Public Health Service Act and in section 197(c)(1)(D)(i)(IV) of the Social Security Act.

Evidence of Coverage and Disclosure

A summary of the Plan’s coverage and general provisions under the health services contract. The Evidence of Coverage includes a description of covered benefits, member cost-sharing, limitations and exclusion.

Exclusions

An item or service that is not covered by Blue Shield as defined in the Evidence of Coverage and Disclosure.

Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO)

An Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO) is a health benefits program in which the member receives no benefits for care obtained outside the network except emergency care and does not include a Primary Care Physician selection. EPO benefit coverage may be delivered via BlueCard PPO and is restricted to services provided by BlueCard PPO providers.

Expedited Appeals

An appeal that requires resolution as soon as possible to accommodate the member’s condition not to exceed seventy-two (72) hours from the initial request. To qualify as an expedited appeal, the routine decision making process might seriously jeopardize the life or health of a person, or when the person is experiencing severe pain.
Expedited Initial Determination

When Blue Shield’s routine decision making process might pose an imminent or serious threat to a member’s health, including, but not limited to severe pain, potential loss of life, limb, or major bodily function, Blue Shield will make a decision on prior authorization requests relating to admissions, continued stays, or other healthcare services, as soon as medically indicated but no longer than 72 hours.

Expedited Review or Decision

The Knox Keene Act requires and provides for an expedited review (initial determination) and appeal process. When a member believes that his/her health and ability to function could be seriously harmed by waiting the 30 days for a standard appeal, he/she may request an expedited review (initial determination) or appeal. NCQA CMS requirements, standards, and Blue Shield require that this request be processed within 72 hours. This request may be filed by the member, his/her representative or his/her physician on behalf of the member.

Experimental/Investigational Treatments

- Any treatment, therapy, procedure, drug or drug usage, facility or facility usage, equipment or equipment usage, device or device usage, or supplies that are not recognized, in accordance with generally accepted professional medical standards, as being safe and effective for use in the treatment of an illness, injury, or condition

- Any service that requires federal or state agency approval prior to its use, where such approval has not been granted at the time the service or supply was provided

- Services or supplies which themselves are not approved or recognized, in accordance with accepted professional medical standards, but nevertheless are authorized by law or by a government agency for use in testing, trials, or other studies on human patients

Explanation of Benefits (EOB)

A written statement to members identifying which services rendered are covered and not covered under their health plan. Services that are not covered are the member’s financial responsibility.

External Independent Medical Review (Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO Plans)

For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members, CMS has contracted with a national independent review body, MAXIMUS Federal Services, Inc. MAXIMUS Federal Services, Inc. is an independent CMS contractor that review appeals by members of Medicare managed care plans, including Medicare Advantage plan.

External Review

An option provided to commercial members for consideration of:

- A medical necessity decision following an appeal;

- An appeal under the Friedman/Knowles Experimental Treatment Act in which care for a member with a terminal illness has been denied on the grounds that the treatment is experimental;

- Where the case is sent to an independent, external review organization for an opinion, which is binding on Blue Shield.
Glossary

Fee-for-Service
A payment system by Medicare. Fee-for-service doctors, hospitals, and other providers are paid for each service performed. For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan, this is also known as traditional or original Medicare.

FEP
The Federal Employee Program.

Formulary
A continually updated list of prescription medications that Blue Shield maintains for use under the Outpatient Prescription Drug program. The list is based on evidence-based review of drugs by members of the Blue Shield Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee. This committee is made up of physicians and pharmacists, including practicing network physicians and pharmacists who are not employees of Blue Shield, many of whom are providers and experts in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. The formulary contains both brand-name, generic and biologic drugs.

Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA)
Comprehensive program to detect, correct and prevent fraud, waste and abuse in the Part D benefit.

Functional Acknowledgment (997)
For providers submitting electronic claims, Blue Shield sends a 997 transaction to identify the acceptance or rejection of the functional group, transaction sets or segments.

Grievance
An expression of dissatisfaction by a member, member representative or provider on the member’s behalf, and categorized as a potential quality issue, appeal (see Appeals) or complaint.

Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)
A health care service plan that requires its members to use the services of designated physicians, hospitals or other providers of medical care except in a medical emergency. HMOs have a greater control of utilization and typically use a capitation payment system.

Health Services Contract
The employer group or individual contract that establishes the benefits that subscribers and dependents are entitled to receive.
HIPAA (The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996)

HIPAA is the 1996 federal legislation that changes health coverage requirements in the group and individual markets. It contains provisions regarding portability of health coverage, Administrative Simplification, Medical Savings Accounts (MSAs), and fraud and abuse. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), formerly is the main regulatory agency responsible for implementing the provisions of HIPAA. The provisions relating to Administrative Simplification were effective in 2002 and 2003. Administrative Simplification is intended to reduce the costs and administrative burdens of health care by establishing national standards (including security) and procedures for electronic storage and transmission of health care information. Administrative Simplification affects health plans, health care providers, and clearinghouses that transmit or collect health information electronically.

HIPAA EDI Validation Report

Blue Shield validates inbound electronic claim files for HIPAA compliance, and produces a report to providers submitting electronic claims. Blue Shield utilizes Edifecs as it HIPAA validator.

Hold Harmless

An agreement with a healthcare provider not to bill the member for any difference between billed charges for covered services (excluding coinsurance) and the amount the healthcare provider has contractually agreed with a Blue plan as full payment for these services.

Home Health Care (HHC)

A comprehensive, medically necessary range of health services provided by a recognized provider organization to a patient at home, usually under the supervision of a physician.

Hospice Care

Care and services provided in a home or facility by a licensed or certified provider that is:

- Designed to be palliative and supportive care to individuals who are terminally ill, and
- Directed and coordinated by medical professionals authorized by the Plan

Hospital

- A licensed and accredited health facility engaged primarily in providing (for compensation from patients) medical, diagnostic, and surgical facilities for the care and treatment of sick and injured members on an inpatient basis, and that provides such facilities under the supervision of a staff of physicians and 24-hour a day nursing services by registered nurses (not including facilities that are principally rest homes, nursing homes, or homes for the aged),
- A psychiatric hospital licensed as a health facility and accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, or
- A “psychiatric health facility” as defined in Section 1250.2 of the Health and Safety Code.
Glossary

Hospitalist
A physician who specializes in the care of patients who are hospitalized.

In Area
Refers to services performed within the Blue Shield service area.

Individual Family Plan (IFP)
A health plan purchased to cover an individual or family, as opposed to a group plan. It differs from a group plan in the following respects: (1) the individual applying for IFP coverage is the contract-holder rather than the employer, (2) underwriting evaluation of a health statement ordinarily is required for everyone to be covered under an IFP contract, and (3) choice of plans is restricted to predetermined benefits.

Infertility
The member who has a current diagnosis of infertility and who is actively trying to conceive and has either:

1) The presence of a demonstrated bodily malfunction recognized by a licensed Doctor of Medicine as a cause of not being able to conceive; or

2) For women age 35 and less, failure to achieve a successful pregnancy (live birth) after 12 months or more of regular unprotected intercourse; or

3) For women over age 35, failure to achieve a successful pregnancy (live birth) after 6 months or more of regular unprotected intercourse; or

4) Failure to achieve a successful pregnancy (live birth) after six cycles of artificial insemination supervised by a physician (The initial six cycles of artificial insemination are not a benefit of this plan); or

5) Three or more pregnancy losses.

Initial Decision/Initial Determination
When a physician group, hospital or Blue Shield makes an initial determination for a requested service or a claim for services rendered.

Inpatient
An individual who has been admitted to a hospital as a registered bed patient and is receiving services under the direction of a physician.

Interchange Acknowledgment (TA1)
For providers submitting electronic claims, Blue Shield provides the capability for the receiving trading partner to notify the sending trading partner of problems that were encountered in the interchange control structure.

Limitations
Refers to services that are covered by Blue Shield but only under certain conditions.
Lock-In

A provision for an HMO that requires the member to obtain all medical care through Blue Shield except in the following situations:

- Emergency services, anywhere
- Urgently needed services outside of the service area and (under limited circumstances) inside the service area
- Referrals to non-plan providers or Away-from-Home care

Members that use non-plan providers, except under the conditions mentioned, will be obligated to pay for these services. Neither Blue Shield nor Medicare will pay for these services.

Marketplace Exchange

For purposes of this document, the term Marketplace/Exchange refers to the public exchange as established pursuant to the Affordable Care Act (ACA): A transparent and competitive insurance marketplace where individuals and small businesses can buy affordable and qualified health benefit plans. Affordable Insurance Marketplaces will offer a choice of health plans that meet certain benefits and cost standards.

The ACA allows the opportunity for each state to establish a State-based Marketplace. Recognizing that not all states may elect to establish a State-based Marketplace, the ACA directs the Secretary of HHS to establish and operate a federally-facilitated Marketplace in any state that does not do so, or will not have an operable Marketplace for the 2014 coverage year, as determined in 2013. MAXIMUS Federal Services, Inc. (Blue Shield 65 Plus (HMO) Only).

Maximum Enrollee Out-of-Pocket Costs (Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO Plans)

For Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan members, the maximum out-of-pocket (MOOP) amount is the most that they will pay during the calendar year for in-network covered Medicare Part A and Part B services. Amounts paid for plan premiums, Medicare Part A and Part B premiums, and prescription drugs do not count toward the maximum out-of-pocket amount. If a Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan member reaches this amount, they will not have to pay any out-of-pocket costs for the remainder of the year for covered in-network Part A and Part B services. For specific guidelines on how to submit claims for MOOP electronically, contact the EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221.

MAXIMUS Federal Services, Inc. (Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO Plans)

An independent Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) contractor that review appeals by members of Medicare managed care plans, including Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan.

Medicaid

A program designed to assist low-income families in providing healthcare for themselves and their children. It also covers certain individuals who fall below the federal poverty level. Other people who are eligible for Medicaid include low-income children under age 6 and low-income pregnant women. Medicaid is governed by overall Federal guidelines in terms of eligibility, procedures, payment level etc., but states have a broad range of options within those guidelines to customize the program to their needs and/or can apply for specific waivers. State Medicaid programs must be approved by CMS; their daily operations are overseen by the State Department of Health (or similar state agency).
Medically Necessary

Benefits are provided for covered services that are medically necessary. Medically necessary services include only those which have been established as safe and effective and are furnished in accordance with generally accepted professional standards to treat an illness or injury and which, as determined by Blue Shield, are:

- Consistent with Blue Shield medical policy; and,
- Consistent with the symptoms or diagnosis; and,
- Not furnished primarily for the convenience of the patient, the attending physician or other provider; and,
- Furnished at the most appropriate level that can be provided safely and effectively to the patient.

If there are two or more medically necessary services that may provide for the illness, injury, or medical condition, Blue Shield will provide benefits based on the most cost-effective services.

Hospital inpatient services which are medically necessary include only those services which satisfy the above requirements, require the acute bed-patient (overnight) setting, and which could not have been provided in a physician’s office, the outpatient department of a hospital, or in another lesser facility without adversely affecting the patient’s condition or the quality of medical care rendered.

Inpatient services which are not medically necessary include hospitalization in the following cases:

- For diagnostic studies that could have been provided on an outpatient basis;
- For medical observation or evaluation;
- For personal comfort;
- In a pain management center to treat or cure chronic pain; or
- For inpatient rehabilitation that can be provided on an outpatient basis.

Blue Shield reserves the right to review all services to determine whether they are medically necessary.

Medicare Advantage Organization (MAO)

A public or private entity that contracts with CMS to offer a Medicare Advantage plan. Blue Shield of California is a MAO that offers Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO plans.

Medicare Advantage (MA) Program

Section 4001 of the BBA created the MA Program as a new Part C of Title XVIII of the Social Security Act. On June 19, 1998, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), issued the regulation implementing the MA Program required by the BBA. Under this program, eligible individuals may elect to receive Medicare benefits through enrollment in one of an array of private health plan choices beyond the original Medicare program or the plans now available through managed care organizations.

Medicare-Covered Charges

The maximum amounts Medicare will pay for Medicare-covered services.
Medicare Crossover

The Crossover program was established to allow Medicare to transfer Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) information directly to a payor with Medicare’s supplemental insurance company.

Medicare Guidelines

The rules and regulations used by CMS to determine the services that Medicare covers under Part A (Hospital Insurance protection) and Part B (Medical Insurance protection).

Medicare Part D Covered Drug

A Part D covered drug is available only by prescription, approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (or is a drug described under section 1927(k)(2)(A)(ii) or (iii) of the Act), used and sold in the United States, and used for a medically accepted indication (as defined in section 1927(k)(6) of the Act). A covered Part D drug includes prescription drugs, biological products, insulin as described in specified paragraphs of section 1927(k) of the Act, and vaccines licensed under section 351 of the Public Health Service Act. The definition of a covered Part D drug excludes any drug, biological product, insulin, or vaccine for which as prescribed and dispensed or administered to an individual, payments would be available under Parts A or B of Medicare for that individual. In addition, the definition of a covered Part D drug specifically excludes drugs or classes of drugs, or their medical uses, which may be excluded from coverage or otherwise restricted under section 1927(d)(2) of the Act. Medicare Part D excludes fees for drug administration, except for administration fees associated with the administration of a Part D vaccine.

Under Medicare guidelines, some drugs may be covered under Medicare Part B or Medicare Part D depending upon the characteristics of the beneficiary and/or medical use of the drug. Unless otherwise indicated in the Division of Financial Responsibilities, Medicare Part B Covered Services are Group responsibility and Medicare Part D Covered Services are Blue Shield responsibility. Group is delegated for authorization of Medicare Part B drugs. If a drug does not meet LCD Medicare Part B coverage guidelines, Blue Shield will review for potential coverage under Part D, using the LCD Medicare guidelines and Blue Shield prior authorization coverage criteria. An LCD, as established by Section 522 of the Benefits Improvement and Protection Act, is a decision by a fiscal intermediary or carrier whether to cover a particular service on an intermediary-wide or carrier-wide basis in accordance with Section 1862(a)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act (i.e., a determination as to whether the service is reasonable and necessary).

Medicare Supplemental (Medigap)

Medicare Supplemental (Medigap) pays for expenses not covered by Medicare. Medigap is a term for a health insurance policy sold by private insurance companies to fill the “gaps” in original Medicare Plan coverage. Medigap policies help pay some of the healthcare costs that the original Medicare Plan doesn’t cover.

Medigap policies are regulated under federal and state laws and are “standardized.” There may be up to 12 different standardized Medigap policies (Medigap Plans A through L). Each plan, A through L, has a different set of basic and extra benefits. The benefits in any Medigap Plan A through L are the same for any insurance company. Each insurance company decides which Medigap policies it wants to sell.

Most of the Medigap claims are submitted electronically directly from the Medicare intermediary to the member’s Home Plan via Medicare Crossover process.

Medigap does not include Medicare Advantage products, which are a separate program under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Members who have a Medicare Advantage Plan do not typically have a Medigap policy because under Medicare Advantage these policies do not pay any deductibles, copayments or other cost-sharing.
Glossary

Member

An individual, either a subscriber or eligible dependent, who is enrolled and maintains coverage in a Blue Shield Plan under the health services contract. This term also applies to Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan or a Blue Shield Medicare prescription drug plan.

National Account

An employer group with employee and/or retiree locations in more than one Blue Plan’s service area.

National Provider Identifier (NPI)

The NPI is a unique 10 digit numeric identification number. The NPI will be issued by CMS to all eligible health care individual practitioners, groups and facilities. The NPI is required on all HIPAA compliant standard electronic transactions.

Non-Covered Services

Health care services that are not benefits under the subscriber’s Evidence of Coverage/Disclosure Form.

Opt-Out

The act of a member seeking care without a referral from the primary care physician. Depending upon with type of HMO plan involved, opt-outs might or might not be covered. If covered, members who opt out are responsible for higher out-of-pocket costs. Also called "self-referral."

Other Party Liability (OPL)

A cost containment program that ensure Blue plans meet their responsibilities efficiently without assuming the monetary obligations of others and without allowing members to profit from illness or accident. OPL includes coordination of benefits, Medicare, Workers’ Compensation, subrogation and no-fault auto insurance.

Out-of-Area Follow-up Care

Out-of-area services which are non-emergent and medically necessary in nature to establish the member’s progress following an initial emergency or urgent service.

Out-of-Pocket Maximum

The highest deductible, copayment and coinsurance amount an individual or family is required to pay for designated covered services each year as indicated in the Summary of Benefits. Charges for services that are not covered and charges in excess of the allowable amount or contracted rate do not accrue to the out-of-pocket maximum.

Note: Members are financially responsible for any services which are not covered by the Plan. This may result in total member payments in excess of the out-of-pocket maximum.
Outpatient

An individual receiving services under the direction of a plan provider but not requiring hospital admission.

*Note: For Blue Shield Preferred Plans, a length of stay past midnight is considered an inpatient admission.*

Outpatient Facility

A licensed facility, not a physician’s office or a hospital, that provides medical and/or surgical services on an outpatient basis.

Part B Premium (Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO Plans)

A monthly premium paid (usually deducted from a person’s Social Security check) to cover Part B Premiums for Original Medicare fee-for-service. Members of Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans must continue to pay this premium by themselves, Medicaid, or another third party, to receive full coverage and be eligible to join and stay in Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans.

Part D Premium (Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO Plans)

Referred to as the Income Related Medicare Adjustment Amount (IRMAA). Beginning in 2011, the Affordable Care Act requires Part D enrollees whose incomes exceed certain thresholds, pay a monthly adjustment amount. This new premium applies to all Medicare beneficiaries, both group and individual, who fall into higher income levels. Like Part B, the premium will usually be deducted from the person’s Social Security check.

Participating Provider

A provider who has contracted with Blue Shield to accept Blue Shield’s payment, plus any applicable Member Deductible, Copayment, Coinsurance, or amounts in excess of specified Benefit maximums, as payment in full for Covered Services provided to Members enrolled in a designated Plan. This definition does not include providers who contract with Blue Shield’s mental health service administrator (MHSA) to provide covered mental health or substance abuse services.

Payor

The entity that accepts the financial risk for the provision of health care services.

Peer Review

A physician review for the purposes of determining the existence of an actual or potential quality of care issue. This review process includes a review of the clinical and administrative information available. It is the evaluation or review of the performance of colleagues by professionals with similar types and degrees of expertise.

Percent of Billed Charges

A payment arrangement under which a provider is reimbursed at a previously agreed upon percentage of the total billed amount, not to include non-benefit items or items previously excepted from the payment arrangement.
Glossary

Per Diem Rate
A negotiated rate per day for payment of all covered inpatient services provided to a patient in a preferred hospital.

Physician Advisor Review
A physician review of a utilization management request for prospective, concurrent and/or retrospective reviews for the purpose of determining medical necessity and/or appropriateness of care or services.

Plan
The member’s health care service plan, e.g. HMO, PPO, EPO, and POS.

Plan Hospital
A hospital licensed under applicable state law contracting with Blue Shield specifically to provide HMO Plan benefits to members.

Plan Provider
A provider who has an agreement with Blue Shield to provide covered services to HMO members.

Plan Specialist
A physician (M.D. or D.O.) other than a primary care physician, who has an agreement with Blue Shield to provide covered services to HMO members according to an authorized referral by a primary care physician, or according to the Access+ Specialist program, or during a well-woman examination.

Point-of-Service (POS)
A type of managed care plan whereby members have the option of choosing to obtain covered medical services from the provider of their choice from a provider within Blue Shield network or from an out-of-network provider, or through their primary care physician who manages their care and refers members to participating hospitals, physicians, and other providers within a select HMO network. POS members who obtain their medical care through their primary care physician receive HMO level benefits. Members who self-refer to in-network or out-of-network providers are subject to applicable deductibles, copayments and coinsurance. Care received from out-of-network providers is covered at the lowest benefit level. When members receive services from out-of-network providers they are financially responsible for the difference between the amount Blue Shield allows for those services and the amount billed by the out-of-network provider. Mental health and substance abuse services are provide at the HMO and PPO non-participating levels of care.

Preferred Provider Organization (PPO)
A network of providers (usually physicians, hospitals, and allied health care professionals) that contract with a payor to deliver services to the enrollees of a designated health care service plan. These providers agree to accept the payor’s allowances plus any enrollee coinsurance, copayment, or deductible as payment in full.
Glossary

**Preferred Provider Organization, Basic (PPOB)**

A health benefit program that provides a significant financial incentive to members when they obtain services from any physician or hospital designated as a PPO provider and that does not require a primary care physician gatekeeper/referral to access PPO providers. Similar to BlueCard PPO/EPO, this network includes providers specializing in numerous types of care, as well as other provider types, such as Essential Community and Indian Health Service providers where they are available.

**Prefix**

Three characters preceding the subscriber identification number on the Blue plan ID cards. The prefix identifies the member’s Blue plan or national account and is required for routing claims.

**Prescription Drug Plan (PDP)**

Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage that is offered under a policy, contract or plan that has been approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as specified in 42 C.F.R. § 423.272 to offer qualified prescription drug coverage.

**Primary Care Physician (PCP)**

A general practitioner, board-certified (if not board certified, must at least have completed a two-year residency program) eligible family practitioner, internist, obstetrician/gynecologist or pediatrician who has contracted with Blue Shield through an IPA/medical group to provide benefits to members and to refer, authorize, supervise and coordinate the provision of all benefits to members in accordance with their health services contract and the Plan service delivery guidelines.

**Provider Connection**


**Provider Inquiry**

A telephoned or written request from a provider to explain the rationale for a decision to reduce, delay, or deny services or benefits. This inquiry may or may not alter the original decision.

**Provider Manual**

The *Hospital and Facility Guidelines* manual, which sets forth the operational rules and procedures applicable to the hospital and the performance of services described in the hospital agreement and which is amended and updated by Blue Shield at least annually. The Provider Manual shall include the rules, regulations or policies adopted by Blue Shield, including Blue Shield’s payment and medical policies, which may, from time to time, be communicated to physicians and providers.

**Prudent Layperson**

A non-medically trained individual using reasonable judgement under the circumstances. For emergency services, coverage is provided when a prudent layperson reasonably would believe that an emergency situation exists.
Glossary

Psychiatric Emergency Medical Condition
A mental disorder that manifests itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity that it renders the patient as being either of the following:

A) An immediate danger to himself or to herself, or to others.

B) Immediately unable to provide for, or utilize, food, shelter, or clothing due to the mental disorder.

Qualified Health Plan (QHP)
Under the Affordable Care Act, starting in 2014, an insurance plan that is certified by an Exchange, provides essential health benefits, follows established limits on cost-sharing (like deductibles, copayments, and out-of-pocket maximum amounts), and meets other requirements. A qualified health plan will have a certification by each Marketplace in which it is sold.

Quality Improvement Organization (QIO)
A group of health quality experts, clinicians, and consumers organized to improve the care delivered to people with Medicare. QIOs work under the direction of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to assist Medicare providers with quality improvement and to review quality concerns for the protection of beneficiaries and the Medicare Trust Fund. Formerly known as a Peer Review Organization (PRO). Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG) is the QIO for California.

Referral
The process by which a member obtains authorization for covered services rendered by providers other than the member’s primary care physician.

Referred Services
A covered health service, performed by a referred-to provider, that is:

• Authorized in advance by the primary care physician and/or the IPA/medical group

• Limited in scope, duration or number of services, as authorized

Referred-To Provider
A provider to whom a member is referred for services.

Rehabilitation Service
Inpatient or outpatient care furnished to an individual disabled by injury or illness, including Severe Mental Illness and Severe Emotional Disturbances of a Child, to restore an individual’s ability to function to the maximum extent practical. Rehabilitation services may consist of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and/or Respiratory Therapy.

Residential Care
Mental Health or Substance Abuse services provided in a facility or a free-standing residential treatment center that provides overnight/extended-stay services for members who do not require acute inpatient care.
Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP)

A service (communication protocol) specially designed to establish a connection to a particular computer, so that files can be securely transferred between computers. This protocol encrypts the data transferred to the receiving computer and prevents unauthorized access during the operation.

Service Area (Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO Plans)

The geographic area in which a person must permanently reside in to be able to become or remain a member of a Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan. Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plans have multiple service areas within California. The specific service area in which the member permanently resides determines the Medicare Advantage plan(s) in which they may enroll. More than one Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan may be offered in a service area.

Service Area (HMO)

The geographic area as defined in the Blue Shield HMO contract generally considered to be located within a 30-mile radius from the IPA/medical group’s primary care physician facilities.

If members receive care outside their primary care physician’s service area, it must be for an urgent or emergency condition or authorized by their primary care physician. When processing claims and encounters, the zip code of the attending physician (for professional claims) or the billing provider (for facility claims) is compared to the IPA/medical group’s table of zip codes stored in Blue Shield’s system to determine if the claim is for out-of-area services.

Shared Savings Services

Covered services paid by Blue Shield from a budget that is subject to a periodic settlement. Any surplus or deficit from this budget is shared between the IPA/medical group and Blue Shield.

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)

A facility with a valid license issued by the California Department of Public Health as a “Skilled Nursing Facility” or any similar institution licensed under the laws of any other state, territory, or foreign country. Also included is a Skilled Nursing Unit within a Hospital.

State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)

SCHIP is a public program administered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides matching funds to states for health insurance to families with children. The program was designed with the intent to cover uninsured children in families with incomes that are modest but too high to qualify for Medicaid. States are given flexibility in designing their SCHIP eligibility requirements and policies within broad federal guidelines. Some states have received authority through waivers of statutory provisions to use SCHIP funds to cover the parents of children receiving benefits from both SCHIP and Medicaid, pregnant women, and other adults.
Glossary

Stop-Loss

A contractual agreement with day or dollar threshold criteria that allows payment beyond the normal case or per-diem rate.

Sub-Acute Care

Skilled nursing or skilled rehabilitative care provided in a hospital or skilled nursing facility to patients who require skilled care such as nursing services; physical, occupational, or speech therapy; a coordinated program of multiple therapies; or who have medical needs that require daily monitoring by a registered nurse. A facility that is primarily a rest home, convalescent facility or home for the aged is not included in this definition.

Subscriber

A group employee or individual who is enrolled in and maintains coverage under the health services contract.

Third Party Liability

A provision of the health services contract that allows recovery of reasonable costs from a third party when a member is injured through the act or omission of a third party.

Traditional Coverage

Traditional coverage is a health benefit plan that provides basic and/or supplemental hospital and medical/surgical benefits (e.g., basic, major medical and add-on riders) designed to cover various services. Such products generally include cost sharing features, such as deductibles, coinsurance or copayments.

Unsolicited Claim Status Inquiry Report (U277) v 4040

Blue Shield validates inbound electronic claim files for HIPAA compliance, and returns results back to submitters in an ASCX12 U277 file format. Blue Shield utilizes Claredi Corporation’s Faciledi as its HIPAA validator.

Urgent Services

Those covered services rendered outside of the primary care physician’s service area (other than Emergency Services) which are medically necessary to prevent serious deterioration of a member’s health resulting from unforeseen illness, injury or complications of an existing medical condition, for which treatment cannot reasonably be delayed until the member returns to the primary care physician’s service area.

Validation Reports

Blue Shield generates a validation report for electronic submitters of claims and encounters summarizing the number of claims and encounters that have been received and processed.
There is no appendix for Section 2.
There is no appendix for Section 3.
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Table of Contents

A. Reimbursement for Outpatient Services
B. Blue Shield 65 Plus (HMO) Medicare Advantage Required Billing Elements
C. Where to Send Claims
D. List of Incidental Procedures
E. List of Office-Based Ambulatory Procedures
This page intentionally left blank.
Reimbursement for outpatient services is based on a facility’s contractual agreement in effect at the time services are rendered. To receive payment, facilities must properly identify services provided by submitting a completed UB 04 (or successor), or other HIPAA-compliant claim form and include all applicable codes (Revenue, CPT/HCPCS, modifiers) for each service. Revenue Codes should be appropriate for the bill type.

Blue Shield periodically reviews, and makes appropriate updates to, procedure listings based on industry standards. Updated listings are provided electronically and available upon request. Please consult your Blue Shield Network Manager for verification of your negotiated payment schedule.

Blue Shield reimburses facilities for outpatient services rendered to Blue Shield members using a variety of payment terms, including but not limited to: case rates, per visit rates, fee schedules, APC payment rate, and percentage of charges. In calculating allowed amounts, Blue Shield may round the figure to the nearest whole dollar. Please refer to your agreement to determine the reimbursement structure applicable to each outpatient service.

To complement the agreement, each section below provides:

A. A summary of the reimbursement method
B. A calculation example(s)

For outpatient services reimbursed pursuant to the APC payment rate, please refer to Section X of this document.

I. OUTPATIENT SURGICAL SERVICES

A. Summary

Blue Shield has implemented a payment system for outpatient surgical services that classifies ambulatory procedures into related groups. The groups are based on the relative resource needs (costs) for that group of procedures. The core of this payment system is the CPT-specific coding. Facilities must bill with appropriate revenue codes, CPT/HCPCS codes and modifiers in order to receive applicable payment. Blue Shield reimburses facilities for outpatient surgical services using one of the following payment methodologies:

- Outpatient Surgical Grouper Schedule
- APG Payment Schedule
- Percentage of Charges

Please refer to your agreement to determine which payment methodology applies to your facility and to view a complete listing of required Revenue and CPT/HCPCS Codes. If your facility is reimbursed under a fee schedule methodology, please see your fee schedule for a complete listing of CPT/HCPCS Codes.

In the event your listing contains groupers not included in your payment schedule, reimbursement will be issued at the applicable rate for ungrouped surgical procedures. If you have not received the fee schedule CD, contact your Blue Shield Network Manager, who will provide you with a copy.
# Reimbursement for Outpatient Services

## I. OUTPATIENT SURGICAL SERVICES (cont’d.)

### B. Examples of Reimbursement Calculation

Facilities contracting with Blue Shield under the Outpatient Surgical Grouper Schedule or APG Payment Schedule methodologies utilize reimbursement calculations resembling the examples below.

**Outpatient Surgical Grouper Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Facility Payment = (Outpatient Surgical Group Index Fee) x (Regional Factor) x (Multiplier)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Example Assumptions | • Revenue code billed is 0360  
• CPT code billed is 10022  
• CPT code 10022 is assigned to Outpatient Surgical Group 1  
• Outpatient Surgical Group 1 has an **Outpatient Surgical Index Fee** of $340  
• Hospital is in XYZ county, which has a **Regional Factor** of 1.176  
• Hospital’s negotiated **Multiplier** is 2.00 |
| Total Case Rate Payment | $799.68  
(The case rate payment may be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.) |

**APG Payment Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Facility Payment = (APG Grouper (corresponding APG Weight)) x (APG Payment Rate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Example Assumptions | • Revenue code billed is 0360  
• CPT code billed is 10021  
• CPT code 10021 is assigned to Grouper 001  
• Grouper 001 has a **weight** of **0.2000**  
• Hospital’s negotiated value of **APG at 1.0000** (APG Payment Rate) is $1,000 |
| Total Case Rate Payment | $200  
(The case rate payment may be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.) |
II. OUTPATIENT EMERGENCY SERVICES AND URGENT CARE SERVICES

A. Summary

Reimbursement for Emergency Services is based on the level of care provided to a Blue Shield member. Level of care varies from Level 1 (Limited) to Level 4 (Critical). Facilities must bill with applicable revenue codes, CPT/HCPCS codes and modifiers in order to receive reimbursement.

Blue Shield reimburses facilities for outpatient Emergency Services and Urgent Care Services using, generally, one of the following payment methodologies:

- Case Rate
- Percentage of Charges

Please refer to your agreement to determine which payment methodology applies to your facility and to view a complete listing of required revenue and CPT/HCPCS codes.

B. Example of Reimbursement Calculation

Facilities contracting with Blue Shield under the case rate methodology utilize reimbursement calculations resembling the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMERGENCY SERVICES AND URGENT CARE SERVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASE RATE CALCULATION EXAMPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example Assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue code billed is 0450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPT Code billed is 99281, which is Level 1: Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Case Rate for Level 1 is $97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital’s negotiated multiplier is 2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Case Rate Payment = $97 x 2.00 = $194

(The case rate payment may be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.)
Reimbursement for Outpatient Services

III. DIALYSIS SERVICES

A. Summary

Blue Shield reimburses facilities for outpatient Dialysis Services using one of the following payment methodologies:

- Per Visit Rate (excluding Pharmaceuticals)
- Percentage of Charges

Please refer to your agreement to determine which payment methodology applies to your facility and to view a complete listing of required Revenue and CPT/HCPCS Codes.

B. Example of Reimbursement Calculation

*For Facilities Under a Per Visit Rate Agreement*

For each day of, or visit for, Dialysis covered services provided on an outpatient basis by a facility to a member, Blue Shield will pay the facility the per visit rate multiplied by the negotiated dialysis multiplier, as set forth in your agreement.

Please see Section VIII, Outpatient Pharmaceutical Services, for specific details and calculation examples regarding pharmaceutical reimbursement.

Facilities contracting with Blue Shield under the per visit rate methodology utilize reimbursement calculations resembling the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIALYSIS SERVICES PER VISIT RATE CALCULATION EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formula</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example Assumptions**

- Revenue code billed is 0829, which is Mobile Dialysis
- The **per visit rate** for Mobile Dialysis is **$300**
- Hospital’s negotiated **Multiplier** is 1.10

Total Per Visit Payment = $300 x 1.10 =

($The per visit payment may be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.) $330
IV. OUTPATIENT INFUSION THERAPY SERVICES

A. Summary

Blue Shield reimburses facilities for outpatient Infusion Therapy Services using one of the following payment methodologies:

- Per Visit Rate (excluding Pharmaceuticals)
- Percentage of Charges

Please refer to your agreement to determine which payment methodology applies to your facility and to view a complete listing of required Revenue and CPT/HCPCS Codes.

Compensation for the facility’s provision of outpatient Infusion Therapy Services provided to HMO or Medicare Advantage members is generally the financial responsibility of the member's IPA or medical group.

B. Example of Reimbursement Calculation

*For Facilities Under a Per Visit Rate Agreement*

For each day of, or visit for, Infusion Therapy covered services provided on an outpatient basis by a facility to a member, Blue Shield will pay the facility the per visit rate.

Please see Section VIII, Outpatient Pharmaceutical Services, for specific details and calculation examples regarding pharmaceutical reimbursement.

Facilities contracting with Blue Shield under the per visit rate methodology utilize reimbursement calculations resembling the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFUSION THERAPY SERVICES PER VISIT RATE CALCULATION EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formula</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Example Assumptions** | • Revenue code billed is 0261, which is an Infusion Therapy revenue code  
• Hospital’s negotiated per visit rate is $250 |
| Total Per Visit Payment = | $250 |
V. OUTPATIENT PHYSICAL, RESPIRATORY, SPEECH, AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES

A. Summary

Blue Shield reimburses facilities for outpatient Physical, Respiratory, Speech, and Occupational Therapy Services using one of the following payment methodologies:

- Per Visit Rate
- Percentage of Charges

Please refer to your agreement to determine which payment methodology applies to your facility and to view a complete listing of required Revenue and CPT/HCPCS Codes.

Compensation for the facility’s provision of outpatient Physical Therapy, Respiratory Therapy, Speech Therapy, and Occupational Therapy Services provided to HMO or Medicare Advantage members is generally the financial responsibility of the member’s IPA or medical group.

B. Example of Reimbursement Calculation

For Facilities Under a Per Visit Rate Agreement

For Physical, Respiratory, Speech, and Occupational Therapy covered services provided by the facility to a member, Blue Shield will pay the facility the per visit rate.

Facilities contracting with Blue Shield under the per visit rate methodology utilize reimbursement calculations resembling the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPIRATORY THERAPY SERVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PER VISIT RATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALCULATION EXAMPLE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Formula**

Facility Payment = the negotiated per visit rate set forth in your agreement

**Example Assumptions**

- Revenue code billed is 0412, which is a Respiratory Therapy revenue code
- Hospital’s negotiated per visit rate is $75

**Total Per Visit Payment =**

$75
VI. OUTPATIENT RADIOLOGY, PATHOLOGY, AND DIAGNOSTIC TEST SERVICES

A. Summary

For the facility and technical component of covered outpatient Radiology, Pathology, and Diagnostic Test Services provided by the facility to a member, Blue Shield reimburses facilities in accordance with the following methodologies:

- Outpatient Radiology, Pathology, and Diagnostic Test Services Fee Schedule
- Percentage of Charges

Please refer to your agreement to determine which payment methodology applies to your facility and to view a complete listing of Revenue and CPT/HCPCS Codes. If your facility is reimbursed under a fee schedule methodology, please see your fee schedule for a complete listing of CPT/HCPCS Codes.

If you have not received the fee schedule CD, contact your Blue Shield Network Manager, who will provide you with a copy.

B. Example of Reimbursement Calculation

For agreements with diagnostic services reimbursed under fixed payment methodologies, the following formulas are used to calculate reimbursements:

### Outpatient Radiology, Pathology, and Diagnostic Test Services Fee Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Payment</th>
<th>= (a + b) x (Conversion Factor) x (Multiplier) where:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) = Practice Expense Technical Component based on the Outpatient Radiology, Pathology and Diagnostic Tests Schedule x ( Practice Regional Factor for the region in which the hospital facility providing the service is located) (subject to rounding)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) = Malpractice Expense Technical Component based on the Outpatient Radiology, Pathology and Diagnostic Tests Schedule x (Malpractice Regional Factor for the region in which the hospital facility providing the service is located) (subject to rounding)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Example Assumptions

- Revenue code billed is 0310
- CPT code billed is 70470, which has the following values:
  - Practice Expense Technical Component = 7.100
  - Malpractice Expense Technical Component = 0.370
- County is XYZ has the following factors:
  - Practice Regional Factor = 1.235
  - Malpractice Regional Factor = 0.669
- Conversion Factor = $40.6978
- Hospital’s negotiated Multiplier is 1.00

#### Calculating (a):

\[(a) = (7.100 \times 1.235) = 8.7685\]

#### Calculating (b):

\[(b) = (0.370 \times 0.669) = 0.24753\]

#### Payment

\[\text{Payment} = (8.7685 + 0.24753) \times ($40.6978) \times (1.00)\]

\[= (9.01603) \times ($40.6978) \times (1.00) = \$366.93\]

(The payment may be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.)
VII. OUTPATIENT CLINICAL LABORATORY SERVICES

A. Summary

Blue Shield reimburses facilities for outpatient Clinical Laboratory Services using one of the following payment methodologies:

- Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule
- Percentage of Charges

Please refer to your agreement to determine which payment methodology applies to your facility and to view a complete listing of required Revenue and CPT/HCPCS Codes. If your facility is reimbursed under a fee schedule methodology, please see your fee schedule for a complete listing of CPT/HCPCS Codes.

If you have not received the fee schedule CD, contact your Blue Shield Network Manager, who will provide you with a copy.

B. Example of Reimbursement Calculation

For Facilities Using a Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule

For the facility and technical component of all outpatient laboratory covered services provided by the hospital to a member, Blue Shield will pay the facility using the Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule multiplied by the negotiated Hospital Specific Multiplier, as set forth in your agreement.

Facilities contracting with Blue Shield under the Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule methodology utilize reimbursement calculations resembling the examples below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Facility Payment = (Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule Rate) x (Multiplier)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Example Assumptions**

- Revenue code billed is 0300
- CPT code billed is 80053
- The Clinical Laboratory Fee Schedule rate for this CPT code is $14.77
- Hospital's negotiated Multiplier is 2.00

Total Payment for CPT code 80053 = $14.77 x 2.00 =
(The calculation may be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.) $29.54
VIII. OUTPATIENT PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES

A. Summary

Blue Shield reimburses facilities for outpatient Pharmaceutical Services using the following payment methodologies:

- Outpatient Pharmaceutical Fee Schedule
- Percentage of Charges

Please refer to your agreement to determine which payment methodology applies to your facility and to view a complete listing of required Revenue and CPT/HCPCS Codes. If your facility is reimbursed under a fee schedule methodology, please see your fee schedule for a complete listing of CPT/HCPCS Codes.

Blue Shield’s AWP-based Outpatient Pharmaceutical Fee Schedule is updated quarterly to capture changes to AWP pricing. If you have not received the fee schedule CD, contact your Blue Shield Network Manager who will provide you with a copy. The CD is mailed out on an annual basis and will only contain the first quarter’s rates. Please contact your Network Manager for quarterly updates.

B. Example of Reimbursement Calculation

For Facilities Using the Outpatient Pharmaceutical Fee Schedule

The Blue Shield Outpatient Pharmaceutical Fee Schedule is based on the Average Wholesale Price (AWP). The AWP shall be derived from nationally recognized pricing sources selected by Blue Shield and shall be updated by Blue Shield quarterly. For new drugs, or drugs that are unclassified, the facility must bill using the appropriate revenue code, unclassified CPT-4/HCPCS code, and NDC Code with description in order to receive payment.

Facilities contracting with Blue Shield under the Pharmaceutical Fee Schedule methodology utilize reimbursement calculations resembling the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES</th>
<th>OUTPATIENT PHARMACEUTICAL Fee Schedule</th>
<th>CALCULATION EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formula</td>
<td>Facility Payment = (Outpatient Pharmaceutical Fee Schedule) x (number of units)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example Assumptions</td>
<td>• HCPCS code billed is J0282</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Outpatient Pharmaceutical Fee Schedule rate for J0282 is $1.39 per unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Units billed = 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Payment = $1.39 x 5 =</td>
<td>(The payment may be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.)</td>
<td>$6.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reimbursement for Outpatient Services

IX. OTHER OUTPATIENT SERVICES

A. Summary

Blue Shield will compensate the facility for other covered outpatient services provided to a member not referenced under any specific outpatient services payment category at allowed charges minus the negotiated discount percentage. In many cases, reimbursement for these services will not exceed the Medical/ Surgical/ Pediatric Per Diem Rate set forth in your agreement.

Please review your agreement’s specific terms for details.

X. OUTPATIENT SERVICES REIMBURSED AT APC PAYMENT RATE

A. Summary

Blue Shield reimburses pursuant to the Outpatient Fee Schedule using the following payment methodologies:

- Outpatient Pharmaceutical Fee Schedule
- Percentage of Charges

B. Example of Reimbursement Calculation

**Services Assigned a Rate on the Outpatient Fee Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Facility Payment = (Outpatient Fee Schedule) x (Multiplier)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Example Assumptions | • CPT code billed is 20999  
| | • The rate for CPT code 20999 is $1500  
| | • Hospital’s Multiplier is 1.05 |
| Total Payment = $1,500 x 1.05 = $1,575 | $1,575 |

(The payment may be rounded to the nearest whole dollar)

**Services Reimbursed at POC Pursuant to the Outpatient Fee Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Facility Payment = (Allowed Charges) x (Base) x (Multiplier)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Example Assumptions | • CPT code billed is 58150  
| | • Hospital’s Allowed Charges are $2,000  
| | • Hospital’s Base Percentage is 10.2%  
| | • Hospital’s Multiplier is 1.05 |
| Total Payment = $2,000 x 10.2% x 1.05 = $214.20 | $214.20 |

(The payment may be rounded to the nearest whole dollar)
Skilled Nursing Facility Discharges (SNF or TCU)

Background

There have been longstanding federal regulations designed to protect member rights for Medicare Advantage (MA) enrollees. These regulations include the right to due process, with appeal rights when any service or item being denied or, as cited in section 422.568(c) of the Balanced Budget Act, when a discontinuation of a service occurs and the member disagrees.

For skilled nursing facility discharges, discontinuation of service, continued stay beyond the maximum Medicare / Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan covered benefit of 100 days per benefit period, a specific, regulatory notice is required to be provided to the beneficiary (member) (or legal representative) and said notice requires a signed acknowledgement of receipt.

What constitutes a valid acknowledgement of receipt?

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has external review performed through Maximus Federal Services (Maximus). We are summarizing from Maximus “Reconsideration Notes”, the guidelines for appropriate notice of receipt of the Notice of Non-Coverage (NONC) for SNF discharges. Signature validates receipt of the notice, but does not imply any agreement. The notice ties to delivery of member rights and for a notice to be considered to have occurred, the following guidelines apply:

Delivery in person is preferable and the member must sign the actual notice. For appeals cases, the plan must provide a copy of the actual notice delivered, not a sample letter, along with the signature page, with the member signature, acknowledging receipt.

If a member refuses to sign an acknowledgment of receipt of the Notice of Non-Coverage, both the beneficiary’s medical chart and the “refusal to sign” page of the notice should reflect:

- The date the notice was delivered.
- The individual who delivered the notice.
- Specific reasons for the member’s refusal to sign the notice receipt acknowledgment form.
- If a witness is able to attest a patient’s refusal to sign, document the delivery of the notice and obtain the witness’s signature as attestment to the patient’s refusal to sign.
- If a witness is not available, the individual delivering the notice should sign the acknowledgment form to attest the attempted delivery of the Notice of Non-Coverage.

Enhancements to build on the acknowledgment of receipt in the case of a refusal to sign:

- Often, a verbal notice of a planned discharge occurs prior to delivery of the actual written notice. Although not required, if a verbal notice occurs, it can be easily noted on the Acknowledgment of Receipt page prior to delivery of the notice to the member. By noting the verbal notice on the acknowledgment of receipt, the case documentation is enhanced, should an issue be subsequently appealed. NOTE: Verbal notice does not meet the requirements for valid notice. Verbal notice can only be used to enhance the case documentation related to the actual delivery of a valid notice with a signed acknowledgement of receipt.
Skilled Nursing Facility Discharges (SNF or TCU) (cont’d.)

Guardians and Incompetent Patients

A Notice is not valid if delivered knowingly to an incompetent patient. Having a patient being discharged from skilled nursing care with a diagnosis of dementia is not likely to hold as a valid notice on appeal unless there are documented attempts to also deliver the Notice of Non-Coverage (NONC) to and secure a signed acknowledgment from any legal guardian or other family members.

Legal guardians include court appointed guardians, family members with Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, or appropriate legal counsel/attorney representation. Additionally, it is also recognized that, as a practical matter, there are circumstances when appointment documentation cannot be obtained in a timely manner. If a member is not competent or is physically unable to sign the statement, and the representative is the spouse or next of kin, the notice acknowledgement that is signed by a default representative should be clearly documented by the facility as to the applicability of a state allowable person to be a default representative. In the event there is any controversy related to such default representation, only a representative as determined by the appropriate state court would be accepted.

If verbal or telephonic notice is provided to a representative, this is only as back up to the actual signed acknowledgement of written notice. The member officially receives notice when the written notice is delivered and a signed acknowledgement obtained or a clearly documented refusal to sign the acknowledgement occurs.

We are challenged when a guardian is unwilling to sign the acknowledgment of receipt of the notice and direct hand delivery is not viable. In such cases, document all attempts to both verbally inform and to physically deliver the notice carefully. If delivery of the notice to a guardian for an incompetent patient is via mail, keep all receipts from the courier service or certified mail (return receipt required) to demonstrate delivery of the notice. In such cases, the signed courier service or other confirmation of delivery can be submitted as valid acknowledgement of receipt.

- The patient’s chart should document any verbal notice
- Document attempted delivery to member and guardian
- Obtain signed acknowledgement of receipt or document (and preferably witness) actual delivery of the notice, where there is a refusal to sign

*Note: In cases where care must be coordinated through an offsite guardian, provide adequate time for delivery of a valid notice. (A courier service delivery will delay notice and potentially discharge by only one day, if they are able to deliver to the guardian. U.S. Certified mail is not as predictable.)*
Skilled Nursing Facility Discharges (SNF or TCU) (cont’d.)

Regulatory Changes and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

*Important Notice:* The Grijalva Final Rule 42 C.F.R. § 422.620 contains provisions required under the settlement agreement in the Grijalva v. Shalala litigation concerning appeal rights under the Medicare managed care program to Medicare Advantage (MA) enrollees at the time of discharge from an inpatient hospital stay. For the Grijalva portion, which relates to SNF, Home Health and CORF discharges, the effective date was January 1, 2004. The current requirement still in effect for IPAs is to deliver the Notice of Non-Coverage (NONC) within one day prior to the effective date of the discharge.

**The Final Rule Requires:**

- The right to an immediate review of a Medicare Advantage Organization (MAO) discharge decision by an independent review body if the enrollee believes services should continue.

- Advanced written notice to all MA enrollees at least two days before the termination of certain services (before planned termination of Medicare coverage of their skilled nursing facility (SNF), home health agency (HHA) or comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation facility (CORF) services), with instructions on how to obtain a detailed notice and file an appeal.

- Upon request, a specific and detailed explanation of why services are either no longer medically necessary or are no longer covered by the health plan. The health plan also needs to describe any applicable Medicare coverage rule, MA policy, contract provision or rationale upon which the termination decision was based.

In addition, the final rule requires MAOs to provide detailed discharge notices only in those situations where enrollees indicate dissatisfaction with the health plan's decision. All Medicare beneficiaries who are treated in a hospital will continue to receive generic notices upon admission that will inform them of their appeal rights, but only those beneficiaries that disagree with the decision to be discharged must be issued a detailed written notice of non-coverage one day before their hospital coverage ends. If an appeal is filed, beneficiaries remain entitled to continuation of coverage for their hospital stay until the quality improvement organization renders a decision.

Enrollees then may request an independent review of the MA organization’s decision to end coverage of SNF, HHA or CORF services. In the event of a timely appeal request, an MA organization must issue a second, detailed notice that explains the reasons why Medicare coverage should end.

CMS has designated Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) to conduct these fast-track reviews. QIOs are suitable for the fast-track appeals process in light of their experience in performing similar, immediate reviews of inpatient hospital discharges. The QIO that has an agreement with the SNF, HHA, or CORF providing the enrollee’s services will process the appeal. The MA organization must provide the second, detailed notice to both the QIO and the enrollee.
Skilled Nursing Facility Discharges (SNF or TCU) (cont’d.)

Regulatory Changes & the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (cont’d.)

Provider Notification of Termination. An important feature of the final rule provisions is that Medicare would charge providers with the actual delivery of the required notices. CMS believes that the providers themselves are in the best position to deliver the notices to enrollees, and that it would be placing an unreasonable burden on MAO’s to require that they deliver the notices to affected enrollees. The MA organization would retain ultimate responsibility for the decision to terminate services and for financial coverage of the services, however. The services would remain covered until four calendar days after an enrollee receives the termination notice, or if the Independent Review Entity reviews the decision, until noon on the day after an Independent Review Entity decision upholding the MAO’s decision. CMS believes that the requirement that providers issue these notices, in effect on behalf of MAO’s, best ensures that beneficiaries receive these notices in a timely manner. To facilitate implementation of this policy, we are proposing under §422.502(1) that all contracts between MAO’s and their providers must specify that the providers will comply with the notice and appeal provisions in subpart M of the federal requirements.

Timing of Notices. Section 422.624(b)(1) addresses the timing of the required notices. In general, the provider would notify the enrollee of the MAO’s decision to terminate covered services two calendar days before the scheduled termination. Again, the current requirement still in effect is within one day of the date of discharge. If the provider services are expected to be furnished to an enrollee for a time span of fewer than two calendar days in duration, the enrollee should be given the notice upon admission to the provider (or at the beginning of the service period if there is no official “admission” to a non-institutional provider, such as in an HHA setting). The notice must be given in all situations, regardless of whether an enrollee agrees with the decision that his or her services should end.

CMS would allow providers a full working “day” within which to deliver the termination notice, with any notification delivered during normal business hours on a given day serving to initiate the four-day standard on that day, even if the timing of the delivery of the notice resulted in fewer than 24 hours to ask for an Independent Review Entity appeal, and fewer than 96 hours between notification and the proposed termination of services. That is, a notice delivered to a member at 2 p.m., Monday, would indicate that the member has until noon, Tuesday, to appeal to the Independent Review Entity, with termination of services scheduled for noon, Friday.
Skilled Nursing Facility Discharges (SNF or TCU) (cont’d.)

Regulatory Changes & the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (cont’d.)

*Delivery of Notices.* §422.624(c) specifies that “delivery” of a notice is valid only if a member has signed and dated the notice to indicate that he or she both received the notice and can comprehend its contents. This policy is consistent with our requirements governing delivery of similar notices, such as the requirements set forth in HCFA Program Memoranda A-02-018 for HHA Advanced Beneficiary Notices. Under this concept, a member who is comatose, confused, or otherwise unable to understand or act on his or her rights could not validly “receive” the notice, necessitating the presence of an authorized representative for purposes of receiving the notice. Similarly, presenting the standardized notice to a person who is illiterate, blind, or unable to understand English would not constitute successful “delivery” of the notice. Such situations could be remedied either through use of an authorized representative if that person has no barriers to receiving the notice or through other steps (such as use of a translator or language accessible version of the notice) that overcome the difficulties associated with notification.

*Note:* CMS would not interpret the requirement for successful delivery to permit an enrollee to extend coverage indefinitely by refusing to sign a notice of termination. If an enrollee refuses to sign a notice, the provider would annotate its copy of the notice to indicate the refusal, and the date of the refusal would be considered the date of receipt of the notice. Paragraph (c) describes what constitutes an effective delivery of a termination notice. The notice would have to be delivered timely, using standardized format and language, and include all of the elements required under §422.624(b)(2).

### BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA
**APPEAL PROCESS FOR NOTICE OF NON-COVERAGE HHA, SNF, CORF**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___</td>
<td>MSO</td>
<td>Determines termination date and drafts Notice of Medicare Non-Coverage (NOMNC). Faxes to SNF, HHA, CORF. If SNF, HHA, CORF prepare their own notices then notification needs to be given for termination date.</td>
<td>No less than 2 days prior to termination of services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>SNF, HHA, CORF</td>
<td>Issues NOMNC and obtains member's signature. SNF- at least 2 days prior to termination. If &lt; 2 days of service, then on admission or first visit, if the enrollee’s services are expected to be fewer than 2 days in duration, the SNF, HHA, or CORF should notify the enrollee at the time of admission to the provider. If, in a non-institutional setting, the span of time between services exceeds two days, the provider should deliver the notice no later than the next to last time that services are furnished. If benefits are exhausted a notice is required, the member may appeal, however these are referred back to the health plan to review and respond to this appeal. If a HHA is going out for an evaluation only, the agency is not required to send a notice. Also when only partial services are being discontinued (i.e., PT ends, but HHC continues), no notice is needed until all services end.</td>
<td>2 days prior to termination of services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Time Requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Enrollee</td>
<td>Disagrees with the discharge, the enrollee must contact the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. This request is made either in writing, telephone or fax, by noon the day after receipt of the NOMNC. The notice is still considered timely as long as Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. receives the appeal request no later than noon the day before the effective date that Medicare coverage ends.</td>
<td>No later than noon the day after receipt of notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>QIO = Health Services Advisory Group, Inc.</td>
<td>Receives Appeal request from enrollee or representative. Immediately notifies Medicare Advantage and the provider of the enrollee's request for a fast track appeal by phone and fax.</td>
<td>Day 1 begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>MA (Medicare Advantage) = Medicare Advantage plan</td>
<td>Receives notice of appeal from Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. (by phone &amp; fax) requesting the following information for review: A copy of the advance notice of termination (NONMC), a copy of the detailed explanation of Non-coverage (DENC), a copy of enrollee’s medical records, and a copy of other documents as requested.</td>
<td>Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan</td>
<td>Contact CM at IPA/MSO and request the information above faxed to Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. for review. Advise of same day requirement for sending these records. Request coversheet confirming records were sent to Health Services Advisory Group, Inc., copy of NONMC and DENC faxed to Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan. Also contact should be made to SNF requesting records &amp; NOMNC be faxed to Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. for review with confirmation of this to Blue Shield. Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. needs the detailed chart notes that SNF’s have for review.</td>
<td>Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan</td>
<td>If IPA/MSO is unable to make Day 1 submission requirement, notify Manager, Director or Medical Director</td>
<td>Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan</td>
<td>Manager, Director or Medical Director then contacts IPA Director of UM/QM &amp; or Medical Director to obtain documents.</td>
<td>Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>IPA/MSO</td>
<td>Faxes records to: 1.) Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. Copy of NOMNC with member’s signature or documentation of refusal to sign, copy of DENC and copy of enrollee’s medical records. 2.) Member/representative: Mails DENC. Upon request, all documents sent to Health Services Advisory Group, Inc.</td>
<td>Day 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Time Requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9  | IPA/ Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan | HMO ONLY: IPA makes decision to rescind the termination date and send new letter to member  
Fax copy of letter to Health Services Advisory Group, Inc.  
PPO ONLY:  
Blue Shield makes decision to rescind the termination date and send new letter to member  
Fax copy of letter to Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. | Resolved  
Go to step 14  
Resolved  
Go to step 14 |
| 10 | Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. | Reviews documents  
Renders decision to uphold or overturn  
Notifies Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan of decision by phone or fax. Mails letters of determination to Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan and enrollee | Day 1  
If Resolved  
Go to step 14 |
| 11 | Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. | If documents not received by Health Services Advisory Group, Inc., on Day 2, Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. sends to Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan, "Notice: Failure to Comply" requesting documents again. | Day 2 |
| 12 | Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan | Call IPA/MSO contact again to ensure all documents are faxed to Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. for review. | Day 2 |
| 13 | Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. | Review documents  
Renders decision to uphold or overturn  
Notifies IPA & Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan of decision by phone or fax. Mails letters of determination to Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan and enrollee | Day 2 |
| 14 | Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan | Logs all actions, dates & times in Notes document  
Prepare file for each appeal with notes on left side of folder, all other documents are filed on right side of folder, latest on top  
Record case in Grijalva Appeals tracking log | Real time |
| 15 | Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan | Cases are filed away in a locked cabinet alphabetically | Conclusion |
Contractual and Billing Requirements

Contracts already obligate providers to compliance with state and federal regulations. As part of the new CMS rule, contracted entities must comply with applicable notice and appeal provisions in subpart M, including but not limited to, the notification requirements in §§422.620 and 422.624 and the requirements in §422.626 concerning supplying information to an Independent Review Entity.

Questions & Answers:

- **Is the provider or MA organization required to obtain an enrollee’s signature on the advance termination notice or detailed termination notice?**
  The provider must obtain the enrollee’s or authorized representative’s signature on the advance termination notice (NOMNC), which ensures that the enrollee received the notice, and that financial liability may be properly transferred to the enrollee for any days beyond the effective date that Medicare coverage ends. The provider must place the original NOMNC in the enrollee’s case file, and give a copy to the enrollee. In the event of an appeal, the provider must also provide a copy to the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), since the QIO is responsible for verifying that the provider delivered a valid notice to the enrollee.
  
  The MA organization does not need to obtain the enrollee’s or authorized representative’s signature on the detailed notice, which is called the Detailed Explanation of Non-Coverage (DENC).

- **Suppose that an enrollee is receiving physical therapy, wound care, and IV in a SNF. If the SNF only discontinues the IV, is the SNF required to deliver an NOMNC to the enrollee two days prior to the IV ending?**
  No. A provider is not required to deliver the NOMNC two days prior to one service ending, while other Medicare-covered services continue. The fast-track appeals process applies only to situations when the enrollee will no longer receive Medicare-covered services from the provider. The scenario described would be considered a reduction, rather than a termination, of services.

- **Many patients receiving home health care only require a single visit. Can the NOMNC be given during the first (and last) visit?**
  Yes. In cases where the services or visits will be less than two days, the NOMNC may be given upon admission, or during the only visit.

- **If a member is in a SNF, gets pneumonia and subsequently needs to go to an acute setting, should the member receive the NOMNC?**
  No. The NOMNC is not intended or required for this situation.

- **Will SNFs, HHAs, and CORFs be required to retain copies of NOMNCs in patients’ medical records? Will the MA organization need to obtain a copy?**
  The provider should retain a copy of the NOMNC as part of the patient’s medical record; however, MAO’s and providers should determine how and where the notices should be maintained to meet medical records’ retention policies.
Skilled Nursing Facility Discharges (SNF or TCU) (cont’d.)

Contractual & Billing Requirements (cont’d.)

• If a provider is discontinuing a previously authorized, discrete increment of services, e.g., the MA organization authorized 12 skilled nursing visits by an HHA nurse, does the provider still have to issue a NOMNC if the provider is planning to discharge the patient as scheduled on the last visit? Why?
  Yes. The provider must deliver the NOMNC no later than the next-to-last visit in this example. Providing a notice to the enrollee not only conveys when the services are going to end, but also informs the enrollee of the right to appeal if the enrollee disagrees, and transfers liability to the enrollee if the enrollee continues to receive non-covered services.

• Can you please clarify if whether the fast-track appeals process also includes psychiatric home health services?
  Yes, the fast-track appeals process applies to psychiatric home health services.

• How will providers know what their responsibilities are under the new fast-track appeals process?
  CMS provides information to providers on their responsibilities under this new appeals process through CMS’ Medlearn website, CMS’ “list serve” of participating providers, outreach to provider trade associations, and CMS open door forums. In addition, we are instructing our fiscal intermediaries and carriers to include an article about the process in their next provider bulletins. QIOs also are required to provide education and training to the providers with whom they have agreements. MAO’s must also do their part to ensure that their providers are educated about their responsibilities under the fast-track appeals process.

• Will CMS release the NOMNC to providers, or will MAO’s be required to distribute the notices to the providers directly?
  The notices are available online at https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/BNI/MAEDNotices. MAO’s should work with their providers to determine whether direct distribution is necessary. The provider education material that we have distributed refers providers to the “appeals” website.
CMS Model Letters:

➢ DETAILED NOTICE OF DISCHARGE (Attachment A)
➢ NOTICE OF MEDICARE NON-COVERAGE (Attachment B)

(Attachment A – CMS Model Letter – SAMPLE - Must be 12 point font)

Patient Name: [Insert Hospital or Plan Logo here]  OMB Approval No. 0938-1019
Patient ID Number: Date Issued:
Physician: __________________________________________________________________________

DETAILED NOTICE OF DISCHARGE

You have asked for a review by the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), an independent reviewer hired by Medicare to review your case. This notice gives you a detailed explanation about why your hospital and your managed care plan (if you belong to one), in agreement with your doctor, believe that your inpatient hospital services should end on ____________________.

This is based on Medicare coverage policies listed below and your medical condition. This is not an official Medicare decision. The decision on your appeal will come from your Quality Improvement Organization (QIO).

• Medicare Coverage Policies:

  _____Medicare does not cover inpatient hospital services that are not medically necessary or could be safely furnished in another setting. (Refer to 42 Code of Federal Regulations, 411.15 (g) and (k)).

  _____Medicare Managed Care policies, if applicable: __________________________________________________________________________

  _____Other ____________________________

        {insert specific managed care policies}

  _____Other __________________________________________________________________________

        {insert other applicable policies}

• Specific information about your current medical condition:

• If you would like a copy of the documents sent to the QIO, or copies of the specific policies or criteria used to make this decision, please call {insert hospital and/or plan telephone number}.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0938- 1019. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: CMS, 7500 Security Boulevard, Attn: PRA Reports Clearance Officer, Mail Stop C4-26-05, Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850. CMS 10066 (approved 5/2007)
NOTICE OF MEDICARE NON-COVERAGE

Patient name: Patient number:

The Effective Date Coverage of Your Current {insert type} Services Will End: {insert effective date}

• Your Medicare provider and/or health plan have determined that Medicare probably will not pay for your current {insert type} services after the effective date indicated above.

• You may have to pay for any services you receive after the above date.

Your Right to Appeal This Decision

• You have the right to an immediate, independent medical review (appeal) of the decision to end Medicare coverage of these services. Your services will continue during the appeal.

• If you choose to appeal, the independent reviewer will ask for your opinion. The reviewer also will look at your medical records and/or other relevant information. You do not have to prepare anything in writing, but you have the right to do so if you wish.

• If you choose to appeal, you and the independent reviewer will each receive a copy of the detailed explanation about why your coverage for services should not continue. You will receive this detailed notice only after you request an appeal.

• If you choose to appeal, and the independent reviewer agrees services should no longer be covered after the effective date indicated above.

• Neither Medicare nor your plan will pay for these services after that date.

• If you stop services no later than the effective date indicated above, you will avoid financial liability.

How to Ask For an Immediate Appeal

• You must make your request to your Quality Improvement Organization (also known as a QIO). A QIO is the independent reviewer authorized by Medicare to review the decision to end these services.

• Your request for an immediate appeal should be made as soon as possible, but no later than noon of the day before the effective date indicated above.

• The QIO will notify you of its decision as soon as possible, generally no later than two days after the effective date of this notice if you are in Original Medicare. If you are in a Medicare health plan, the QIO generally will notify you of its decision by the effective date of this notice.

• Call your QIO at: Health Services Advisory Group of California, Inc., 1-800-841-1602, TTY 1-800-881-5980, to appeal, or if you have questions.
See page 2 of this notice for more information.

If You Miss The Deadline to Request An Immediate Appeal, You May Have Other Appeal Rights:

• If you have Original Medicare: Call the QIO listed on page 1.
• If you belong to a Medicare health plan: Call your plan at the number given below.

Plan contact information:

Blue Shield Medicare Advantage Plan
Attn: Medicare Appeals and Grievances Dept.
P.O. Box 927
Woodland Hills, CA 91365-9856

Ph: 1-800-776-4466
TTY: 1-800-794-1099
Fax: 1-916-350-6510

Additional Information (Optional):

Please sign below to indicate you received and understood this notice.

I have been notified that coverage of my services will end on the effective date indicated on this notice and that I may appeal this decision by contacting my QIO.

Signature of Patient or Representative
Date

Form CMS 10123-NOMNC (Approved 12/31/2011)
Optional Attachment to assist with documentation

Please fax completed (signed) Notice of Medicare Non-Coverage (NOMNC) to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFIRMATION OF NOTICE BY TELEPHONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Notification by telephone is done only in situations where the notice must be delivered to an incompetent enrollee in an institutional setting. See Medicare Managed Care Manual, Chapter 13, Section 60.1.3 for reference.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name of person contacted: 
Date of contact: 
Time:  □ AM  □ PM

Signature of Health Plan/SNF/HHA/CORF/Medical Group Representative:  
Date:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFIRMATION OF FOLLOW-UP NOTICE BY MAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Notification by mail must also be done if telephone notification was made. This is done only in situations where the notice must be delivered to an incompetent enrollee in an institutional setting. See Medicare Managed Care Manual, Chapter 13, Section 60.1.3 for reference.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mailing address:  

Date sent:  
Via:  □ US Mail  □ Certified Mail  □ FedEx  □ Priority Mail

Tracking #:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFIRMATION OF REFUSAL TO SIGN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I confirm that the Notice of Medicare Non-Coverage was hand-delivered to the member or the member's authorized representative; however, the member or the member's authorized representative refused to sign the acknowledgment of receipt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name of person receiving notice:  
Date of delivery:  
Time:  □ AM  □ PM

Signature of Person Delivering Notice:  
Date:  

Blue Shield of California  Appendix 4-B Page 13
Hospital and Facility Guidelines  January 2020
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidance Checklist When Issuing NOMNC to Other Than Member (See Medicare Managed Care Manual, Chapter 13, Section 60.1.3)</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call patient’s representative the day letter is issued. (Date of conversation is the date of the receipt of the NONMC). ID self and give organization, contact name and number, purpose of call (right to file an appeal) and describe the appeal right being discussed (e.g., QIO vs. expedited).</td>
<td>SNF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform representative that skilled services will no longer be covered beginning on: (date) __________ and financial responsibility starts on (date) __________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise representative of appeal rights. (You must read directly from the letter)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise representative that an appeal must be phoned to HSAG by 12:00 p.m. the following day of receipt of the NOMNC or phone call.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide the representative with the QIO name (HSAG) and phone number listed in the appeal section of the letter. Provide address, fax or other method of communication needed by representative for QIO to receive appeal in a timely fashion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform representative how to get a detailed notice describing why the enrollee’s services are not being covered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide at least one phone number of an advocacy organization or 1-800-MEDICARE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm the telephone contact by written notice mailed same day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If direct phone contact cannot be made, including leaving voice mail, mail the notice to the representative, certified mail, return receipt requested. (If the Medical Group is sending the certified mail, the Facility must notify the Medical Group immediately that certified mail is required.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If the Facility sent the certified mail, and HSAG is processing an appeal, the certified returned receipt must be submitted to HSAG. If not submitted, the appeal may be decided in favor of the member solely due to lack of the receipt which is the evidence of timely notification.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document that representative understands the information provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hospitals and facilities are required to submit Blue Shield claims electronically that do not have a medical record attached. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Claims are submitted in the ASC X12 837 5010 format. Blue Shield has contracted with several vendors for providers to submit claims at no cost. Electronic claims can also be submitted directly to Blue Shield via secure file transfer protocol (SFTP) using one of their own dedicated static IP addresses.

To enroll in electronic claim submission, providers can use any approved clearinghouse listed on Provider Connection. Providers can submit claims at no charge using vendors Office Ally, TriZetto Provider Solutions or Ability Network. These vendors can be contacted at blueshieldca.com/provider in the Claims section under How to submit claims or by contacting the EDI Department at (800) 480-1221.

If you need to submit paper claims with medical records, use the Claims Routing Tool, located on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider under the Claims tab, to determine the correct mailing address for each member. Because claims mailing addresses are different for different Blue Plan members, using the Claims Routing Tool is the most accurate way to determine a claim mailing address.

If you are unable to access the Claims Routing Tool, please use the specific P.O. Box numbers listed on this page. If the subscriber’s group is not listed, use the All Other Blue Shield Plans P.O. Box number shown below.

**BLUE CARD OUT-OF-AREA PROGRAM**
*Check subscriber ID for three-letter prefix before sending*
Blue Shield of California
BlueCard Program
P. O. Box 1505
Red Bluff, CA 96080-1505
(800) 622-0632

**CALPERS**
(California Public Employees Retirement System)
Blue Shield of California
CalPERS
P. O. Box 272540
Chico, CA 95927-2540
(800) 541-6652

**FEDERAL EMPLOYEE PROGRAM (FEP)**
*Subscriber ID number begins with the letter “R”*
FEP
P. O. Box 272510
Chico, CA 95927-2510
(800) 824-8839

**NATIONAL ACCOUNTS - NASCO**
*Subscriber number should be submitted with the 3-digit alpha prefix*
Blue Shield of California
NASCO
P. O. Box 272570
Chico, CA 95927-2570
(800) 241-4896

**BLUE SHIELD MEDICARE ADVANTAGE**
Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan
P. O. Box 272640
Chico, CA 95927
(800) 541-6652
Fax (818) 228-5104

**INITIAL PROVIDER APPEAL AND RESOLUTION**
Blue Shield of California
P. O. Box 272620
Chico, CA 95927-2620

**FINAL PROVIDER APPEAL AND RESOLUTION**
Blue Shield of California
P.O. Box 629011
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-9011

**SHORT-TERM CLAIMS FOR BLUE SHIELD LIFE & HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY**
P. O. Box 9000
London, KY 40742

**ALL OTHER BLUE SHIELD PLANS**
Blue Shield of California
P. O. Box 272540
Chico, CA 95927-2540
(800) 541-6652
Where to Send Claims

Where to Send Claims for Foundations for Medical Care

When the name of a medical foundation appears on a subscriber’s identification card, the benefits for that subscriber are administered by that foundation. Forward all claims to that foundation for payment.

The medical foundations with which Blue Shield is affiliated are listed below:

**Foundation for Medical Care of Tulare & Kings Counties, Inc.**
Address: 3335 South Fairway
            Visalia, CA 93277
Phone: (800) 662-5502
       (559) 734-1321
Fax: (559) 334-0081 (Primary)
     (559) 734-3828

**Foundation for Medical Care of Mendocino-Lake Counties**
Address: 620 S. Dora St., Suite 201
          Ukiah, CA 95482-5482
Phone: (707) 462-7607
Fax: (707) 462-1206
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### List of Office-Based Ambulatory Procedures

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# List of Office-Based Ambulatory Procedures

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<td>Focused ultrasnd abl.uterine leiomyomata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64615</td>
<td>Chemodenerv muscle migraine</td>
<td>0072T</td>
<td>Total leiomyomata vol.200cc tissue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64616</td>
<td>Chemodenerv muscle neck dyston</td>
<td>0207T</td>
<td>Clear eyelid gland w/heat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64617</td>
<td>Chemodenerv muscle laryny EMG</td>
<td>0213T</td>
<td>Njx paravert w/us cer/thor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64632</td>
<td>N block inj. common digit</td>
<td>0214T</td>
<td>Njx paravert w/us cer/thor</td>
</tr>
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<td>65205</td>
<td>Remove foreign body from eye</td>
<td>0215T</td>
<td>Njx paravert w/us cer/thor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65210</td>
<td>Remove foreign body from eye</td>
<td>0216T</td>
<td>Njx paravert w/us lumb/sac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65220</td>
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<td>0217T</td>
<td>Njx paravert w/us lumb/sac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0218T</td>
<td>Njx paravert w/us lumb/sac</td>
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<td>Corneal smear</td>
<td>0219T</td>
<td>Plmt post facet implt cerv</td>
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<td>Cover eye w/membrane</td>
<td>0220T</td>
<td>Plmt post facet implt cerv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65779</td>
<td>Cover eye w/membrane stent</td>
<td>0221T</td>
<td>Plmt post facet implt lumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67500</td>
<td>Inject/treat eye socket</td>
<td>0222T</td>
<td>Plmt post facet implt addl</td>
</tr>
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<td>0228T</td>
<td>Njx tfml eprl w/us cer/thor</td>
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<td>0230T</td>
<td>Njx tfml eprl w/us lumb/sac</td>
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<td>0272T</td>
<td>Interrogate crtd sns dev</td>
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<td>67800</td>
<td>Remove eyelid lesion</td>
<td>0273T</td>
<td>Interrogate crtd sns w/pgrm</td>
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<td>Ext ecg complete</td>
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<td>Treatment of eyelid lesions</td>
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</tr>
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<td>68200</td>
<td>Treat eyelid by injection</td>
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<td>Ext ecg scan w/report</td>
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<td>68400</td>
<td>Incise/drain tear gland</td>
<td>0298T</td>
<td>Ext ecg review and interp</td>
</tr>
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<td>68761</td>
<td>Close tear duct opening</td>
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<td>0332T</td>
<td>Heart symp image plnr spect</td>
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<td>0419T</td>
<td>Dstrj Neurofibroma Xtnsv</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Remove impacted ear wax</td>
<td>0420T</td>
<td>Dstrj Neurofibroma Xtnsv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69220</td>
<td>Clean out mastoid cavity</td>
<td>0465T</td>
<td>Supchrdl njx rx w/o supply</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tcranial magn stim tx plan</td>
<td>0474T</td>
<td>Injs aqueous drg dev io rsvr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Tcranial magn stim tx deli</td>
<td>0482T</td>
<td>Absolute quant myocardial bld flow</td>
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<td>92132</td>
<td>Cmplt ophth dx img ant segmt</td>
<td>0525T</td>
<td>Injs/rplmnt compl iims</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cmplt ophth img optic nerve</td>
<td>0529T</td>
<td>Interrog dev eval iims ip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92134</td>
<td>Cmplt ophth dx img post segmt</td>
<td>0530T</td>
<td>Removal complete iims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92537</td>
<td>Caloric vsbtl test w/rec</td>
<td>C8929</td>
<td>Transthoracic Echo, w or w/o contrst followd with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92538</td>
<td>Caloric vsbtl test w/rec</td>
<td>C8930</td>
<td>Transthoracic Echo, w or w/o contrst followd inc record</td>
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# The BlueCard® Program

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Section 1
Introduction to the BlueCard® Program

As a contracted provider of Blue Shield of California (Blue Shield), you may render services to patients who are insured by other states’ Blue plans, and who travel in or live within California.

This section describes the advantages of the BlueCard Program, and provides information to make filing claims easy. You will find helpful information about:

- Identifying out-of-state Blue plan members
- Verifying eligibility and benefits
- Locating other states’ Blue plan medical policies and pre-certification requirements
- Requesting and obtaining authorizations
- Submitting BlueCard claims and requesting medical records
- Accessing BlueCard resources and contact information

Definition of the BlueCard Program

BlueCard® is a national program that enables Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) plan members to obtain healthcare services while traveling or living in another Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plan’s service area. The program links participating healthcare providers with all the independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans across the country through a single electronic network for claims processing and reimbursement. Additionally, the program links providers in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

BlueCard Program Advantages to Providers

The program allows you to conveniently submit claims for patients from out-of-state Blue plans, either domestic or international, directly to Blue Shield.

Blue Shield is your primary contact for BlueCard claim submission, claims processing, and provider inquiries.

Blue Shield, a mission-driven and nonprofit health plan established in 1939, continues to experience growth in out-of-area membership because of our partnership with you. That is why we are committed to meeting your needs and expectations and creating a sustainably affordable healthcare system that’s worthy of our family and friends. In doing so, your patients will have a positive experience with each visit.

Services Processed Through the BlueCard Program

Claims for all inpatient, outpatient and professional services generated for out-of-state Blue plan members are processed through the BlueCard Program.
Products Included in the BlueCard Program

A variety of products and claim types are eligible to be delivered via BlueCard, however not all Blue plans offer all the products listed below to their members.

- Traditional (indemnity insurance)
- PPO (Preferred Provider Organization)
- EPO (Exclusive Provider Organization)
- POS (Point of Service)
- HMO (Health Maintenance Organization)
  - HMO claims are eligible to be processed under the BlueCard Program or through the Away From Home Care Program.
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core
- GeoBlue Expat claims
- Medigap – Medicare Complementary/Supplemental
- Medicaid: payment is limited to the member’s Plan’s state Medicaid reimbursement rates
  - These cards will not have a suitcase logo.
- Stand-Alone SCHIP (State Children’s Health Insurance Plan) if administered as part of Medicaid
  - Payment is limited to the member’s Plan’s state Medicaid reimbursement rates. These cards do not have a suitcase logo. Stand-Alone SCHIP programs will have a suitcase logo
- Standalone vision
- Standalone prescription drugs

Note: Standalone vision and standalone self-administered prescription drugs programs are eligible to be processed through BlueCard when such products are not delivered using a vendor. Consult claim filing instructions on the back of the ID cards.

Note: Definitions of the above products are available in the Glossary of Terms section of this manual.
Products Excluded from the BlueCard Program

The following claims are excluded from the BlueCard Program:

- Stand-alone dental claims
- Self-administered prescription drugs claims
- Vision claims delivered through an intermediary model (using a vendor)
- Federal Employee Program (FEP) member claims
- Medicare Advantage*

*Medicare Advantage is a separate program from BlueCard and delivered through its own centrally-administered platform. However, since you might see members of other Blue plans who have Medicare Advantage coverage, there is a section on Medicare Advantage claims processing in this manual.
The BlueCard® Program

Section 2
How Does the BlueCard Program Work?

How to Identify Members

Member ID Cards

When members of out-of-state Blue plans arrive at your office or facility, be sure to ask them for their current Blue plan membership identification card.

The main identifier for out-of-area members is the three-character prefix. The ID cards may also have:

- PPO in a suitcase logo, for eligible PPO members
- Blank suitcase logo, for eligible Traditional, HMO, POS or indemnity members
- PPOB in a suitcase logo, for PPO members with access to the BlueCard PPO Basic network

The PPO in a suitcase logo indicates that the member is enrolled in either a PPO product or an EPO product. In either case, you will be reimbursed according to Blue Shield’s PPO provider contract. Please note that EPO products may have limited benefits out-of-area. The potential for such benefit limitations are indicated on the reverse side of an EPO ID card.

The PPOB in a suitcase logo indicates that the member has selected a PPO or EPO product, from a Blue Plan, and the member has access to a new PPO network, referred to as BlueCard PPO Basic.

For members having traditional or HMO coverage, you will be reimbursed according to Blue Shield’s traditional provider contract. For members who have POS coverage, you will be reimbursed according to Blue Shield’s POS provider contract, if you participate in the BlueCard POS voluntary program or you will be reimbursed according to Blue Shield’s Traditional provider contract, if you don’t participate in the BlueCard POS voluntary program.

Some Blue ID cards don’t have any suitcase logo on them. Those ID cards include Medicaid, State Children’s Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP) if administered as part of State’s Medicaid, and Medicare Complementary and Supplemental products, also known as Medigap. Government-determined reimbursement levels apply to these products. While Blue Shield routes these claims for out-of-area members to the member’s Blue plan, most of the Medicare Complementary or Medigap claims are sent directly from the Medicare intermediary to the member’s Blue Plan via the established electronic crossover process.
How to Identify Members (cont’d.)

Member ID Cards (cont’d.)

Important facts concerning member IDs:

- A correct member ID includes the three-character prefix (first three positions) and all subsequent characters, up to a total of 17 positions. This means that you may see cards with IDs between 6 and 14 numbers or letters following the prefix.
- Do not add or delete characters or numbers within the member ID.
- Do not change the sequence of the characters following the prefix.
- The three-character prefix is critical for the electronic routing of specific HIPAA-compliant transactions to the appropriate Blue plan.
- Members who are part of the Federal Employee Program (FEP) will have the letter "R" in front of their member ID. FEP claims are not processed by the BlueCard Program. Providers are required to submit claims electronically to Blue Shield that do not have a medical record attached. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Mail hard-copy FEP professional claims that require medical records to the FEP Claims Unit at P.O. Box 272510, Chico, CA 95927-2510.
- Note that most out-of-state Blue plan member ID cards have plan names that begin with “Blue Cross Blue Shield” brand names and identifies the state where members receive coverage. However, some Blue plans have unique plan names that do not begin with “Blue Cross Blue Shield” branding and do not identify the state where the member receives coverage. Nevertheless, you can submit BlueCard claims to Blue Shield for members whose ID cards have unique Blue plan names. For a current list of the unique Blue plan names, email BlueCardMarketing@blueshieldca.com.

Examples of member IDs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Prefix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2A1234567</td>
<td>ABC1234H567</td>
<td>2A212345678901234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blue Card® Program
The BlueCard® Program

How to Identify Members (cont’d.)

Three-Character Prefix

The three-character prefix at the beginning of the member’s identification number is the key element used to identify and correctly route claims. The prefix identifies the Blue plan or National Account to which the member belongs. It is critical for confirming a patient’s membership and coverage.

To ensure accurate claim processing, it is critical to capture all ID card data. If the information is not captured correctly, you may experience a delay with the claim processing. Please make copies of the front and back of the ID card, and pass this key information to your billing staff. Do not make up prefixes.

Do not assume that the member’s ID is the Social Security number. All Blue plans have replaced Social Security numbers on member ID cards with a unique, alternative identifier.

As a provider serving out-of-state Blue plan members, you may find the following tips helpful:

- Ask the member for his or her most current Blue ID card at every visit. Since new ID cards may be issued to members throughout the year, this will ensure you have the most up-to-date information in your patient’s file.

- Verify with the member that the ID on the card is not his or her Social Security number. If it is, call the BlueCard® Eligibility line at (800) 676-BLUE to verify the ID.

- Member IDs must be reported exactly as shown on the ID card and must not be changed or altered. Do not add or omit any characters from the member ID.

- Blue plan member ID cards are formatted to reflect brand guidelines established by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The ID cards are designed to make it easier for members and providers to find information they need. Design elements include:
  - Easier-to-read member information featured on the front of the card.
  - A single toll-free provider phone number for provider customer service, hospital pre-admission or pre-authorization information and prescription processing information for pharmacists, listed together on the back of the card.
  - The Blue plan’s Web URL and mailing instructions for medical claims that require attachments are included on the back of the card.

Note: ID card samples are not the actual depiction of cards; they show the general look and feel for the brand guidelines from the Association.
How to Identify Members (cont’d.)

BlueCard PPO Basic ID Cards

Verifying Blue patients’ benefits and eligibility is now more important than ever since new products and benefit types have entered the market, due to the Affordable Care Act. In addition to patients who have traditional Blue PPO, HMO, POS, or other coverage, you may now see patients who have a BlueCard PPO Basic product.

When you see the “PPOB in a suitcase” logo on the front of the member’s ID card, it means the member has selected a PPO or EPO product, from a Blue Plan, and the member has access to a new PPO network, referred to as BlueCard PPO Basic.

Currently, Blue Shield does not offer a BlueCard PPO Basic network to local Blue Shield members. However, you may see patients with BlueCard PPO Basic coverage by an out-of-state Blue Plan. Providers will be reimbursed for covered services in accordance with your PPO contract with Blue Shield of California.

Sample of BlueCard PPO Basic Member ID Card

![Sample of BlueCard PPO Basic Member ID Card](image-url)
How to Identify Members (cont’d.)

How to Identify International Blue Plan Members

Occasionally, you may see identification cards that are from members of International Licensees or that are for international-based products. Currently those Licensees include Blue Cross Blue Shield of the U.S. Virgin Islands, BlueCross & BlueShield of Uruguay, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Panama, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Costa Rica, and those products include those provided through Blue Shield Global Core and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Global™ portfolio. Always check with Blue Shield of California as the list of International Licensees and products may change. ID cards from these Licensees and for these products will also contain three-character prefixes and may or may not have one of the benefit product logos referenced in the following sections. Please treat these members the same as you would domestic Blue plan members (e.g., do not collect any payment from the member beyond cost-sharing amounts such as deductible, coinsurance and co-payment) and electronically submit their claims to Blue Shield of California. See below for sample ID cards for international members and products.

Example of an ID card from an International Licensee:

![Example ID Card]

Examples of ID cards for International Products

Illustration A – Blue Cross Blue Shield Global portfolio:

![Illustration A Card]
How to Identify Members (cont’d.)

Illustration B – Shield-only ID Card:

*Please Note:* In certain territories, including Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates, Blue Cross branded products are not available. The ID cards of members in these territories will display the Blue Shield Global logo (see example below):

![Illustration B - Shield-only ID Card](image)

Canadian ID Cards

*Please Note:* The Canadian Association of Blue Cross plans and its member plans are separate and distinct from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) and its member plans in the United States.

You may occasionally see ID cards for people who are covered by a Canadian Blue Cross plan. Claims for Canadian Blue Cross plan members are not processed through the BlueCard® Program.

Please follow the instructions of the Blue Cross plans in Canada and those, if any, on the ID cards for servicing their members. The Blue Cross plans in Canada are:

- Alberta Blue Cross
- Manitoba Blue Cross
- Medavie Blue Cross
- Ontario Blue Cross
- Pacific Blue Cross
- Quebec Blue Cross
- Saskatchewan Blue Cross

Source: [http://www.bluecross.ca/en/contact.html](http://www.bluecross.ca/en/contact.html)
How to Identify Members (cont’d.)

Consumer Directed Health Care and Healthcare Debit Cards

Consumer Directed Health Care (CDHC) is a broad umbrella term that refers to a movement in the healthcare industry to empower members, reduce employer costs and change consumer healthcare purchasing behavior. Health plans that offer CDHC plans provide the member with additional information to make an informed and appropriate healthcare decision using member support tools, provider and network information, and financial incentives. Members who have CDHC plans often carry healthcare debit cards that allow them to pay for out-of-pocket costs using funds from their Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRA), Health Savings Accounts (HSA) or Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA). All three are types of tax favored accounts offered by the member’s employer to pay for eligible expenses not covered by the health plan.

Some cards are “stand-alone” debit cards to cover out-of-pocket costs, while others also serve as a member ID card with the member ID number. These debit cards can help you simplify your administration process and can potentially help:

- Reduce bad debt
- Reduce paper work for billing statements
- Minimize bookkeeping and patient-account functions for handling cash and checks
- Avoid unnecessary claim payment delays

In some cases, the card will have the nationally recognized Blue logos, along with the logo from a major debit card organization such as MasterCard® or Visa®.

Sample of Stand-Alone Healthcare Debit Card

Sample of Combined Healthcare Debit Card and Member ID Card
How to Identify Members (cont’d.)

Consumer Directed Health Care and Healthcare Debit Cards (cont’d.)

The cards include a magnetic strip so providers can swipe the card at the point of service to collect the member copayment. With the healthcare debit cards members can pay for copayments and other out-of-pocket expenses by swiping the card though any provider’s debit card swipe terminal. The funds will be deducted automatically from the member’s appropriate HRA, HSA or FSA account.

Combining a healthcare ID card with a source of payment is an added convenience to members and providers. Members can use their cards to pay outstanding balances on billing statements. They can also use their cards via phone to process payments. In addition, members are more likely to carry their current ID cards, because of the payment capabilities. If your office currently accepts credit card payments, there is no additional cost or equipment necessary beyond what you already pay to swipe other signature debit cards.

Limited Benefit Products

Another new product and benefit type in the healthcare market is the limited benefit products for Blue plan patients whose annual benefits are limited to $50,000 or less.

Currently, Blue Shield does not offer such limited benefit plans to our members. However, you may see patients with limited benefits who are covered by an out-of-state Blue plan.

How to recognize members with limited benefits products

Members with Blue limited benefits coverage (that is, annual benefits limited to $50,000 or less) carry ID cards that may have one or more of the following indicators:

- Product name will be listed such as InReach or MyBasic
- A green stripe at the bottom of the card
- A statement either on the front or the back of the ID card stating this is a limited benefits product
- A black cross and/or shield to help differentiate it from other identification cards
How to Identify Members (cont’d.)

Limited Benefit Products (cont’d.)

These ID cards may look like this:

How to find out if the patient has limited benefit coverage

In addition to obtaining a copy of the patient’s ID card and regardless of the benefit product type, we recommend that you verify patient’s benefits and eligibility and collect any patient liability or copayment only. You may do so electronically by submitting an eligibility inquiry to Blue Shield at blueshieldca.com/provider or by calling BlueCard® Eligibility at (800) 676-BLUE (2583).

You will receive the patient’s accumulated benefits to help you understand the remaining benefits left for the member. If the cost of services extends beyond the patient’s benefit coverage limit, inform the patient of any additional liability he or she might have.

What to do if the patient’s benefits are exhausted before the end of their treatment

Annual benefit limits should be handled in the same manner as any other limits on the medical coverage. Any services beyond the covered amounts or the number of treatment might be member’s liability. We recommend that you inform patients of any potential liability they might have as soon as possible.
How to Identify Members (cont’d.)

Helpful Tips

- Carefully determine the member’s financial responsibility before processing payment. You can access the member’s accumulated deductible by logging onto blueshieldca.com/provider or by calling the BlueCard® Eligibility line at (800) 676-BLUE (2583).

- Ask members for their current member ID card and regularly obtain new photocopies (front and back) of the member ID card. Having the current card will enable you to submit claims with the appropriate member information (including three-character prefix) and avoid unnecessary claims payment delays.

- If the member presents a debit card (stand-alone or combined), be sure to verify the out-of-pocket amounts before processing payment:
  - Many plans offer well care services that are payable under the basic healthcare program. If you have any questions about the member’s benefits or to request accumulated deductible information, please log onto blueshieldca.com/provider or call the BlueCard® Eligibility line at (800) 676-BLUE (2583).
  - You may use the debit card for member responsibility for medical services provided in your office.
  - You may choose to forego using the debit card and submit the claims to Blue Shield for processing. The Remittance Advice will inform you of member responsibilities.
  - All services, regardless of whether or not you’ve collected the member responsibility at the time of service, must be filed to Blue Shield for proper benefit determination and to update the members’ claim history.

- Check eligibility and benefits electronically by logging onto Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider or by calling (800) 676-BLUE (2583) and providing the three-character prefix. Online eligibility and benefits results for out-of-state Blue plan members include the following elements:
  - Other payor information, if the member has other insurance
  - An authorization indicator, if authorization or referral is required
  - Pre-existing condition information, if applicable
  - Accumulated year-to-date deductible amounts
  - Accumulated year-to-date out-of-pocket costs
  - Accumulated year-to-date benefit maximum amounts
  - Accumulated year-to-date individual lifetime maximum amounts

- Please do not use the debit card to process full payment up front. If you have any questions about the member’s benefits, log onto blueshieldca.com/provider to perform a BlueCard eligibility and benefits search, or call (800) 676-BLUE (2583). For questions about the debit card processing instructions or payment issues, please contact the toll-free debit card administrator’s number on the back of the card.
Coverage and Eligibility Verification

Provider Connection, our provider website at blueshieldca.com/provider, gives you direct access to current, reliable information for out-of-state Blue plan members’ eligibility, benefits, claims mailing address, and share of cost. You can receive more detailed benefit information when searching for out-of-state BlueCard members’ benefits online. Submit an online inquiry about certain benefits you would like more information on, and the benefit information will be returned to you onscreen or sent to the Provider Connection Message Center.

You can also verify out-of-state Blue plan member eligibility, benefits coverage and share of cost information by calling BlueCard Eligibility® at (800) 676-BLUE (2583). This automated Voice Response Unit (VRU) will prompt you to provide the three-character prefix and will route your call to the member’s Blue plan.

Keep in mind that Blue plans are located throughout the country and may operate on a different time zone than Blue Shield. You may be transferred to a voice response system linked to customer enrollment and benefits.

The BlueCard Eligibility® line is for eligibility, benefit and pre-certification/referral authorization inquiries only. It should not be used for determining where to submit your BlueCard claims or for claim status. See the Claim Filing section in this manual for claim filing information.

Blue Shield has created a BlueCard Eligibility and Benefits Verification Guide to help you acquire eligibility and benefits information for out-of-state Blue plan members quickly and efficiently the first time, so you’re less likely to encounter issues with denials or delays. A PDF version of the guide is available on Provider Connection for downloading in the Find BlueCard Program Resources link on our BlueCard Program webpage.
Coordination of Benefits (COB) Information on Blue Plan Members

Coordination of Benefits (COB) refers to how the Blue System ensures that Blue plan members receive full benefits and prevent double payment for services when a Blue plan member has coverage from two or more sources. The member’s contract language explains the order for which entity has primary responsibility for payment and which entity has secondary responsibility for payment.

Blue plan member benefit structures vary and state requirements around the collection of other insurance information differ across the country. To reduce the number of BlueCard claims being denied for lack of COB information, processing standard requirements are in place to limit instances when Blue plans can reject claims for COB investigations.

When you see Blue plan patients who you are aware might have other health insurance coverage (i.e., Medicare, other Blue plan), please keep in mind the following:

- If Blue Shield of California or any other Blue plan is the primary payor, submit the other carrier’s name and address with the claim to Blue Shield of California. If you do not include the COB information with the claim, the member’s Blue plan will have to investigate the claim. This investigation could delay your payment or result in a post-payment adjustment, which will increase your volume of bookkeeping.

- If another non-Blue health plan is primary and Blue Shield of California or any other Blue plan is secondary, submit the claim to Blue Shield of California only after receiving payment from the primary payor, including the explanation of payment from the primary carrier. If you do not include the COB information with the claim, the member’s Blue plan will have to investigate the claim, which may result in a payment delay or post-payment adjustment.

Carefully review the payment information from all payors involved on the remittance advice before balance billing the patient for any potential liability. The information listed on the Blue Shield of California remittance advice as “patient liability” might be different from the actual amount the patient owes you, due to the combination of the primary insurer payment and your negotiated amount with Blue Shield of California.

If you have any questions regarding COB claims processing or payments in relation to Blue plan members, please contact the BlueCard Program Customer Service Unit at (800) 622-0632.

Your involvement is needed to assist in collecting other insurance information from Blue plan members. To avoid claim rejections due to lack of COB information, use the COB Questionnaire to collect information from any Blue plan member who has insurance coverage in addition to his/her out-of-state Blue plan coverage.

When out-of-state Blue plan members state they have other insurance coverage in addition to their out-of-state Blue plan coverage, please perform one of the following:

1. During the patient’s visit, request the patient complete and return the COB Questionnaire to you, then mail the completed form on behalf of the patient to Blue Shield to:
   
   Blue Shield of California, BlueCard Program, P.O. Box 1505, Red Bluff CA 96080

2. During the patient’s visit, give the patient a COB Questionnaire with instructions to complete and submit the form to his or her out-of-state Blue plan as soon as possible.

Refer to the COB Questionnaire on the following pages or on blueshieldca.com/provider under Guidelines & resources, then Forms, then Patient care forms.
# Coordination of Benefits Questionnaire

Provider: After the policy holder has completed and signed, please forward this form to your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan immediately. Do not hold to submit with the claim.

- Check here if you will be electronically submitting this to your local BC and/or BS Plan and you have the Policy Holder's signature on file.

Member: Your Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield contract may contain a Coordination of Benefits (COB) provision. Your Plan depends upon your help in order to process your claims correctly and appreciates your prompt and accurate reply. If any of the information below changes, please contact your Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan immediately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider Name</th>
<th>NPI (Give Tax ID if no NPI Number)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Policyholder Name</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Number</th>
<th>Member ID Number with Three Letter Prefix</th>
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## Section A Other Insurance

Are you or any other member of this Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield policy covered by another medical or dental insurance policy, any other Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield policy or Medicare?

- No
  - If No, please complete Section D, sign, date and return this questionnaire to us, indicating “No other insurance.”

- Yes
  - If Yes, please complete all the fields below that pertain to the member(s) that has the other coverage.

Mark those that apply:  
- Other Health Insurance
- Other Dental Insurance

What type of policy is this?  
- Group
- Individual Policy
- Student Policy
- Medicare Supplemental

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Insurance Carrier’s Name</th>
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<th>Address</th>
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<th>Phone Number</th>
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<th>Dependent(s) listed on the other insurance</th>
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<tr>
<th>Other Insurance Policyholder’s Name</th>
<th>Policyholder’s Date of Birth</th>
<th>ID Number</th>
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<tr>
<th>Effective Date of Other Insurance</th>
<th>If Cancelled, Cancellation Date</th>
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<th>Is the policy holder:</th>
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<td>Active working for the group</td>
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<td>Retired, retirement date:</td>
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<th>Policyholder’s Employer</th>
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Section B | Medicare Information

Do the policyholder and/or dependent(s) have Medicare? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of person(s) with Medicare

Medicare Number, including alpha character(s)

Effective Date of Medicare Part A: ____________ Effective date of Medicare Part B: ____________

Medicare Entitlement: ☐ Yes ☐ Disability* ☐ Yes ☐ End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD)*

If the reason is for Disability or ESRD, please provide the following:

1st Date of Disability:

1st Date of Dialysis for ESRD:

Was ESRD started in a facility? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Was ESRD started as Self Dialysis of Home Dialysis? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has a transplant been performed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide the date of the transplant: ____________

Section C | Court Order Information

Is there a Court Order specifying a person(s) to maintain health coverage for any of your dependent(s)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

List the name(s) of the dependent(s) that this applies to:

If yes, who is the person(s) listed to maintain health coverage?

What is the relation to the child(ren)? Who has custody of the child(ren) more than 50% of the time?

Documentation of the court order may be requested from your Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan

Section D | Names of Dependent(s) on Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Social Security Number (Optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Social Security Number (Optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Social Security Number (Optional)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Holder Signature Date

N20-07-371
Out-of-State Blue Plan Members’ Medical Policies and Pre-Certification/Prior Authorization Requirements

On Provider Connection, our provider website, you can now find information to help you treat out-of-state Blue plan members. You can view medical policies and general pre-certification/prior authorization requirements applicable to out-of-state Blue plan members, along with contact information to initiate the pre-certification/prior authorization process.

To access the medical policy and pre-certification/prior authorization requirements, follow the steps below:

1. Log onto blueshieldca.com/provider.
2. Click on the Managing out-of-area Blue plan member link within the Authorizations section of the opening landing page.
3. Click on the Pre-service review box.
4. Enter the out-of-state Blue plan member’s three-character prefix, select either the medical policy or the prior authorization button, and then click on “Search.”

This online functionality gives providers easy access to information and provides a valuable supplement to the information you currently receive when verifying out-of-state Blue plan members’ benefits, eligibility and share of costs, directly from the member’s out-of-state Blue plan.

Prior Authorization

Prior authorization of medical services for out-of-state Blue plan members is provided by the member’s Blue plan. Providers can request authorization for an out-of-state Blue plan member online by using the Electronic Provider Access (EPA) tool. The EPA tool will enable you to use Blue Shield’s provider website to gain secured access to an out-of-area Blue plan’s provider website to request authorization.

To access the EPA tool, log onto Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider, click on the Managing out-of-area Blue plan member link within the Authorizations section, then click on the Pre-service review box. Choose from the available options to assist in obtaining the necessary information:

- Medical Policy Information – Select this option to obtain medical policy for a service.
- Prior Authorization Information – Select this option to determine if pre-service and pre-authorization is required for a service.
- Electronic Provider Access – Select this option to submit a pre-certification and prior authorization request.

Providers will need the member’s three-character prefix to complete each search. The prefix is the first three characters that precede the member identification number.
**Prior Authorization (cont’d.)**

By entering a valid prefix, you will then be automatically routed to the member’s Blue plan provider portal to begin an authorization request. Please note that each Blue plan’s website is customized to their authorization services they offer.

Providers can also contact the member’s Blue plan by calling the designated telephone number of the Health Care Services department located on the back of the member’s ID card.

The member’s Blue plan may contact you directly related to clinical information or to request medical records prior to treatment or for concurrent review or disease management for a specific member.

*Note: Failure to obtain required prior authorization or admission review may result in partial or total benefit denial and/or greater out-of-pocket expenses for Blue plan members. However, obtaining approval is not a guarantee of payment. Participating providers are responsible for obtaining pre-service review/preauthorization for inpatient facility services. In addition, members are held harmless when pre-service review/preauthorization is required and not obtained for inpatient facility services.*

**Utilization Review**

You should remind patients that they are responsible for obtaining pre-certification/authorization for outpatient services from their Blue plan. Participating providers are responsible for obtaining pre-service review for inpatient facility services when the services are required by the account or member contract (see section entitled Provider Financial Responsibility). In addition, members are held harmless when pre-service review is required and not received for inpatient facility services (unless an account receives an approved exception).

General information on pre-certification/preauthorization information can be found by clicking on the Pre-service review box within the Authorization section of blueshieldca.com/provider.

When obtaining pre-certification/preauthorization, please provide as much information as possible, to minimize potential claims issues. Providers are encouraged to communicate immediately with a member’s Blue Plan if any changes in treatment or setting occurs to ensure an existing authorization is modified or a new one is obtained, if needed. Failure to obtain approval for additional days may result in claims processing delays and potential payment denials.

When the length of an inpatient hospital stay extends past the previously-approved length of stay, any additional days must be approved. Failure to obtain approval for the additional days may result in claim processing delays and potential payment denials.
Electronic Provider Access

Electronic Provider Access (EPA) gives providers the ability to access out-of-area member’s Blue plan provider portals to conduct electronic pre-service review. The term pre-service review is used to refer to pre-notification, pre-certification, pre-authorization and prior approval, amongst other pre-claim processes. EPA enables providers to use their local Blue plan provider portal to gain access to an out-of-area member’s Blue plan provider portal, through a secure routing mechanism. Once in the Blue plan provider portal, the out-of-area provider has the same access to electronic pre-service review capabilities as the Blue plan’s local providers.

The availability of EPA varies depending on the capabilities of each Blue plan. Some Blue plans have electronic pre-service review for many services, while others do not. The following describes how to use EPA and what to expect when attempting to contact other Blue plans.

Using the EPA Tool

Log onto blueshieldca.com/provider, click on Managing out-of-area Blue plan members link within the Authorizations section, and click on the Pre-service review box. Choose the Electronic Provider Access option. You will be asked to enter the three-character prefix from the member’s ID card, which is the first three characters that precede the member subscriber identification number. The NPI and location of requesting provider are also required, as is whether or not you’re a Blue Shield of California contracted provider. Once those fields have been filled out, click the “Submit” button.

After submitting, you are routed to the member’s Blue plan EPA landing page. This page welcomes you to the out-of-state Blue plan’s portal and indicates that you have left Blue Shield of California’s provider portal. The landing page allows you to connect to the available electronic pre-service review processes. Because the screens and functionality of out-of-state Blue plan pre-service review processes vary widely, other Blue plans may include instructional documents or e-learning tools on their Blue plan landing page to provide instruction on how to conduct an electronic pre-service review. The page may also include instructions for conducting pre-service review for services where the electronic function is not available.

The out-of-state Blue plan landing page looks similar across the Blue plan system but will be customized to the particular Blue plan based on the electronic pre-service review services they offer.
Provider Financial Responsibility for Pre-Service Review for Blue Plan Members

Blue Shield’s participating providers are responsible for obtaining pre-service review for inpatient facility services for BlueCard members and holding the member harmless when pre-service review is required by the account or member contract and not received for inpatient services. Participating providers must also:

- Notify the member’s Blue plan within 48 hours when a change or modifications to the original pre-service review occurs.

- Obtain pre-service review for emergency and/or urgent admissions within 72 hours.

Failure to contact the member’s Blue plan for pre-service review or for a change or modification of the pre-service review will result in claim processing delays and potential payment denials for inpatient facility services. The Blue plan member must be held harmless and cannot be balance-billed if pre-service review has not occurred.*

Pre-service review contact information for a member’s Blue plan is provided on the member’s identification card. Pre-service review requirements can also be determined by:

- Using the Electronic Provider Access (EPA) tool available at Blue Shield’s provider portal at blueshieldca.com/provider.
- Submitting an ANSI 278 electronic transaction to Blue Shield.
- Calling the BlueCard Eligibility toll-free phone number at (800) 676-BLUE.

Services that deny as not medically necessary remain the member’s liability.

If you have any questions on Provider Financial Responsibility or general questions, please call Blue Shield at (800) 622-0632.

*Unless the member signed a written consent to be billed prior to rendering service.
The BlueCard® Program

Medical Records Requests and Processing

Blue Shield is dedicated to achieving a seamless delivery of medical records requests and processing for out-of-state Blue plan members and the providers who serve them.

Medical records related to your out-of-state Blue plan patients may be requested as part of the pre-claim experience, as part of a concurrent review or as part of the BlueCard claim appeal process. It is Blue Shield’s responsibility to obtain medical records from our providers at the request of the member’s Blue plan. However, in pre-claim situations, the member’s Blue plan may directly contact you to request medical records if the member’s Blue plan needs the records to make a determination as part of the prior authorization or pre-certification process or in situations that are deemed as an urgent medical need.

Blue Shield performs the following steps to ensure delivery of medical record requests and processing:

- When receiving a medical records request from the member’s Blue plan, we verify whether or not the provider has already submitted the records.
- When a member’s Blue plan requests medical records, we send the request to our providers within two business days of receipt of the out-of-state Blue plan’s request.
- When requesting medical records from a provider, we strive to send concise and specific details to fulfill the request.
- We send medical record requests to the address and department indicated in your provider demographics profile.
- When providers respond to requests and submit medical records to us, we ensure that all records are sent electronically to the member’s Blue plan within three business days on their receipt.
- We follow up with the member’s Blue plan to ensure that records are reviewed and adjusted in a timely manner.
- We maintain copies or images of all medical records received from providers.

To make the medical records process more efficient, please respond to medical record requests within 10 days of the request.
Section 3
Claim Filing

Processing BlueCard Claims

Blue Shield processes BlueCard claims for inpatient, outpatient, professional, and ancillary* services rendered to out-of-state Blue plan members. Be sure to include the member’s complete identification number when you submit the claim. The complete identification number includes the three-character prefix. Claims with incorrect or missing prefixes and member identification numbers cannot be filed correctly.

*Ancillary providers who Blue Shield categorizes them in their contract as Independent Clinical Laboratory, Durable/Home Medical Equipment and Supplies, and Specialty Pharmacy providers should file their claims according to the Ancillary Claims Filing Requirements listed further in this document.

Providers are required to submit BlueCard claims electronically to Blue Shield that do not have a medical record attached. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Please indicate the member’s subscriber ID number, including the three-character prefix, on each electronically submitted claim. If you have any questions about the process or require additional information on electronic claim submission, contact our EDI Help Desk by calling (800) 480-1221 or emailing EDI_BSC@blueshieldca.com.

You may now submit claims online through clearinghouse vendor Office Ally. Once at the EDI clearinghouse’s website, you’ll have the option to review the claim submission services offered. To visit Office Ally and for detailed information about electronic submissions, go to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider, click on Claims, then click on the Submit claims for free box in the claims tool area.

Mail hard-copy BlueCard claims that require medical records to:

Blue Shield of California
BlueCard Program
P. O. Box 1505
Red Bluff, CA  96080-1505

*Ancillary providers who Blue Shield categorizes them in their contract as Independent Clinical Laboratory, Durable/Home Medical Equipment and Supplies, and Specialty Pharmacy providers should file their claims according to the Ancillary Claims Filing Requirements listed further in this document.
BlueCard Claim Tips

After the member of another Blue plan receives services from you, you should submit the claim to Blue Shield of California. We will work with the member’s Blue plan to process the claim and the member’s Blue plan will send an explanation of benefit (EOB) to the member. We will send you an explanation of payment or remittance advice and applicable payment to you under the terms of our contract with you, and based on the member’s benefits and coverage.

Following these helpful tips will improve your claim experience:

- Ask members for their current member ID cards and regularly obtain new photocopies of it (front and back). Having the current card enables you to submit claims with the appropriate member information (including the three-character prefix) and avoid unnecessary claims payment delays.

- Check eligibility and benefits electronically at blueshieldca.com/provider or by calling (800) 676-BLUE (2583). Be sure to provide the member’s three-character prefix.

- Verify the member’s cost sharing amount before processing payment. Please do not process full payment upfront as Blue plan members are responsible for their share of cost, deductible, co-insurance, and non-covered services.

- Indicate any payment you collected from the patient on the claim.

- Submit all BlueCard claims to Blue Shield of California. Providers are required to submit BlueCard claims electronically to Blue Shield that do not have a medical record attached. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Be sure to include the member’s complete subscriber identification number when you submit the claim. This includes the three-character prefix. Submit claims with only valid prefixes; claims with incorrect or missing prefixes and member identification numbers cannot be processed.

- Reduce claim adjustments by double-checking to ensure you’ve indicated the correct provider Tax ID Number (TIN), Provider Identification Number (PIN) and/or the National Provider Identifier (NPI) number.

- In cases where there is more than one payor and a Blue plan is a primary payor, submit Other Party Liability (OPL) information with the BlueCard claim. Upon receipt, Blue Shield of California will electronically route the claim to the member’s Blue plan.

- Do not send duplicate claims. Sending another claim, or having your billing agency resubmit claims automatically, slows down the claims payment process and creates confusion for the member. Go to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider for direct access, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for current, reliable information on BlueCard claims, payment status and claim reporting tools.

- To avoid denials as duplicates when submitting corrected BlueCard claims, file them after the original claim has finalized. After the original claim is finalized, you may submit the corrected claim electronically by identifying the claim as Type of Bill (XX7).

- If medical records are requested, send them to either the claims address listed on the request letter you received from Blue Shield or to the address that appears in the search results of the Claims Routing Tool or the eligibility and benefits inquiry.
BlueCard Claim Tips (cont’d.)

- Check claims status by contacting Blue Shield of California at blueshieldca.com/provider, contact Blue Shield’s dedicated BlueCard Customer Service Unit at (800) 622-0632, or submit an electronic HIPAA 276 transaction to Blue Shield of California.

- You can reduce claim rejects by matching the admit date in Box 12 with the date in Box 6 on the UB 04 claim form. These dates must match for claims processing.

- If you’re submitting implant reimbursements with bulk invoices, clearly indicate which implants were used in the service for which you are billing. Submit the manufacturer’s invoice instead of the purchase order, unless your contract clearly states that a purchase order may be submitted.

- For implant claims, submit the implant invoice on the first submission with the claim. This will enable Blue Shield to process your claim in full on the first submission rather than processing surgery charges first and then adjusting the claim for the implant charges later.

Providers are required to submit BlueCard claims electronically to Blue Shield that do not have a medical record attached. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. However, if you mail hard-copy BlueCard claims that require medical records, please consider these paper claim tips:

- Always use an original UB 04 claim form, not a photocopy. Duplicated claim forms often cannot be scanned and can create processing delays and accuracy risks.

- When typing or writing on the UB 04 claim form, avoid typing or writing over the titles of claim boxes.

- You may apply a stamp on the paper claims with clear messages; however, do not cover up key information with the stamp. Attaching a cover sheet to the claim is an acceptable alternative to applying a stamp to the claim form.

- Please type or write in a font size that is large enough so that your message can be clearly read.

- BlueCard hospital exception claims, provider correspondence, and all other BlueCard paper claims are sent to:

  Blue Shield of California
  BlueCard Program
  P.O. Box 1505
  Red Bluff, CA 96080-1505

After you have submitted BlueCard claims to Blue Shield, you may obtain status and verify payment information on your BlueCard claims by accessing the Claims section on our website at blueshieldca.com/provider. Use this tool as your primary resource for requesting and receiving details and status of BlueCard claim.

If you have remaining questions about your BlueCard claims after accessing the Claims section on our website, download the BlueCard Program claims brochure for facility providers (which is available in the Resources link of the BlueCard Program web page at blueshieldca.com/provider), or contact Blue Shield’s dedicated BlueCard Customer Service Unit at (800) 622-0632.
Submitting BlueCard Claims

Providers are required to submit BlueCard claims electronically to Blue Shield that do not have a medical record attached. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. The following are tips on how to submit claims:

1) Access our Claims Routing Tool on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider by clicking on the Claims Routing Tool link within the Claims section of the welcome landing page. Simply enter the member’s three-character prefix and date of service to instantly learn where to send the BlueCard claim.

2) Note the claim address and patient benefit information added to the online verification of Eligibility and Benefits search results returned by blueshieldca.com/provider. You’ll find the information you need to correctly send BlueCard claims, as well as local Blue Shield commercial and FEP claims. On the right-hand side of your search results, refer to the appropriate payor information, claims mailing address for medical record attachments, claims unit’s toll-free telephone number and member eligibility toll-free telephone number.

3) If and for so long as the hospital or facility is not contracted with another licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association in the State of California, providers shall submit to Blue Shield for processing all claims for medical services furnished by the hospital or facility and process through the BlueCard Program, unless the member receiving such services is enrolled in a benefit plan having an exclusive arrangement with such other licensee of the Association.

4) If and for so long as the hospital or facility is contracted with both Blue Shield and another licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association in the State of California, and there is no exclusive arrangement with either Blue Shield nor the other license of the Association, the hospital or facility shall increase the number of claims for medical services process through the BlueCard Program (as defined in the Provider Manual) sent to Blue Shield for processing.

5) To facilitate the obligation outlined in 4) above, Blue Shield provides clearinghouses and EDI partners* with tools that improve claims processing accuracy and reduce turnaround time. These are collectively known as the BlueCard Prefix Code Routing Table Edit ("BlueCard Edit" or simply, "Edit"). Unless otherwise noted in the Provider Contract; the provider has authorized the implementation and use of these tools for their BlueCard claims in all transmission formats.

The purpose and functionality of the BlueCard Edit is to direct and route all BlueCard transactions where Blue Shield is eligible to process said claims. This includes all BlueCard transactions that are related to a healthcare member whose healthcare payer is a licensed affiliate of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (“BCBSA”). It does not include transactions from prefixes noted in the table that are (i) exclusive to another licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association in the State of California; or (ii) from those licensed affiliates of BCBSA that designates another licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association in the State of California exclusively to process transactions for its members.
Submitting BlueCard Claims (cont’d.)

*If requested, Blue Shield will provide to the provider or their agents or claims clearinghouse (collectively known as the “SUBMITTER”) its proprietary BlueCard Prefix Code (also known as the Interplan Teleprocessing System, or “ITS”) table (“Table”) which shall at all times remain the Confidential Information of Blue Shield. Upon provision of the Table, the Submitter shall develop, implement, and maintain in production the software functionality or program known as the BlueCard Prefix Code Routing Table edit (“BlueCard Edit” or simply, “Edit”). Where such capability currently exists, the provider hereby authorizes and directs their Submitter to make use of said Edit or similar capability. To inquire about the BlueCard Edit, email BlueCardMarketing@blueshieldca.com.

6) If you have any questions about electronic claims submission, contact our EDI Help Desk at (800) 480-1221, email EDI_BSC@blueshieldca.com, or submit an EDI inquiry online on Provider Connection.

In cases where there is more than one payor and Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield is a primary payor, submit Other Party Liability (OPL) information with the Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield claim. Upon receipt, Blue Shield will electronically route the claim to the member’s Blue plan. The member’s Blue plan then processes the claim and applicable payment. Blue Shield will reimburse you for services.

Below is an example of how claims flow through BlueCard
Traditional Medicare-Related Claims

The following are guidelines for the processing of traditional Medicare-related claims:

- When Medicare is primary payor, submit claims to your local Medicare intermediary.

- All Blue claims are set up to automatically cross-over to the member’s Blue plan after being adjudicated by the Medicare intermediary.

How do I submit Medicare primary/Blue plan secondary claims?

- For members with Medicare primary coverage and Blue plan secondary coverage, submit the claim first to your Medicare intermediary.

- Be certain that you include the exact name of the secondary plan and the complete subscriber number. The member’s Blue plan subscriber number will include the three-character prefix followed by alphanumeric values.

- When you receive the remittance advice from the Medicare intermediary, verify whether the claim has been automatically forwarded (crossed over) to the secondary payor (Blue plan). If the Medicare remittance advice indicates the claim has been crossed over, it means that Medicare has forwarded the claim, on your behalf, to the appropriate secondary plan for processing. There is no need for you to resubmit the claim to the Blue plan.

When should I expect to receive payment?

The Medicare intermediary will process and cross over the claim within about 14 business days. This means that the Medicare intermediary will be forwarding the claim to the secondary Blue plan on approximately the same date you receive the Medicare remittance advice. Please allow up to 30 additional calendar days before expecting payment or instructions regarding the secondary processing of the claim.

What should I do if I have not received a Medicare remittance advice and/or payment for the claim?

If you submitted the claim to the Medicare intermediary and you have not received a response to your initial claim submission, do not automatically submit another claim to the secondary Blue plan. Instead, please take the following steps:

- Confirm that the Medicare intermediary received the claim and resend it to the Medicare intermediary only if it was not initially received.

- Wait until you receive the Medicare remittance advice for the claim.

- Wait an additional 30 calendar days after you receive the remittance advice to receive payment or instructions from the Blue plan regarding secondary coverage processing.

- If, after 30 calendar days, you have not received payment or instructions from the Blue plan regarding secondary claim processing, we recommend that you submit a secondary claim, including complete Medicare adjudication information, to the local Blue plan, as appropriate.

To avoid having your claim denied by the Blue plan as a duplicate, do not submit a secondary claim to the local Blue plan before taking each of the steps described above.
Traditional Medicare-Related Claims *(cont’d.)*

**Whom should I contact if I have questions?**

If Blue Shield is the secondary healthcare coverage carrier for the patient, please contact us using the following information:

- Online at blueshieldca.com/provider
- Provider Customer Service, by telephone at (800) 541-6652
- By postal mail at Blue Shield of California, P.O. Box 272540, Chico, CA 95927-2540

If the patient’s secondary plan is a Blue plan in a state other than California, please contact us using the following information:

- BlueCard Provider Customer Service, by telephone at (800) 622-0632
- By postal mail at BlueCard Claims, P.O. Box 1505, Red Bluff, CA 96080-1505
Claims Filing for Air Ambulance Services for BlueCard Patients

Generally, as a healthcare provider you should file claims for your Blue Cross and Blue Shield patients to the local Blue plan. However, there are unique circumstances when claims filing directions will differ based on the type of service rendered.

Claims for air ambulance services must be filed to the Blue plan in whose service area the point of pickup ZIP code is located.

Note: If you contract with more than one Blue plan in a state for the same product type (i.e., PPO or Traditional), you may file the claim with either Blue plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Rendered</th>
<th>How to File (Required Fields)</th>
<th>Where to File</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Air Ambulance Services | Point of Pickup ZIP Code:  
- Populate item 23 on CMS 1500 Health Insurance Claim Form, with the 5-digit ZIP code of the point of pickup.  
- For electronic billers, populate the origin information (ZIP code of the point of pick-up), in the Ambulance Pick-Up Location Loop in the ASC X12N Health Care Claim (837) Professional.  
- Where Form CMS-1450 (UB-04) is used for air ambulance service not included with local hospital charges, populate Form Locators 39-41, with the 5-digit ZIP code of the point of pickup. The Form Locator must be populated with the approved Code and Value specified by the National Uniform Billing Committee in the UB-04 Data Specifications Manual.  
- Form Locators (FL) 39-41.  
- Code: A0 (Special ZIP code reporting), or its successor code specified by the National Uniform Billing Committee.  
- Value: Five digit ZIP code of the location from which the beneficiary is initially placed on board the ambulance.  
- For electronic claims, populate the origin information (ZIP code of the point of pick-up) in the Value Information Segment in the ASC X12N Health Care Claim (837) Institutional. | File the claim to the Blue plan in whose service area the point of pickup ZIP code is located*.  
*BlueCard rules for claims incurred in an overlapping service area and contiguous county apply. | 1. The point of pick up ZIP code is in Plan A service area.  
2. The claim must be filed to Plan A, based on the point of pickup ZIP code. |

If you have questions about the claims filing for Air Ambulance Services for an out-of-state Blue plan member, please contact Blue Shield’s BlueCard Customer Service Unit at (800) 622-0632.
Medical Records

Blue plans around the country have made improvements to the medical records process to make it more efficient. We now are able to send and receive medical records electronically among each other. This new method significantly reduces the time it takes to transmit supporting documentation for our out-of-area claims, reduces the need to request records multiple times and significantly reduces lost or misrouted records.

Under what circumstances may the provider get requests for medical records for out-of-area members?

- **As part of the pre-authorization process** - If you receive requests for medical records from the member’s Blue plan prior to rendering services, as part of the pre-authorization process, you will be instructed to submit the records directly to the member’s Blue plan that requested them. This is the only circumstance where you would not submit them to Blue Shield.

- **As part of claim review and adjudication** - These requests will come from Blue Shield in a form of a letter requesting specific medical records and including instructions for submission.

BlueCard Medical Record Process for Claim Review

- An initial communication, generally in the form of a letter, should be received by your office requesting the needed information.

- A remittance may be received by your office indicating the claim is being denied pending receipt and review of records. Occasionally, the medical records you submit might cross in the mail with the remittance advice for the claim indicating a need for medical records. A remittance advice is not a duplicate request for medical records. If you submitted medical records previously, but received a remittance advice indicating records were still needed, please contact Blue Shield’s dedicated BlueCard Customer Service team at (800) 622-0632 to ensure your original submission has been received and processed. This will prevent duplicate records being sent unnecessarily.

- If you received only a remittance advice indicating records are needed, but you did not receive a medical records request letter, contact Blue Shield’s dedicated BlueCard Customer Service team at (800) 622-0632 to determine if the records are needed from your office.

- Upon receipt of the information, the claim will be reviewed to determine the benefits.

Helpful Ways You Can Assist in Timely Processing of Medical Records

- If the records are requested following submission of the claim, forward all requested medical records to Blue Shield’s dedicated BlueCard Customer Service team at: Blue Shield of California, BlueCard Program, P. O. Box 1505, Red Bluff, CA 96080-1505.

- Follow the submission instructions given on the request, using the specified address, email address or fax number. The address or fax number for medical records may be different than the address you use to submit claims.

- Include the cover letter you received with the request when submitting the medical records. This is necessary to make sure the records are routed properly once received by Blue Shield.

- Please submit the information to Blue Shield within 10 days of the request to avoid further delay.

- Only send the information specifically requested. Frequently, complete medical records are not necessary.

- Please do not proactively send medical records with the claim. Unsolicited claim attachments may cause claim payment delays.
The BlueCard® Program

Claims Coding

Code claims as you would for local Blue Shield claims. Please refer to Section 4: Billing and Payment for further claim billing information and requirements.

Claim Payment and Claim Status Inquiries

Blue Shield processes BlueCard claims in accordance to our contract agreement with you. Providers are required to receive claims payments electronically through direct deposit of funds into a provider’s designated bank account. Providers are also required to receive Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA) files or view Explanation of Payment (EOP) using the Blue Shield provider portal unless the provider contract specifically states otherwise.

Go to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider 24 hours a day, seven days a week for current, reliable information on BlueCard claims, payment status, and claim reporting tools.

To obtain status and verify payment information on your BlueCard claims, access the Claims section on blueshieldca.com/provider. Use this tool as your primary resource for requesting and receiving details on BlueCard claims.

If you have remaining questions about your BlueCard claims after accessing the Claims section on our website, contact Blue Shield’s dedicated BlueCard Customer Service Unit at (800) 622-0632.

Calls from Members and Others with Claim Questions

If Blue plan members contact you, advise them to contact their Blue plan and refer them to their ID card for a customer service number.

The member’s Blue plan should not contact you directly regarding claims issues, but if the member’s Blue plan contacts you and asks you to submit the claim to them, refer them to Blue Shield of California.

Value Based Provider Arrangements

Blue plans have value-based care delivery arrangements in place with their providers. Each Blue plan has created their own arrangement with their provider(s), including reimbursement arrangements. Due to the unique nature of each Blue plan/provider arrangement, there is no common provider education template for value-based care delivery arrangements that can be created and distributed for use by all Blue plans.

Claim Adjustments

Contact Blue Shield’s BlueCard Customer Service Unit at (800) 622-0632 if an adjustment is required.

Provider Claim Appeals

Provider claim appeals for all BlueCard claims processed by Blue Shield are handled through Blue Shield. BlueCard claim appeals must be resolved within a 30-day timeframe. We will coordinate the appeal process with the member’s Blue plan, if needed. For more information on the BlueCard claim appeal process, contact our BlueCard Customer Service Unit at (800) 622-0632.
The BlueCard® Program

Section 4

BlueCard Resources

Claims Routing Tool

Determining where to submit BlueCard claims is the number one question providers ask about BlueCard claims. To find out which California Blue plan can process your BlueCard claim, access our Claims Routing Tool on Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider and click on the Access Claims Routing Tool link within the BlueCard Program section. Simply enter the member’s three-character prefix and date of service to instantly learn where to send your BlueCard claim.

BlueCard Videos

Blue Shield has posted two short videos online at our Provider Connection website that describe the core processes of the BlueCard Program.

Our BlueCard Basics video makes it easy to learn how to verify eligibility and benefits, request authorizations, and submit claims for out-of-state Blue plan members.

Our Claims Routing Tool video will help you identify where to send your BlueCard claims for Blue plan members with healthcare coverage from out-of-state Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans.

Access our online BlueCard videos by logging onto blueshieldca.com/provider, clicking on the Find BlueCard Program resources link within the BlueCard section on the opening landing page, then selecting either video on the webpage that appears.

BlueCard Program Tutorials

Access our online BlueCard Program tutorials and quickly learn about our online tools. BlueCard tutorials are available anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Select the topics you want to learn about, whenever it’s convenient for you.

The tutorials will help you learn how to:

- Verify eligibility and benefits
- Access other Blue plans’ medical policies, pre-certification guidelines and request medical authorizations
- Instantly determine where to submit claims with the Claims Routing Tool
- Check claims status, payment details and EOB’s
- Get help on Medicare secondary claims involving out-of-state Blue plans

Log into Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider, click on the BlueCard Program home page link within the BlueCard Program section on the opening landing page, and select the Tutorials link. Then choose from a variety of tutorial modules offered.
The BlueCard® Program

BlueCard Program Webinars

We offer complimentary online BlueCard Program training sessions to give providers detailed information about serving other states’ Blue plan members and processing out-of-state Blue plan claims.

We conduct BlueCard Basics training as well as quarterly online training sessions on a wide variety of BlueCard topics. To attend one of our webinars, access our Webinars link on the BlueCard Program web page on Provider Connection for the date, time, topic and type of provider whom the webinar is intended. You can also register for available BlueCard webinars by accessing News & education on Provider Connection’s opening landing page and clicking on the Register for Webinars link. To receive notification about BlueCard webinars, request more information by emailing BlueCardMarketing@blueshieldca.com.

BlueCard Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Page

Visit our expanded BlueCard FAQ page to see 15 of the most often asked questions by providers about the BlueCard Program and our detailed answers. To access this informative page, log onto blueshieldca.com/provider, click on the BlueCard Program home page link, select the Resources link and then choose the BlueCard Program FAQs box.

BlueCard Program Educational Resources

A wide variety of BlueCard educational flyers, brochures, and other resources are available on the BlueCard Program web page on Provider Connection. The BlueCard educational materials are also available in the News & education section.
Section 5
Medicare Advantage

Medicare Advantage Overview

“Medicare Advantage” (MA) is the program alternative to standard Medicare Part A and Part B fee-for-service coverage (generally referred to as “traditional Medicare”). It offers Medicare beneficiaries several product options (similar to those available in the commercial market), including health maintenance organization (HMO), preferred provider organization (PPO), point-of-service (POS) and private fee-for-service (PFFS) plans. All Medicare Advantage plans must offer beneficiaries at least the standard Medicare Part A and B benefits, but many offer additional covered services as well (e.g., enhanced vision and dental benefits).

In addition to these products, Medicare Advantage organizations may also offer a Special Needs Plan (SNP) which can limit enrollment to subgroups of the Medicare population in order to focus on ensuring that their special needs are met as effectively as possible.

Medicare Advantage plans may allow in- and out-of-network benefits, depending on the type of product selected. Providers should confirm the level of coverage by calling the members’ health plans or submitting an electronic inquiry for all Medicare Advantage members prior to providing service since the level of benefits, and coverage rules may vary depending on the Medicare Advantage plan.

Types of Medicare Advantage Plans

Medicare Advantage HMO

A Medicare Advantage HMO is a Medicare managed care option in which members typically receive a set of predetermined and prepaid services provided by a network of physicians and hospitals. Generally (except in urgent or emergency care situations), medical services are only covered when provided by in-network providers. The level of benefits, and the coverage rules, may vary by Medicare Advantage plan.

Medicare Advantage POS

A Medicare Advantage POS program is an option available through some Medicare HMO programs. It allows members to determine—at the point of service—whether they want to receive certain designated services within the HMO system, or seek such services outside the HMO’s provider network (usually at greater cost to the member). The Medicare Advantage POS plan may specify which services will be available outside of the HMO’s provider network.

Medicare Advantage PPO

A Medicare Advantage PPO is a plan that has a network of providers, but unlike traditional HMO products, it allows members who enroll access to services provided outside the contracted network of providers. Required member cost-sharing may be greater when covered services are obtained out-of-network. Medicare Advantage PPO plans may be offered on a local or regional (frequently multi-state) basis. Special payment and other rules apply to regional PPOs.
Types of Medicare Advantage Plans (cont’d.)

Medicare Advantage PFFS

A Medicare Advantage PFFS plan is a plan in which the member may go to any Medicare-approved doctor or hospital that accepts the plan’s terms and conditions of participation. Acceptance is “deemed” to occur where the provider is aware, in advance of furnishing services, that the member is enrolled in a PFFS product and where the provider has reasonable access to the terms and conditions of participation.

The Medicare Advantage organization, rather than the Medicare program, pays physicians and providers on a fee-for-services basis for services rendered to such members. Members are responsible for cost-sharing, as specified in the plan, and balance billing may be permitted in limited instance where the provider is a network provider and the plan expressly allows for balance billing.

Medicare Advantage PFFS varies from the other Blue products you might currently participate in:

- You can see and treat any Medicare Advantage PFFS member without having a contract with Blue Shield.

- If you do provide services, you will do so under the Terms and Conditions of that member’s Blue plan.

- Please refer to the back of the member’s ID card for information on accessing the Plan’s Terms and Conditions. You may choose to render services to a MA PFFS member on an episode of care (claim-by-claim) basis.

- MA PFFS Terms and Conditions might vary for each Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plan and we advise that you review them before servicing MA PFFS members.

- You can determine the Terms and Conditions related to a members' Medicare Advantage Plan by accessing the Medicare Advantage Plan Terms and Conditions Lookup Tool located under the Find BlueCard Program Resources link on the BlueCard Program page at blueshieldca.com/provider. To use the tool, enter the first three characters of the member’s identification number on the Blue Cross Blue Shield Medicare Advantage PFFS card and click “GO” to view the BCBS Medicare Advantage PFFS Plan’s Terms & Conditions.

- Submit your MA PFFS claims to Blue Shield.

Medicare Advantage Medical Savings Account (MSA)

A Medicare Advantage MSA plan is made up of two parts. One part is the Medicare Medical Savings Account (MSA) which is a type of savings account for members to pay for qualified medical expenses. The other part is the Medicare MSA Health Policy that is a special health insurance policy with a high deductible. Qualified medical expenses are services and products that otherwise could be deducted as medical expenses on the member’s annual tax return, which includes but is not limited to doctor visits, hospital stays, dental exams and medical equipment. The Blue plan calculates the amount and the Medicare program deposits the funds into the member’s savings account. Savings balances accumulate interest or dividends tax free until spent and as long as the member spends the funds on qualified medical expenses, the money is tax free to the member.
Types of Medicare Advantage Plans  

Medicare Advantage SNP

A Medicare Advantage SNP allows a Medicare Advantage organization to offer benefit plans targeted to special needs populations and limit enrollment to only members with the special needs. Many MA organizations target Medicare populations with special needs defined by the presence of certain chronic diseases. For example, a SNP may only provide coverage for members with cardiovascular disease or members who have diabetes. Unlike other Medicare Advantage Plans, SNPs must provide Medicare prescription drug coverage. Medical Advantage SNPs also may target enrollment to dual-eligibles and to beneficiaries residing in institutions.

**How to Recognize Medicare Advantage Members**

Members of Medicare Advantage plans will not have a standard Medicare card; instead, a Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield logo will be visible on the ID card. The following examples illustrate how the different products associated with the Medicare Advantage program will be designated on the front of the member ID cards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member ID cards for Medicare Advantage products will display one of the benefit product logos shown here:</th>
<th>HMO</th>
<th>MSA</th>
<th>PFFS</th>
<th>POS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDICARE ADVANTAGE</strong></td>
<td>Health Maintenance Organization</td>
<td>Medical Savings Account</td>
<td>Private Fee-For-Service</td>
<td>Point of Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MA PPO</strong></td>
<td>Network Sharing Preferred Provider Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When these logos are displayed on the front of a member’s ID card, it indicates the coverage type the member has in his/her Blue plan service area or region. However, when the member receives services outside his/her Blue plan service area or region, provider reimbursement for covered services is based on the Medicare allowed amount, except for PPO network sharing arrangements.

Blue Shield of California participates in Medicare Advantage PPO Network Sharing arrangements, and contracted provider reimbursement is based on the contracted rate with Blue Shield of California. Non-contracted provider reimbursement is the Medicare allowed amount based on where services are rendered.

*Tip:* While all MA PPO members have suitcases on their ID cards, some have limited benefits outside of their primary carrier’s service area. Providers should refer to the back the member’s ID card for language indicating such restrictions apply.
Eligibility Verification

Verify eligibility by contacting Medicare Member Services at (800) 676-BLUE (2583) and providing the member’s prefix or by submitting an electronic inquiry to Blue Shield and providing the member’s prefix. Be sure to ask if Medicare Advantage benefits apply. If you experience difficulty obtaining eligibility information, please record the prefix and report it to Blue Shield.

Medicare Advantage Claims Submission

Submit all Medicare Advantage claims to Blue Shield. Providers are required to submit BlueCard claims electronically to Blue Shield that do not have a medical record attached. Except as otherwise specified in your agreement, claims not submitted in accordance with these requirements will be rejected. Do not bill Medicare directly for any services rendered to a Medicare Advantage member. Payment will be made directly by a Blue plan.

Reimbursement for Medicare Advantage PPO, HMO and POS

No Plan Contract: Services for out-of-area and local Medicare Advantage members

Based upon the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations, if you are a provider who accepts Medicare assignment and you render services to a Medicare Advantage member for whom you have no obligation to provide services under your contract with a Blue plan, you will generally be considered a non-contracted provider and be reimbursed the equivalent of the current Medicare allowed amount for all covered services (i.e., the amount you would collect if the beneficiary were enrolled in traditional Medicare). Special payment rules apply to hospitals and certain other entities (such as skilled nursing facilities) that are non-contracted providers.

Providers should make sure they understand the applicable Medicare Advantage reimbursement rules. Other than the applicable member cost sharing amounts, reimbursement is made directly by a Blue plan or its branded affiliate. In general, you may collect only the applicable cost sharing (e.g., copayment) amounts from the member at the time of service and may not otherwise charge or balance bill the member.

    Note: Enrollee payment responsibilities can include more than copayments (e.g., deductibles). Please review the remittance notice concerning Medicare Advantage plan payment, member’s payment responsibility, and balance billing limitations.

Plan Contract: Services for local Blue Medicare Advantage members

If you are a provider who accepts Medicare assignment and you render services to a local Medicare Advantage member for whom you have an obligation to provide services under your contract with a Blue plan, you will be considered a contracted provider and be reimbursed per the contractual agreement.

If you are a provider who accepts Medicare assignment, has a Blue plan contract to provide services for all Medicare Advantage enrollees, and you render services to out-of-area Blue Medicare Advantage members, you will be reimbursed at the contracted rate.

Providers should make sure they understand the applicable Medicare Advantage reimbursement rules and their individual Plan contractual arrangements. Other than the applicable member cost sharing amounts, reimbursement is made directly by a Blue plan. In general, you may collect only the applicable cost sharing (e.g., copayment) amounts from the member at the time of service, and may not otherwise charge or balance bill the member.
Reimbursement for Medicare Advantage PPO, HMO and POS (cont’d.)

Please review the remittance notice concerning Medicare Advantage plan payment, member’s payment responsibility, and balance billing limitations.

Plan Contract: Services for out-of-area Medicare Advantage Blue members

If you are a provider who accepts Medicare assignment, has a Blue plan contract to provide services for local Medicare Advantage enrollees only, and you render services to out-of-area Blue Medicare Advantage members, you will be reimbursed at the Medicare allowed amount (i.e., the amount you would collect if the beneficiary were enrolled in traditional Medicare).

Providers should make sure they understand the applicable Medicare Advantage reimbursement rules and their individual Plan contractual arrangements. Other than the applicable member cost sharing amounts, reimbursement is made directly by a Blue plan. In general, you may collect only the applicable cost sharing (e.g., copayment) amounts from the member at the time of service, and may not otherwise charge or balance bill the member.

Please review the remittance notice concerning Medicare Advantage plan payment, member’s payment responsibility and balance billing limitations.
Reimbursement for Medicare Advantage Private Fee-For-Service (PFFS)

Plan Contract: Services for local Medicare Advantage PFFS member

If you are a provider who accepts Medicare assignment and you render services to a PFFS local Medicare Advantage member for whom you have an obligation to provide services under your contract with a Blue plan, you will generally be considered a contracted provider and be reimbursed per the contractual agreement. This amount may be less than your charge amount.

Providers should make sure they understand the applicable Medicare Advantage reimbursement rules and their individual Plan contractual arrangements. Other than the applicable member cost sharing amounts, reimbursement is made directly by a Blue plan. In general, you may collect only the applicable cost sharing (e.g., copayment) amounts from the member at the time of service, but may be able to balance bill the member in certain limited instances where the Blue plan with which you contract expressly allows for balancing billing of PFFS members.

Please review the remittance notice concerning Medicare Advantage plan payment, member’s payment responsibility and balance billing limitations.

Services for out-of-area Blue Medicare Advantage PFFS members

If you have rendered services for a Blue out-of-area Medicare Advantage PFFS member, but are not obligated to provide services to such member under a contract with a Blue plan, you will generally be reimbursed the Medicare allowed amount for all covered services (i.e., the amount you would collect if the beneficiary were enrolled in traditional Medicare).

If you have rendered services for a Blue out-of-area Medicare Advantage PFFS member and you are obligated to provide services to such member under a contract with a Blue plan, you will generally be reimbursed at your contracted rate.

Providers should make sure they understand the applicable Medicare Advantage reimbursement rules. Other than the applicable member cost sharing amounts, reimbursement is made directly by a Blue plan. In general, you may collect only the applicable cost sharing (e.g., copayment) amounts from the member at the time of service, and may not otherwise charge or balance bill the member.

Please review the remittance notice concerning Medicare Advantage plan payment, member’s payment responsibility and balance billing limitations.
Medicare Advantage Network Sharing

What is BCBS Medicare Advantage PPO Network Sharing?

Network sharing allows MA PPO members from MA PPO Blue plans to obtain in-network benefits when traveling or living in the service areas of the MA PPO plans as long as the member sees a contracted Medicare Advantage PPO provider. Medicare Advantage PPO shared networks are available in 35 states and one territory:

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois*
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Missouri
- Montana
- North Carolina
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Puerto Rico
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wisconsin
- West Virginia

What does the BCBS Medicare Advantage PPO Network Sharing mean to me?

There is no change from your current practice. You should continue to verify eligibility and bill for services as you currently do for any out-of-area Blue Medicare Advantage member you agree to treat. Benefits will be based on the Medicare allowed amount for covered services and be paid under the member’s out-of-network benefits unless for urgent or emergency care. Once you submit the MA claim, Blue Shield will send you payment.

When the logo is displayed on the front of a member’s ID card, it indicates the coverage type the member has in his/her Blue plan service area or region. However, when the member receives services outside his/her Blue plan service area or region, provider reimbursement for covered services is based on the Medicare allowed amount, except for PPO network sharing arrangements.

Do I have to provide services to these Medicare Advantage PPO network sharing members or other Blue MA members from out-of-area?

If you are a contracted Medicare Advantage PPO provider with Blue Shield of California, you must provide the same access to care as you do for local members. You can expect to receive the same contracted rates for such services.

If you are not a Medicare Advantage PPO contracted provider, you may see Medicare Advantage members from other Blue plans but you are not required to do so. Should you decide to provide services to Blue Medicare Advantage 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.

If you choose to provide services to a Blue Private-Fee-for-Service (PFFS) member (as a “deemed” provider), you will be reimbursed for covered services at the Medicare allowed amount, as outlined in the Plan’s PFFS Terms and Conditions.
The BlueCard® Program

Medicare Advantage Network Sharing (cont’d.)

What if my practice is closed to new local Blue Medicare Advantage PPO members?

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

If I chose to provide services, how do I verify benefits and eligibility?

Call BlueCard Eligibility® at (800) 676-BLUE (2583) and provide the member’s three-character prefix located on the ID card. You may also submit electronic eligibility requests for Blue members, following these three easy steps:

1. Log in to Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider.
2. Click on the Eligibility & Benefits tab at the top of the web page and enter the required data fields to verify member eligibility.
3. Submit your request online.

Where do I submit the claim?

You should submit the claim to Blue Shield under your current billing practices. Do not bill Medicare directly for any services rendered to a Medicare Advantage member.

What can I expect for reimbursement?

Benefits will be based on the Medicare allowed amount when providing covered services to any Blue Medicare Advantage out-of-area members. Once you submit the MA claim, Blue Shield will send you the payment. These services will be paid under the members out-of-network benefits, unless services were for urgent or emergency care.

What is the member cost sharing level and copayments?

Any MA PPO members from out-of-area will pay the out-of-network cost sharing amount. You may collect the copayment amounts from the member at the time of service.

May I request payment upfront?

Generally, once the member receives care, you should not ask for full payment up front other than out-of-pocket expenses (deductible, copayment, coinsurance, and non-covered services).

Under certain circumstances, when the member has been notified in advance that a service will not be covered, you may request payment from the member before services are rendered or billed to the member. The member should sign an Advance Benefit Notification (ABN) form before services are rendered in these situations.

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

No. You may not balance bill the member for this difference. Members may be balanced billed for any deductibles, co-insurance, and/or copays.

What if I disagree with the reimbursement amount I received?

If there is a question concerning the reimbursement amount, contact Blue Shield at (800) 622-0632.
Section 6
Health Insurance Marketplaces (Exchanges)

Health Insurance Marketplaces Overview

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 provides for the establishment of Health Insurance Marketplaces (i.e. Exchanges), in each state, where individuals and small businesses can purchase qualified insurance coverage through internet websites. The intent of the Marketplace is to:

- Create a more organized and competitive health insurance marketplace by offering consumers a choice of health insurance plans,
- Establish common rules regarding insurance offerings and pricing,
- Provide information to help consumers better understand the options available to them and,
- Allow individual and small businesses to have the purchasing power comparable to that of large businesses.

The Marketplaces makes it easier for consumers to compare health insurance plans by providing transparent information about health insurance plan provisions such as product information, premium costs, and covered benefits, as well as a plan’s performance in encouraging wellness, managing chronic illnesses, and improving consumer satisfaction.

Each state is given the option to set-up its own “state-based” Marketplace approved by HHS for marketing products to individual consumers and small businesses. If states do not set up a state-based marketplace, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) establishes a federally-facilitated Marketplace, federally-supported Marketplace, or a state-partnership Marketplace in the state. Blue plans that offer products on the Marketplaces collaborate with the state and federal governments for eligibility, enrollment, reconciliation, and other operations to ensure that consumers can seamlessly enroll in individual and small business health insurance products. Blue Shield of California has on-Exchange state-subsidized plans available for purchase through Covered California. Information on Covered California plans offered by Blue Shield can be accessed through Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider. Click on Guidelines & resources at the top of the landing page, then Healthcare reform in the top right.

OPM Multi-State Plan Program

Under the Affordable Care Act of 2010, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) was required to offer OPM sponsored products on the Marketplaces beginning in 2014. For a coverage effective date of Jan. 1, 2017, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans will participate in this program by offering these Multi-State Plans on Marketplaces in 21 states.

For 2017, the following Plans will offer Multi-State Plan products: ARBCBS, HCSC (IL, TX, OK, and MT), BCBSAL, BCBSM, BCBSC, and Anthem (CA, CO, CT, GA, IN, KY, ME, MO, NV, NH, NY, VA, and WI).

The Multi-State Plan products are similar to other Qualified Health Plan products offered on the Marketplaces. Generally, all of the same requirements that apply to other state Marketplace products also apply to these Multi-State Plan products.
Health Insurance Marketplaces Overview (cont’d.)

Exchange-Purchased Plans - Individual Grace Period

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) mandates a three month grace period for individual members who receive a premium subsidy from the government and are delinquent in paying their portion of premiums. The grace period applies as long as the individual has previously paid at least one month’s premium within the benefit year. The health insurance plan is only obligated to pay claims for services rendered during the first month of the grace period. PPACA clarifies that the health insurance plan may pend claims during the second and third months of the grace period.

Blue plans are required to either pay or pend claims for services rendered during the second and third month of the grace period. Consequently, if a member is within the last two months of the federally mandated individual grace period, providers may receive a notification from Blue Shield of California indicating that the member is in the grace period.

Exchange Individual Grace Period – Post Service Notification Letter to Provider

Communication to providers will include the following information:

1. Notice-unique identification number (claim includes member information):
   
   Claim #: __________

2. Name of the QHP and affiliated issuer (Blue plan name):

3. Explanation of the three month grace period:

   Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), there is a three month grace period under Exchange-purchased individual insurance policies, when a premium due is not received for members eligible for premium subsidies. During this grace period, carriers may not disenroll members and, during the second and third months of the grace period, are required to notify providers about the possibility that claims may be denied in the event that the premium is not paid.

4. Purpose of the notice, applicable dates of whether the enrollee is in the second or third month of the grace period & individuals affected under the policy and possibly under care of the provider:

   Please be advised that a premium due has not been received for this subsidy eligible member and that the member and any eligible dependents are and at the time that your care was provided, were in the second or third month of the Exchange individual health insurance grace period. The above-referenced claim thus was pended due to non-payment of premium, and will be denied if the premium is not paid by the end of the grace period.

5. Consequences:

   If the premium is paid in full by the end of the grace period, any pended claims will be processed in accordance with the terms of the contract. If the premium is not paid in full by the end of the grace period, any claims incurred in the second and third months may be denied.

6. QHP customer service telephone number:

   Please feel free to contact Blue Shield of California, Monday through Friday, at our Provider Customer Service Unit at (800) 541-6652 if you have any questions regarding this claim.
Health Insurance Marketplaces Overview (cont’d.)

Health Insurance Marketplaces Claims

The products offered on the Marketplaces will follow local business practices for processing and servicing claims. Providers should continue to follow current practices with Blue Shield of California for claims processing and handling such as outlined below.

1. Eligibility and Benefits
2. Care Management
   1. Pre-Service Review
   2. Medical Policy
3. Claim Pricing and Processing
   1. Contracting
   2. Claim Filing
   3. Pricing
   4. Claim Processing
   5. Medical Records
   6. Payment
   7. Customer Service

How can I get more information about Health Insurance Marketplaces (Exchanges)?

If you would like more information about Health Insurance Marketplaces (Exchanges), log onto Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider. Once you are logged onto our provider portal, follow these steps for more information:

1. Click on Guidelines & resources at the top of the landing page.
2. Click on Healthcare reform in the top right.
3. On the next page, click on the link Products and Networks Available through Covered California.

Here, you will find a wide variety of provider and member resources to enhance your understanding of Health Insurance Marketplaces.

Who do I contact if I have a question about Health Insurance Marketplaces (Exchanges)?

If you have any questions regarding the Health Insurance Marketplaces, please contact Blue Shield’s Provider Customer Service Unit at (800) 541-6652.
### Section 7

#### Glossary of BlueCard Program Terms

| **Administrative Services Only (ASO)** | ASO accounts are self-funded, where the local plan administers claims on behalf of the account, but does not fully underwrite the claims. ASO accounts may have benefit or claims processing requirements that may differ from non-ASO accounts. There may be specific requirements that affect; medical benefits, submission of medical records, Coordination of Benefits or timely filing limitations.

   Blue Shield of California receives and prices all local claims, handles all interactions with providers, with the exception of Utilization Management interactions, and makes payment to the local provider. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affordable Care Act</strong></td>
<td>The comprehensive healthcare reform law enacted in March 2010. The law was enacted in two parts: The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law on March 23, 2010, and was amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act on March 30, 2010. The name “Affordable Care Act” is used to refer to the final, amended version of the law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bcbs.com</strong></td>
<td>Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association’s website, which contains useful information for providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BlueCard Access</strong></td>
<td>Providers or members can use this toll-free number (800) 810-BLUE (2583) to locate healthcare providers in another Blue plan’s area. This number is useful when you need to refer the patient to a physician or healthcare facility in another location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BlueCard Doctor and Hospital Finder</strong></td>
<td>A website providers and members can use to locate providers in another Blue Cross and Blue Shield plan’s service area. This is useful when you need to refer the patient to a physician or healthcare facility in another location. You can access provider information for all 50 states as well as the BlueCard Worldwide network through blueshieldca.com. Click on <em>Find a Doctor</em> and then click on the <em>Providers outside of CA</em> link on the bottom of the page.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **BlueCard Eligibility®** | Providers can use this toll-free eligibility line at (800) 676-BLUE (2583) to verify membership and coverage information and obtain pre-certification on patients from other Blue plans.

   Providers can also access eligibility and benefits information for other Blue plan members by accessing blueshieldca.com/provider. |
| **BlueCard PPO** | A national program that offers members traveling or living outside of their Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plan’s service area the PPO level of benefits when they obtain services from a physician or hospital designated as a PPO provider. |
### The BlueCard® Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BlueCard PPO Basic</td>
<td>A national program that offers members traveling or living outside of their Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan’s service area the PPO basic level of benefits when they obtain services from a physician or hospital designated as a BlueCard PPO Basic provider. When you see the “PPOB” in a suitcase logo on the front of the member’s Blue Plan ID card, it means the member has selected a PPO plan product from a Blue Cross Blue Shield plan. Since Blue Shield of California does not have a BlueCard PPO Basic network, providers will be reimbursed for covered services in accordance with your PPO contract with Blue Shield of California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BlueCard PPO Member</td>
<td>A Blue plan patient who carries an ID card with this identifier on it. Only members with this identifier can access the benefits of the BlueCard PPO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BlueCard PPO Network</td>
<td>The network comprising those physicians, hospitals and other healthcare providers PPO members may elect to use to obtain the highest level of PPO benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BlueCard PPO Provider</td>
<td>A doctor, hospital or other healthcare entity enrolled in a network of designated PPO providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BlueCard Traditional</td>
<td>A national program that offers members traveling or living outside of their Blue plan’s service area the traditional, or indemnity, level of benefits when they obtain services from a physician or hospital outside of their Blue plan’s service area. These members will carry an ID card featuring an “empty” suitcase logo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Shield Global Core®</td>
<td>A program that allows Blue plan members traveling or living outside of the United States to receive healthcare services from participating international Blue plan healthcare providers. The program also allows members of international Blue plans to access U.S. Blue plan provider networks. The Global Network of participating providers can be accessed through blueshieldca.com. Click on Find a Doctor and then click on the Providers outside of CA link on the bottom of the page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Directed Health Care/Health Plans (CDHC/CDHP)</td>
<td>Consumer Directed Health Care (CDHC) is a broad umbrella term that refers to a movement in the healthcare industry to empower members, reduce employer costs and change consumer healthcare purchasing behavior. CDHC plans provide the member with additional information to make an informed and appropriate decision through the use of member support tools, provider and network information, and financial incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coinsurance</td>
<td>A provision in a member’s coverage that limits the amount of coverage by the plan to a certain percentage. The member pays any additional costs out-of-pocket.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The BlueCard® Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Coordination of Benefits (COB)</strong></th>
<th>Ensures that members receive full benefits and prevents double payment for services when a member has coverage from two or more sources. The member’s contract language gives the order for which entity has primary responsibility for payment and which entity has secondary responsibility for payment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copayment</strong></td>
<td>A specified charge that a member incurs for a specified service at the time the service is rendered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deductible</strong></td>
<td>A flat amount the member incurs before the insurer will make any benefit payments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electronic Provider Access</strong></td>
<td>Electronic Provider Access (EPA) is an online tool giving providers the ability to access out-of-area members’ Blue plan provider websites to request medical authorization and pre-service review. To access the EPA tool, log onto Provider Connection at blueshieldca.com/provider and click on Authorizations at the top, then click on the Out-of-area Blue plan Members link. On the next screen, select Pre-service review. Choose the Electronic Provider Access option and you will be connected directly to the Blue plan within a secured routing mechanism to begin your request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential Community Providers</strong></td>
<td>Healthcare providers that serve predominately low-income, high-risk, special needs and medically-underserved individuals. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) proposes to define essential community providers as including only those groups suggested in the ACA, namely those named in section 340B(a)(4) of the Public Health Service Act and in section 197(c)(1)(D)(i)(IV) of the Social Security Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO)</strong></td>
<td>An Exclusive Provider Organization is a health benefits program in which the member receives no benefits for care obtained outside the network except emergency care and does not include a Primary Care Physician selection. EPO benefit coverage may be delivered via BlueCard PPO and is restricted to services provided by BlueCard PPO providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEP</strong></td>
<td>The Federal Employee Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hold Harmless</strong></td>
<td>An agreement with a healthcare provider not to bill the member for any difference between billed charges for covered services (excluding coinsurance) and the amount the healthcare provider has contractually agreed with a Blue plan as full payment for these services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Marketplace/Exchange

For purposes of this document, the term Marketplace/Exchange refers to the public exchange as established pursuant to the Affordable Care Act (ACA): A transparent and competitive insurance marketplace where individuals and small businesses can buy affordable and qualified health benefit plans. Affordable Insurance Marketplaces will offer a choice of health plans that meet certain benefits and cost standards.

The ACA allows the opportunity for each state to establish a State-based Marketplace. Recognizing that not all states may elect to establish a State-based Marketplace, the ACA directs the Secretary of HHS to establish and operate a federally-facilitated Marketplace in any state that does not do so.

### Medicaid

A program designed to assist low-income families in providing healthcare for themselves and their children. It also covers certain individuals who fall below the federal poverty level. Other people who are eligible for Medicaid include low-income children under age 6 and low-income pregnant women. Medicaid is governed by overall federal guidelines in terms of eligibility, procedures, payment level etc., but states have a broad range of options within those guidelines to customize the program to their needs and/or can apply for specific waivers. State Medicaid programs must be approved by CMS; their daily operations are overseen by the State Department of Health (or similar state agency).

### Medicare Advantage

Medicare Advantage (MA) is the program alternative to standard Medicare Part A and Part B fee-for-service coverage; generally referred to as “traditional Medicare.”

MA offers Medicare beneficiaries several product options (similar to those available in the commercial market), including health maintenance organization (HMO), preferred provider organization (PPO), point-of-service (POS) and private fee-for-service (PFFS) plans.

### Medicare Crossover

The Crossover program was established to allow Medicare to transfer Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) information directly to a payor with Medicare’s supplemental insurance company.
### Medicare Supplemental (Medigap)

Pays for expenses not covered by Medicare. Medigap is a term for a health insurance policy sold by private insurance companies to fill the “gaps” in original Medicare Plan coverage. Medigap policies help pay some of the healthcare costs that the original Medicare Plan doesn’t cover.

Medigap policies are regulated under federal and state laws and are “standardized.” There may be up to 12 different standardized Medigap policies (Medigap Plans A through L). Each plan, A through L, has a different set of basic and extra benefits. The benefits in any Medigap Plan A through L are the same for any insurance company. Each insurance company decides which Medigap policies it wants to sell.

Most of the Medigap claims are submitted electronically directly from the Medicare intermediary to the member’s Home Plan via Medicare Crossover process.

Medigap does not include Medicare Advantage products, which are a separate program under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Members who have a Medicare Advantage Plan do not typically have a Medigap policy because under Medicare Advantage these policies do not pay any deductibles, copayments or other cost-sharing.

### National Account

An employer group with employees and/or retirees located in more than one Blue plan service area.

### Other Party Liability (OPL)

A cost containment program that ensure Blue plans meet their responsibilities efficiently without assuming the monetary obligations of others and without allowing members to profit from illness or accident. OPL includes coordination of benefits, Medicare, Workers’ Compensation, subrogation and no-fault auto insurance.

### Plan

Refers to any Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield plan member’s health care service coverage, e.g., HMO, PPO, EPO, and POS.

### Point of Service (POS)

Point of Service is a health benefit program in which the highest level of benefits is received when the member obtains services from his/her primary care provider/group and/or complies with referral authorization requirements for care. Benefits are still provided when the member obtains care from any eligible provider without referral authorization, according to the terms of the contract.

### PPOB

A health benefit program that provides a significant financial incentive to members when they obtain services from any physician or hospital designated as a PPO provider and that does not require a primary care physician gatekeeper/referral to access PPO providers. Similar to BlueCard PPO/EPO, this network includes providers specializing in numerous types of care, as well as other provider types, such as Essential Community and Indian Health Service providers where they are available.
| **Preferred Provider Organization (PPO)** | Preferred Provider Organization is a health benefit program that provides a significant incentive to members when they obtain services from a designated PPO provider. The benefit program does not require a gatekeeper (primary care physician) or referral to access PPO providers. |
| **Prefix** | The three characters preceding the subscriber identification number on the Blue plan ID cards. The prefix identifies the Blue plan or national account to which the member belongs and is required for routing claims. |
| **Provider Connection** | Blue Shield’s provider website at blueshieldca.com/provider contains useful information for our providers including: basic BlueCard patient administration and claims processing steps, eligibility and benefits information on other Blue plan members, and instructions on where to send BlueCard claims by accessing our Claims Routing Tool. |
| **Qualified Health Plan (QHP)** | Under the Affordable Care Act, starting in 2014, an insurance plan that is certified by an Exchange, provides essential health benefits, follows established limits on cost-sharing (like deductibles, copayments, and out-of-pocket maximum amounts), and meets other requirements. A qualified health plan will have a certification by each Marketplace in which it is sold. |
| **Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP)** | Allows employers to choose the level of coverage and offer choices among health insurance plans. State-run Marketplaces were scheduled to become available by January 2014, with the federal government stepping in to run Marketplaces for states that were not ready. In 2016, all businesses with 100 or fewer employees must be able to purchase insurance through these Exchanges. The Marketplaces have the option of including employees with more than 100 employees beginning in 2017. |
| **State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)** | SCHIP is a public program administered by the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides matching funds to states for health insurance to families with children. The program was designed with the intent to cover uninsured children in families with incomes that are modest but too high to qualify for Medicaid. States are given flexibility in designing their SCHIP eligibility requirements and policies within broad federal guidelines. Some states have received authority through waivers of statutory provisions to use SCHIP funds to cover the parents of children receiving benefits from both SCHIP and Medicaid, pregnant women, and other adults. |
| **Traditional Coverage** | Traditional coverage is a health benefit plan that provides basic and/or supplemental hospital and medical/surgical benefits (e.g., basic, major medical and add-on riders) designed to cover various services. Such products generally include cost sharing features, such as deductibles, coinsurance or copayments. |
### Other Payor Summary List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Payor Summary List</th>
<th>Type of Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Cross Blue Shield Plans</td>
<td>Individual and Group Health Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Arrangements</td>
<td>Arrangements pursuant to which Blue Shield subsidiaries, e.g., Blue Shield of California Life &amp; Health Insurance Company, may utilize the Blue Shield Life Network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Shield of California Life &amp; Health Insurance Company</td>
<td>Individual Health Plans (Blue Shield Life Network)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Management Accounts (RMCs)</td>
<td>Group health plans - Blue Shield of California provides one or more of the following services for a fixed administrative fee: administrative services (such as eligibility and claims processing), benefit determinations, generation of identification (ID) cards, check issuance, and reconciliation. The group is at risk for the cost of health care. Only large groups are eligible. This list is updated periodically. Please contact Blue Shield of California directly if an updated list is needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name A-Pe</th>
<th>Name Pi-Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 Hour Fitness USA, Inc.</td>
<td>Pinterest Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCO Management Company</td>
<td>Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activision Publishing, Inc.</td>
<td>Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist Health Systems/West</td>
<td>Playworks Education Energized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry Joint Trust Funds</td>
<td>Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alhambra Unified School District</td>
<td>Premium Packing, Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen Lund Company, Inc.</td>
<td>Prime HealthCare Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance HealthCare Services</td>
<td>Printing Specialties &amp; Paper Products Joint Benefits H&amp;W Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amerit Fleet Solutions</td>
<td>Professional Auto Transport, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampla Health</td>
<td>Public Storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARM, INC. (ARM, Physical IP, Inc.)</td>
<td>Radnet, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armanino, LLP</td>
<td>Raley's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Creek Lumber</td>
<td>Rescue Public Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackhawk Network Holdings, Inc.</td>
<td>Riverside Community College District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton Collectibles LLC</td>
<td>Rolling Hills Casino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrete Waste Industries Inc.</td>
<td>Royal T Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttonwillow Warehouse Co Inc.</td>
<td>Sabor Farms LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Olive Ranch, Inc.</td>
<td>Saddleback Valley USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Valued Trust</td>
<td>Sakura Finetek USA Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlsbad Unified School District</td>
<td>San Benito Health Care District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citrus Valley Health Partners, Inc.</td>
<td>San Francisco Electrical Workers Health &amp; Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of San Jose</td>
<td>San Francisco Symphony, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Tulare</td>
<td>Satcoy Lemon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clovis Unified School District</td>
<td>Save Mart Supermarkets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornerstone On Demand Inc.</td>
<td>Saxco International LLC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Other Payor Summary List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name A-Pe</th>
<th>Name P-Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton On USA, Inc.</td>
<td>Self-Insured Schools of California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Kings</td>
<td>Sensient Technologies Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Orange</td>
<td>Servion Systems, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of San Mateo</td>
<td>Sheet Metal Workers Intl Assoc Local Union 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credity Karma</td>
<td>Sheppard, Mullin Richter &amp; Hampton LLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CrossFit, Inc</td>
<td>Sign Pictorial and Display Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSBA Excess Insurance Authority</td>
<td>SISC/Alexander Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Alta Loma School District</td>
<td>SISC/Alpaga USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Bear Valley Unified School District</td>
<td>SISC/Alvord USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Beaumont Unified School District</td>
<td>SISC/Antelope Valley CCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Brea Olinda Unified School District</td>
<td>SISC/Arcadia USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Central School District</td>
<td>SISC/ASCIP La Canada USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Centralia School District</td>
<td>SISC/Azusa Unified School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Chaffey Community College District</td>
<td>SISC/Bennett Valley Union Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Chartersafe - Clear Passage Education Center</td>
<td>SISC/Cabrillo College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Chartersafe - New Opportunities Organization</td>
<td>SISC/Calistoga Joint Unified School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Chartersafe - Paramount Collegiate Academy</td>
<td>SISC/Celiba Public Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Chartersafe - Pathways</td>
<td>SISC/Central Region School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Chartersafe - River Springs Charter School</td>
<td>SISC/Ceres Unified School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Chartersafe - Ross Valley Charter School</td>
<td>SISC/Chawanake USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Chartersafe - Sierra</td>
<td>SISC/Chowchilla Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Chino Valley</td>
<td>SISC/Cinnabar Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Colton Jt. Unified School District</td>
<td>SISC/Cloverdale Unified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEBA/Covina Valley Unified School District</td>
<td>SISC/College of the Desert</td>
</tr>
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B. Blue Shield Eligibility Adds and Terminations Report
C. Claims Compliance and Monitoring
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## COMMERCIAL

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# Blue Shield Combined Eligibility/Capitation Report

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Blue Shield of California  
Hospital and Facility Guidelines  
January 2020
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This supplement has been written as a guide for a “delegated claims operation.” That phrase refers to delegated hospitals, medical service organizations, third party administrators (TPAs) or others who process claims delegated by Blue Shield of California (Blue Shield). Blue Shield hopes the information and procedures in this supplement will assist in meeting claims processing requirements. For any questions or further assistance, please contact your Delegated Claims Oversight Auditor. This supplement includes the following sections:

- Introduction
- Key Terms and Definitions
- Measuring Timeliness and Accuracy Definitions
- Best Practices and Claims Adjudication
  - Audits and Audit Preparation
  - Balance Billing
  - Check Mailing
  - Compliance Program/Fraud, Waste, and Abuse
  - Contract Auditing
  - Date Stamping
  - Delegated Claims Compliance and Self Reporting
  - Denial Review – Second Level
  - Forwarding Claims
  - Inpatient Non-Authorized Services
  - Offshore Monitoring
  - Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR) Process – Medicare Advantage
  - Self-Monitoring and Reporting
  - Sub-Delegated Claims Monitoring
  - Timely Filing
  - Unclean or Contested Claims (Affiliated or Unaffiliated Providers)
- Frequently Asked Questions
Introduction

This supplement to the Blue Shield Hospital and Facility Guidelines is for the delegated hospitals that 1) process their own claims, 2) contracts with a management company or Third Party Administrator (TPA) to process claims on their behalf, or 3) sub-capititates (sub-delegates) some or all of their claims processing responsibilities. If the delegated entity is currently not processing their claims, the delegated entity must share this supplement with their TPA or management company or otherwise ensure that they have the latest version of this specific update. If the delegated entity sub-capititates claims processing, or ever contemplates doing so, please carefully read the “Sub-Capitated (Sub-Delegated) Claims Monitoring” section of this appendix below. It explains the additional responsibilities hospitals assume when they sub-capitate the claims processing function.

By means of this supplement, Blue Shield seeks to describe and follow sound operating principles. This supplement will guide hospitals in providing superior service to our beneficiaries and in applying industry best practices in claims operations. It will verify that you are successful in meeting all applicable requirements. Please don’t hesitate to contact the Blue Shield Delegated Claims Oversight Manager and/or Delegated Claims Oversight Auditors directly for further information or assistance.

Based on the available data, the information in this supplement conforms to all CMS, DMHC, DOL and NCQA requirements. Should information in this supplement fail to reflect any existing or newly enacted statutory requirements, these new or additional requirements will supersede the information contained herein. Blue Shield will notify the delegated hospital of any changes in requirements through supplemental revisions or by other written communications. Throughout this document, wherever possible, Blue Shield distinguishes between Medicare Advantage (HMO) requirements and DMHC (“commercial”) requirements or citations by displaying them side-by-side.

This supplement only describes claims compliance and monitoring. Information on other claims-related topics (i.e., claims operations coordination with Blue Shield; submission of encounter claims or data; claims appeals or grievances; Medicare Secondary Payment (MSP); and coordination of benefits (COB)) are covered in other parts of the Hospital and Facility Guidelines.
Key Terms and Definitions

“Automatically”

The word “automatically” as it refers to paying interest on late commercial claims is defined in CCR Title 28, Section 1300.71. “Automatically” means the payment of the interest due to the provider within five working days of the payment of the claim without the need for any reminder or request by the provider.

Blue Shield Medicare Advantage HMO and PPO Plans

Blue Shield’s Medicare Advantage plans; Blue Shield 65 Plus (HMO), Blue Shield Plus Choice Plan (HMO), Blue Shield Trio Medicare (HMO), Blue Shield Inspire (HMO), Blue Shield Vital (HMO) and Blue Shield Medicare (PPO). The terms “Medicare Advantage” and “MA-PD” may be used interchangeably throughout this manual.

Claims Operations

Blue Shield monitors compliance and deficiencies across all aspects of claims operations: receipt and related handling, processing/adjudication and payment. The claim operation begins when the claim is first received from the US Postal Service, electronically or by any other means and ends when the check or disbursement, explanation of benefits (EOB) or notice of denial is electronically transmitted or deposited in the US mail. These operations are defined to include computer systems and their reports, as well as utilization review, and any other ancillary operations in the workflow needed to fully process a claim and deliver the payment and/or denial.

Clean Claim

A Medicare claim which can be paid and/or denied as soon as it is received because it is complete in all aspects, including complete coding, itemization, dates of service, billed amounts, and identification of the billing provider including tax identification number (TIN) and the national provider identifier (NPI).

Emergency services or out-of-area urgently needed services do not need authorization to be considered “clean,” providing that the presenting ICD-10-CM diagnoses codes or accompanying medical records substantiate that they qualify as emergent, urgent under the prudent layperson standard.

Unclean Claims

An unclean claim is defined as “one which cannot be paid as soon as it is received” because it lacks the necessary information in order to make a payment and/or denial determination.

Complete Claim

A complete claim is one that includes all necessary information to determine payor liability. Information necessary to determine payor liability for the claim includes, but is not limited to, reports or investigations concerning fraud and misrepresentation, necessary consents, releases and assignments, or other information necessary for the delegated claims operation to determine the medical necessity for the health care services provided.

Emergency services or out-of-area urgently needed services do not need authorization to be considered “complete,” providing that the diagnoses codes or accompanying medical records substantiate that they qualify as emergent, urgent under the reasonable person standard.
Incomplete Claims

A claim or portion thereof, if separable, including attachments and supplemental information or documentation, which does not provide: “reasonably relevant information” and “information necessary to determine payor liability.”

Unclean Claim/Contested Claims

Commercial

A contested claim is defined as a claim or portion thereof is reasonably contested where the delegated claims operation has not received the completed claim and all information necessary to determine payor liability or has not been granted reasonable access to information concerning provider services. Commercial contested claims must be adjudicated within 45 working days of the received date to be considered compliant.

When appropriate, claims may need to be contested for additional information. For example: (1) validate referring physician, (2) confirming member self-referred, (3) validating the member signed a member financial liability form, (4) eligibility verification, and (5) medical records/chart notes.

Contested claims include provider denials and claims pended or closed before a coverage determination can be made. Upon receipt of additional information, a new 45 working day cycle begins.

Compliance

Compliance means conforming to a rule, such as a specification, policy, standard or law. Regulatory compliance describes the goal that organizations aspire to achieve in their efforts to ensure that they comply with relevant laws, policies, and regulations.

Date of Payment

The date of postmark or electronic mark accurately setting forth the date when the payment was electronically transmitted or deposited in the U.S. Mail or another mail or delivery service, correctly addressed to the claimant’s office or other address of record.

Date of Receipt

Commercial

The working day when a claim, by physical or electronic means, is first delivered to either the plan’s specified claims payment office, post office box, or designated claims processor or to the plan’s capitated provider for that claim. In the situation where a claim is sent to the incorrect party, the “date of receipt” shall be the working day when the claim, by physical or electronic means, is first delivered to the correct party responsible for adjudicating the claim.

Group/Medicare Advantage

The working day when a claim, by physical or electronic means, is first delivered to either the plan’s specified claims payment office, post office box, or to the plan’s capitated hospital for that claim. For Medicare Advantage and Group Medicare Advantage, the earliest date, either from the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan or any of the Blue Shield’s network providers, determines the received date of the claims unless documentation can be provided to validate that the earliest stamp(s) does not belong to the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan network.
Key Terms and Definitions (cont’d.)

Group Medicare Advantage

The product line offered to large group employers with 50 or more retirees who have Medicare Part A and Part B and reside within the plan’s service area. Group Medicare Advantage mirrors Medicare Advantage for rules and regulations with employer group defined benefits.

HMO

Health Maintenance Organization. A type of health insurance plan that usually limits coverage to care from doctors who work for or contract with the HMO. Generally, an HMO won't cover out-of-network care except in an emergency or when authorized.

Medicare

The health care coverage program administered by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Medicare Advantage (MA)

The Medicare managed care program that superseded the Medicare Risk program, as promulgated through the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1998 and the implementing regulations (Mega-Reg) issued in June of 1998. Any member claims are the responsibility of the HMO and not reimbursed by Medicare.

Member Denial

An adverse benefit determination in which a claim, or any line item(s) on a claim, will not be paid and the member is responsible for payment of the service. Re-coding a claim to better match clinical information and to pay a lesser amount is not a member-denial, nor are rebundling or making other corrections of billing errors that result in reduced payment. Non-eligibility, not authorized non-contracted, and/or excluded services are examples of potential member liability denials

Closing a claim without issuing a payment is not a member denial unless the member is responsible to pay for the services rendered. Examples of this would be forwarding a claim to the responsible payor, closing a claim as a duplicate, and/or instructing a contracted provider to write off any unpaid portion of a claim without billing the member because of errors made by that provider. Forwarded claims and/or claims closed as duplicates should be excluded from the monthly timeliness reports. Duplicate claims already paid or denied must be denied as duplicates. A second denial notice may not be mailed to the member for the service provided.
Key Terms and Definitions (cont’d.)

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Federal and state law specifically requires monitoring of compliance over delegated hospitals. Monitoring for compliance and quality assurance assesses the delegated claims operation’s ability to meet timeliness and accuracy requirements. Blue Shield reviews both the monthly and quarterly self-reports of claims timeliness, conducts periodic auditing as part of compliance and our quality assurance monitoring program and expects every delegated claim organization to monitor itself. Blue Shield expects the delegated claims operation to maintain a complete program of “continuous quality improvement” (CQI) to detect deficiencies early and implement corrective actions.

Present on Admission (POA)

Present on admission is defined as a condition that is present at the time the order for inpatient admission occurs. That means that conditions that develop during any outpatient encounter “including in the emergency department or during observation or outpatient surgery “are considered to be present on admission.

Principal Officer

Each hospital that has commercial claims delegated must designate a Principal Officer for claims and provider disputes. These officers are responsible for operations and for reporting the timeliness of those operations. The Principal Officer must sign the quarterly reports for both claims and provider disputes. To designate an individual as Principal Officer or report a change of Principal Officer, request form from Blue Shield of California or retrieve the form available at the ICE website and submit an original copy with original signatures to Blue Shield. The Principal Officer form should be submitted either by fax to (855) 895-3505, by email to Delegated.Claims.Reports@blueshieldca.com, or by mail to:

Blue Shield of California
Attention: Delegated Claims Oversight
6300 Canoga Avenue 9th Floor
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR)

A written provider dispute that includes all information required under state regulations:

(1) Clear identification of the disputed item(s).

(2) The date of service(s)

(3) Clear explanation of the basis upon which the provider believes the payment amount, request for additional information, and request for reimbursement for the overpayment of a claim, contest, denial, adjustment or other action is incorrect.
Key Terms and Definitions (cont’d.)

Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR) Process - Commercial

A formal process for receiving, resolving, and reporting provider disputes for commercial claims relating to billing, claims, contracts, utilization management, and other provider appeals is mandated for delegated payors.

Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR) Process – Group/Medicare Advantage

A formal process for receiving, resolving, and reporting provider disputes for Group/Medicare Advantage claims relating to payment of non-contracted provider claims.

Measuring Timeliness and Accuracy Definitions

Timeliness for claims and disputes is measured from the date the claim or provider dispute is received to the date the check or disbursement, explanation of benefits, denial notice, or dispute resolution correspondence is mailed.

Acknowledgement of Receipt

Commercial

The delegated hospital must acknowledge receiving electronic claims within two (2) working days of receipt and paper claims within 15 working days of receipt.

Commercial Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR)

The delegated hospital must acknowledge receiving electronic claims within two (2) working days of receipt and paper claims within 15 working days of receipt.

Group/Medicare Advantage/Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR)

Not applicable.

Check Cashing Timeliness

Blue Shield accepts the check or electronic transfer date as reasonable evidence of mailing, provided no operational or systematic delays are documented. Blue Shield will confirm the date the check or electronic transfer reached the bank or was charged to the delegated hospital’s bank account during the audit process.

Blue Shield requires that a minimum of 70% of all checks be presented for deposit within 14 calendar days of the date the check is reported to have been mailed.
Measuring Timeliness and Accuracy *(cont’d.)*

**Fee Schedule Accuracy**

**Group/Medicare Advantage**

Title 42, Part 422, Section 214 mandates that “Any provider that does not have in effect a contract establishing payment amounts for services furnished to a beneficiary enrolled in a Medicare Advantage private fee-for-service plan must accept, as payment in full, the amounts that the provider could collect if the beneficiary were enrolled in original Medicare.”

Blue Shield will accept the following payment structures in determining accuracy on 30-day claims based on the location on where the services were rendered:

1. “Participating” providers are paid at a published Medicare fee schedule less any standard copayment amount,
2. “Non-participating” providers who accept assignment are paid 95% of a published Medicare fee schedule less any standard copayment amount, and
3. “Non-participating” providers who do not accept assignment are paid at the “Limiting Charge,” This charge is the amount that non-participating providers are “limited” to charge for that service. The amount is 115% of the non-par fee allowance service.

**Interest Accuracy**

**Commercial**

Interest is applicable for contracted and non-contracted providers claims paid beyond the statutory deadline. Interest must be calculated beginning with the first day after deadline through the day the payment/check is mailed.

Interest is due on adjustments paid in favor of the provider (in whole or in part) when the delegated hospital was at fault with the original claim process. Interest would be calculated from the original received date of the claim through the date of the mailing of the adjustment payment.

The interest rate is fixed at a 15% annual rate. The amount of interest is calculated by multiplying the daily rate times the number of calendar days late, times the dollar amount paid. The interest should be included with the claim payment except as noted below. The daily rate is the result of dividing the current interest rate by 365 or 366 in the case of a leap-year.

To avoid a mandated $10.00 per claim penalty, the full amount of interest warranted must be paid “automatically.” “Automatically” means that the interest must be included with the claim payment or mailed within five working days of the original claim payment. If the warranted amount of interest is underpaid, the mandated $10.00 per claim penalty must be paid along with the additional interest due.

If the interest amount is less than $2.00 the interest may be paid on that claim along with interest on other such claims within ten (10) calendar days of the close of the calendar month in which the claim was paid as long as a statement identifying the specific claims for which the interest being paid is included.

For claims involving emergency services, the minimum amount of interest due is the greater of either $15.00 for each 12-month period or 15 percent per annum calculated as described above.
Measuring Timeliness and Accuracy *(cont’d.)*

**Interest Accuracy *(cont’d.)***

**Group/Medicare Advantage**

Clean claims from unaffiliated/non-contracted providers paid later than the statutory deadline requires interest to be paid. Interest is to be calculated beginning on the thirty-first calendar day through the day the check is mailed.

Interest is due at the current Federal Prompt Payment Interest Rate, which is updated each January and July. The current interest rate can be found at [www.fiscal.treasury.gov/prompt-payment/rates.html](http://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/prompt-payment/rates.html) Interest is to be calculated based on 1) the number of calendar days over thirty (30), 2) the current Medicare interest rate and, (3) the amount paid. The daily rate is the result of dividing the interest rate in effect at the time the claim was paid by 365 or 366 in the case of a leap year.

The amount of interest is calculated by multiplying the daily rate, times the number of calendar days over 30, times the dollar amount paid. The interest should be included with the claim payment. Interest payments mailed within two weeks of the initial claim payment are considered compliant.

**Measuring Timeliness**

**Commercial Claims**

Claim processing begins when a claim is first delivered to delegated payor’s office. The number of days measured are “working” days. The time limit to make payment – 45 working days – applies to all uncontested claims, without regard to whether the billing providers are contracted or non-contracted. If a claim is to be contested the notice to that effect (denial notice to contracted physicians or request for more information) must be mailed within 45 working days. Member-denial notices must be mailed within 30 calendar days of receipt of the claim to fulfill the ERISA regulations. This policy blends requirements from ERISA regulations, California’s Health and Safety Code and NCQA. To fulfill the state regulations all denial notices must be mailed within 45 working days.

**Commercial Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR)**

Resolution and a written determination must be completed within 45 working days after the date of receipt of the provider dispute or the amended provider dispute.

If the provider dispute is overturned in favor of the provider, payment is due within five (5) working days of the issuance of the written determination. If the payment is issued prior to the written determination, the written determination is due to the provider within five (5) working days of the issuance of the payment.
Measuring Timeliness and Accuracy (cont’d.)

Measuring Timeliness (cont’d.)

Group/Medicare Advantage Claims

Claim processing begins when a claim is received anywhere within a health plan or its contracted network. Accordingly, the earliest date stamp on a claim determines when the timeliness cycle begins and must be entered into the claim system as the received date unless documentation to the satisfaction of a CMS auditor can be provided to validate that the earliest stamp(s) does not belong to the Blue Shield network. The number of days measured is “calendar” days. There are two different types of claims, each with its own processing time limit: 1) 30 calendar days for clean claims from unaffiliated/ non-contracted providers and 2) 60 calendar days for all other claims – “unclean” claims, denied claims, or claims from affiliated/contracted providers. The mailed date of the check and/or correspondence defines the end of the claim’s turnaround time.

Group/Medicare Advantage Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR)

Resolution and a written determination must be completed within 30 calendar days after the date of receipt of the provider dispute or the amended provider dispute.

Member Denial Notice – Monthly Self Reporting

Commercial

A denied claim is a claim where (1) one or more services will not be paid by the provider claims operation and (2) payment is the financial responsibility of the member.

Member denied claims are reported and monitored separately from paid and “contested” claims. Provider-denials are reported and audited along with other contested claims.

Examples of claims that are not member-denials and should not be reported, submitted or presented to the health plan as member liability “denied” claims include:

- Patients who remain enrolled with the health plan but have transferred from one delegated claims operation to another must be forwarded to the health plan or the other entity for processing;
- Duplicates to claims already paid or denied must be denied as duplicates, a second denial notice may not be mailed to the member;
- Encounter only, capitated claims and no patient liability is involved;
- Denials to a contracting provider who must write off the unpaid claim (unless the provider has written evidence that the member understood and accepted payment responsibility); or
- Reduced payment amounts due to contract terms, or correction of billing errors such as bundling or inaccurate coding.
Measuring Timeliness and Accuracy (cont’d.)

Member Denial Notice – Monthly Self Reporting (cont’d.)

Group/Medicare Advantage

A denied claim is a claim where (1) one or more services will not be paid by the provider claims operation and (2) payment is the financial responsibility of the member.

Examples of claims that are not member-denials and should not be reported, submitted or presented to the health plan as member liability “denied” claims include:

- Patients who remain enrolled with the health plan but have transferred from one delegated claims operation to another and you are just forwarding the claim to the health plan or the other entity for processing;
- Patients who remain capitated to your organization, but payment responsibility belongs to another contracting entity (health plan or hospital) and you are forwarding the claim;
- Duplicates to claims already paid or denied;
- Encounter only, capitated claims and no patient liability is involved;
- Denials to a contracting provider who must write off the unpaid claim (unless the provider has written evidence that the member understood and accepted payment responsibility); or
- Correction of billing errors such as bundling or inaccurate coding.
Measuring Timeliness and Accuracy (cont’d.)

**Member Denial Notice - Standards**

**Commercial**

When health plans and delegated claim operations make decisions to deny claims that result in liability for the enrollee, those decisions must be in accordance with DMHC and DOL law and regulations, including required coverage for emergency care taking the “reasonable person” standard into account. The member must be given clear information including phone numbers and mailing addresses to assist them in contacting the health plan or the delegated claim operations or the consumer assistance agencies for more information or to appeal the denial decision.

Once a denial notice has been sent, no further adverse notices may be sent to the member.

All member denial and emergency service denial letters must include the diagnosis code and corresponding meaning and treatment with the corresponding meaning.

Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in certain health programs and activities. Members must be notified about their rights under Section 1557. Specifically, delegated entities must include a nondiscrimination notice in English and taglines in at least the top 15 non-English languages spoken by individuals with limited English proficiency with every member liability denial notice.

**Group/Medicare Advantage**

Federal law, regulations and CMS guidelines govern initial coverage determinations that are adverse to a Medicare beneficiary (i.e., denials that result in financial liability for the beneficiary).

These requirements apply to health plans and thereby to any entity in which authority to make coverage determinations has been delegated. When an adverse determination has been made, the current CMS approved Integrated Denial Notice (IDN) letter format must be sent to the member.

Any changes to Integrated Denial Notices will be sent out annually as applicable. Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in certain health programs and activities. Members must be notified about their rights under Section 1557. Specifically, covered entities must include a nondiscrimination notice in English and taglines in at least the top 15 non-English languages spoken by individuals with limited English proficiency with every Integrated Denial Notice.

All Integrated Denial Notices (IDN) must contain the Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan CMS material identification number along with the CMS-approved expiration date. The most current IDN letter may be obtained through the Blue Shield’s Delegated Claims Oversight department.

If identified that the member is eligible with a Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan but delegated to another IPA/medical group, the claim must be forwarded to the appropriate payor.

CMS requires that the health plan coordinate all member-initiated appeals. Health plans may not delegate administration of member appeals. Once an Integrated Denial Notice has been sent, no further adverse notices may be sent to the member except by the Center For Healthcare Dispute Resolution (CHDR).
Measuring Timeliness and Accuracy (cont’d.)

Medicare Opt Out

Group/Medicare Advantage

Any provider that has chosen not to participate with the CMS Medicare program may not provide services to Medicare members without notifying the member in advance that they have elected to Opt Out of the CMS Medicare program. Upon advanced notification, the member would be responsible for the payment of the services rendered.

Overpayment

Commercial

The delegated hospital has a total of 365 calendar days from the date of payment to initiate an overpayment request. The request must be in writing and allow the provider of service a minimum of 30 working days to contest and/or refund the overpayment. The delegated hospital may only offset an uncontested notice of reimbursement of the overpayment of a claim against a provider’s current claim submission when (1) the provider fails to reimburse within the 30 working day timeframe and (2) the provider has entered into a written contract specifically authorizing the delegated hospital to offset an uncontested notice of overpayment of a claim from the contracted provider’s current claims submissions.

Group/Medicare Advantage

Overpayments are Medicare payments a provider has received in excess of amounts due and payable under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and/or the provider's contract. The delegated hospital may go back three (3) years from the date the claim was paid to collect an overpayment. Once an overpayment is discovered and a final determination is made, a first written demand letter is sent. If a full payment is not received fifteen (15) days after the date of the first demand letter, recoupment (off-set) should start on the 16th day. If the delegated hospital has a written agreement with the provider to automatically off-set any overpayment(s) no written demand letter is required.

Group/Medicare Advantage Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR)

Not applicable
Measuring Timeliness and Accuracy *(cont’d.)*

**Payment Accuracy**

**Commercial**

Payment accuracy includes: (1) proper payment of interest, (2) proper use of a reasonable and customary fee schedule for non-contracted providers, (3) applying appropriate contract fee schedules and (4) ensuring all services submitted have been processed to the correct provider and for the patient billed on the claim. All four criteria must be met for a claim or a claim Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR) to be considered compliant in payment accuracy.

**Group/Medicare Advantage**

Payment accuracy includes: (1) proper payment of interest, (2) proper use of provider fee schedules for non-contracted providers, (3) applying appropriate contract benefits and (4) ensuring all services submitted have been processed to the correct provider and for the patient billed on the claim. All four criteria must be met for a claim or a claim provider dispute to be considered compliant in payment accuracy.

**Rescinding Authorization- AB 1324 (Health & Safety Code Section 1371.8)**

**Commercial/Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR)**

Blue Shield validates that delegated hospitals pay incurred services if the specific service was pre-authorized or referred, even if the member is later found to be ineligible for any reason, when the provider of service relied on the authorization or referral in good faith. The delegated hospital may then bill Blue Shield under the eligibility guarantee clause within their contract with Blue Shield.

**Group/Medicare Advantage**

Not applicable.
Claims Compliance and Monitoring

Best Practices and Claims Adjudication

In this section as well as prior sections, the terms “our” or “your” refer both to health plans and to the delegated hospital. Best practices are recommended for everyone involved in claims processing. When the word “must” is used, Blue Shield regards the standard as the minimum acceptable standard.

Audits and Audit Preparation

Blue Shield, CMS, and the DMHC will conduct periodic audits of claims and provider disputes (where appropriate) to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements. In advance of the audit, Blue Shield will send a written confirmation letter including the audit date and describing the materials the delegated hospital will need to prepare and steps that will need to be performed in preparation of the audit. Such preparations include producing claims universe lists, providing detailed information about your claims processing operations and company controls in the industry-standard questionnaire, selecting and retrieving claims, checks, and/or related documents. Without complete sets of sampled claims, related documentation, and photocopies of documents that will be retained the audit will be impeded or incomplete. If the audit is impeded or incomplete the samples may be scored as non-compliant. Electronic submission of all data is required.

Blue Shield will concentrate on quantified timeliness and operational compliance for processing claims. Blue Shield will tour the claims department, which will include adjustment, PDR and audit teams. The mail room, operations and finance for check-handling operations. Interview leadership for Compliance, and other selected department staff. Blue Shield will require a walk through and demonstration of claims processing system.

Blue Shield will share preliminary audit results at the conclusion of the on-site audit, unless some elements require additional research for us to complete our work. In the event further research is warranted Blue Shield will make every effort to contact the delegated hospital to discuss all additional findings prior to distributing final results. Blue Shield will provide the delegated hospital with written results within 30 calendar days including an itemization of any deficiencies and whether the delegated hospital must prepare and implement a formal, written corrective action plan or provide additional supporting documentation.

Non-Compliance

When Blue Shield first finds non-compliance or other deficiencies in your operations, Blue Shield will require that you implement corrective actions within a specific time limit, within 30 days after the receipt of the post audit results. Non-compliance that is not remedied may be subject to administrative actions.

Special Studies

In the event CMS or the DMHC require that Blue Shield conduct additional compliance oversight, Blue Shield will require the delegated hospital to participate within the regulator-specified time schedules or deadlines.
Balance Billing

Commercial

If a member is billed for a capitated service, a representative from Blue Shield’s Member Services Department will contact the hospital to verify that the provider was paid for the service. The hospital is also required to ensure that the provider ceases billing the member.

California state law prohibits balance billing by contracted providers and non-contracted providers rendering emergent care.

The California Code of Regulations identifies in 1300.71 (g) (4) that every plan contract with a provider shall include a provision stating that except for applicable copayments and deductibles, a provider shall not invoice or balance bill a plan’s enrollee for the difference between the provider’s billed charges and the reimbursement paid by the plan or the plan’s capitated provider for any covered benefit.

The California Code of Regulations identifies this practice as an Unfair Billing Pattern in § 1300.71.39:

Except for services subject to the requirements of Section 1367.11 of the Act, “unfair billing pattern” includes the practice, by a provider of emergency services, including but not limited to hospitals and hospital-based physicians such as radiologists, pathologists, anesthesiologists, and on-call specialists, of billing an enrollee of a health care service plan for amounts owed to the provider by the health care service plan or its capitated provider for the provision of emergency services.

Delegated hospitals no longer have to pay the balance when advised that a non-contracted provider of emergency services is balance billing a member. Delegated hospitals have the right and the obligation to immediately notify the provider in writing that their balance billing of the member is a violation of state law and must stop immediately. Any accounts turned over for collections and/or adverse credit reports filed must be withdrawn. If the provider does not do so immediately, the delegated hospital must notify the provider in writing with a copy to the member to cease and desist. The written notification to the provider must include the provider’s appeal rights including the right to appeal directly to the health plan. If the provider continues to balance bill the member, the hospital should submit all written and documented verbal communication with the provider to the health plan who will report the provider to the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) for further action by the state. The non-contracted provider may appeal to the health plan directly should they disagree with the payment from the delegated hospital.

AB 72 (Health & Safety Code Section 1300.71.31. Methodology for Determining Average Contracted Rate; Default Reimbursement Rate) establishes a payment rate, which is the greater of the average of a health care service plan (health plan) or health insurer’s contracted rate, as specified, or 125% of the amount Medicare reimburses for the same or similar services; and an independent dispute resolution process (IDRP) for claims and claim disputes related to non-emergency covered services provided at a contracted health facility by a noncontracting individual health care professional for health plan contracts and health policies issued, amended, or renewed on or after July 1, 2017. AB 72 also limits the enrollee and insured’s cost sharing for these non-voluntary covered services to no more than the cost sharing required had the services been provided by a contracting health professional and requires the payment made by the health plan or insurer in addition to the applicable cost sharing owed by the enrollee or insured to be payment in full for services rendered unless either party uses the independent dispute resolution process (IDRP).
Best Practices and Claims Adjudication (cont’d.)

Balance Billing (cont’d.)

Claims Compliance includes within the audit process validation that the member be held harmless for any portion of the bill other than applicable copayments and deductibles. For contracted providers of all services, non-contracted providers of emergency services, or non-contracted providers of non-emergency services covered under AB 72 threatening to balance bill the member, the hospital must re-educate the provider and ensure the member is not balance billed. Those providers who refuse to cooperate and continue to balance bill the member should be reported to the health plan directly with documentation of communication with the provider.

If the hospital fails to meet required timeframes for payment and Blue Shield determines that the claim is payable by the hospital, Blue Shield may pay the claim and deduct the amount of the payment from future capitation. When this occurs, Blue Shield will provide documentation explaining the deduction.

Section §1371.8 of the Health & Safety Code and §796.04 of the Insurance Code state that an authorization must be honored, and payment must be made even if the carrier later determines the enrollee isn’t eligible, regardless of the reason. Note: These codes are applicable to Commercial HMO members only.

Existing law has been expanded to apply only when:

- The plan has authorized a specific type of treatment
- The provider rendered the service in good-faith reliance on the authorization

AB 1324 (SECTION 1. Section 1371.8 of the Health and Safety Code) - A health care service plan that authorizes a specific type of treatment by a provider shall not rescind or modify this authorization after the provider renders the health care service in good faith and pursuant to the authorization for any reason, including, but not limited to, the plan’s subsequent rescission, cancellation, or modification of the enrollee’s or subscriber’s contract or the plan’s subsequent determination that it did not make an accurate determination of the enrollee’s or subscriber’s eligibility. Blue Shield validates that delegated administrators pay incurred services if the specific service was pre-authorized, even if the member is later found to be ineligible for any reason, when the provider of service relied on the authorization or referral in good faith. The delegated administrator may then bill Blue Shield under the eligibility guarantee clause within their contract with Blue Shield.

The hospital is encouraged to use the following letter template for illegal balance billing to communicate with the non-contracted provider of emergency services:
WARNING RE: ILLEGAL BALANCE BILLING

[Patient Information – including service dates]

Dear [Physician’s name]:

[Name of delegated IPA/medical group] has been advised that you have billed this patient/our enrollee for the emergency services referenced above for amounts other than the copayments, coinsurance or deductible owed by them as noted on our Explanation of Benefits. This balance billing by you is in violation of California law and must cease immediately.

The patient is an enrollee in a health plan regulated under the Knox-Keene Act. As such, balance billing is specifically prohibited as follows:

- Regulations issued by the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) deem this balance billing to be an unfair billing practice. See, Title 28 California Code of Regulations § 1300.71.39; and,

- The California Supreme Court has ruled that a provider of emergency services cannot balance bill an enrollee in a Knox-Keene plan. See, Prospect Medical Group v. Northridge Emergency Medical Group (2009) 45 Cal. 4th 497.

Accordingly, your balance billing of this member is a violation of state law and must stop immediately. If the account has been turned over for collections and/or there have been any adverse credit reports filed, those must be withdrawn immediately. If you do not do so immediately, we will report this illegal activity to Blue Shield of California who will in turn report this illegal activity to the DMHC for further action by the state.

If you disagree with this determination you have the right to submit an appeal to [Name of delegated IPA]. If you then disagree with the determination of the appeal submitted to [Name of delegated IPA] you may submit an appeal to Blue Shield of California directly. If you have questions about this letter or about how to initiate an appeal to review the payment made, please contact us at: [(xxx) xxx-xxxx].

[Signature]

{Name}

cc: [Patient/Enrollee]

Notice to enrollee – Please contact us immediately at [(xxx) xxx-xxxx] if this physician continues to bill you for any amounts other than the specified copayments or deductibles found in Blue Shield of California’s evidence of coverage (EOC).
Best Practices and Claims Adjudication (cont’d.)

Balance Billing (cont’d.)

Group/Medicare Advantage

Chapter 4 of the Medicare Managed Care Manual, Benefits and Beneficiary Protections, Section 10.21 addresses when beneficiaries may be balanced billed, as identified below.

- Contracted providers are prohibited from balance billing enrollees. They may only collect the copayments and/or coinsurance.

- Non-contracting participating providers are prohibited from balance billing enrollees. They may only collect the copayments and/or coinsurance.

- Non-contracted non-participating providers can balance bill the MAO up to the original Medicare rate (115% of the non-participating rate).

- Non-contracted non-participating DME suppliers can balance bill the MAO the difference between the member’s cost sharing and the DME supplier’s bill.

Check Mailing

By law, the date of payment is the date that the check was electronically transmitted or deposited in the U.S. Mail. Blue Shield validates the check date as well as the date the payment was mailed. It is recommended that the delegated hospital doesn’t not exceed 3 mail days. The calendar day delay must be added into the claim’s turnaround time calculation. Blue Shield will use the check mailed date as the closure of the claim’s turnaround time. The delegated hospital must eliminate delays in routing and check signing and make the time period from check printing to mailing reliable and consistent. The delegated hospital must report the number of extra days it takes the delegated hospital to mail a check after the check has been printed for health plan, CMS, or the DMHC audits. Documentation must be retained to validate the mailed date. The check mailing delay must be included within the delegated hospital’s signed check run policy and procedure to keep all parties informed and avoid any appearance of improprieties.

In the event documentation can be provided that the provider receiving the check was responsible for the delay in depositing the check issued, Blue Shield will remove all checks issued to that provider within the sampling.
Best Practices and Claims Adjudication (cont’d.)

Compliance Program/Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Blue Shield required delegated administrators to have compliance programs. It is a best practice that the delegated administrator models the compliance plan requirements as established by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) requires that MAO’s have a compliance plan that guards against potential fraud, waste, and abuse. 42 C.F.R. § 422.503(b)(4)(vi) and 42 C.F.R. § 423.504 (b)(4)(vi) became effective on January 1, 2009 through ARRA. The compliance program must include continual education, monitoring and annual training completed by December 31st of each year.

CMS defines Medicare Fraud and Abuse in the following ways:

Fraud
The intentional deception or misrepresentation that an individual knows, or should know, to be false, or does not believe to be true, and makes, knowing the deception could result in some unauthorized benefit to himself or some other person(s).

Abuse
A range of the following improper behaviors or billing practices including, but not limited to:

- Billing for a non-covered service;
- Misusing codes on the claim (i.e., the way the service is coded on the claim does not comply with national or local coding guidelines or is not billed as rendered); or
- Inappropriate allocating costs on a cost report.

Fraud and Abuse

- Fraud: To purposely bill for services that were never given or to bill for a service that has a higher reimbursement than the service produced.
- Abuse: Payment for items or services that are billed by mistake by providers, but should not be paid for by Medicare. This is not the same as fraud.

Each delegated hospital must have a comprehensive Compliance Plan that should include measures to detect, correct, and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse including but not limited to the following key components.

Key components should include but are not limited to:

1. Written policies, procedures, and standards of conduct articulating the organization’s commitment to comply with all applicable Federal and State Standards.
2. The designation of a compliance officer and compliance committee accountable to senior management.
3. Procedures for conducting claims compliance/internal control audits
4. The procedures that will be taken to report the suspected fraud to the MAO.
5. Effective training and education between the compliance officer and the employees, managers, directors, and the downstream and related entities.
Best Practices and Claims Adjudication (cont’d.)

Compliance Program/Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (cont’d.)

6. Effective lines of communication between the compliance officer, members of the compliance committee, the employees, managers and directors, and the downstream and related entities.

7. Enforcement of standards through well-publicized disciplinary guidelines.

8. Procedures for effective internal monitoring and auditing.

9. Procedures for ensuring prompt responses to detected offenses and development of corrective action initiatives relating to the organization’s contract.

10. Respond to and initiate corrective action to prevent similar offenses including a timely responsible inquiry.

11. Conduct timely and reasonable inquiries.

12. Conduct appropriate corrective actions in response to the potential violation.

13. Include procedures to voluntarily self-report potential fraud or misconduct to the health plan and or CMS.

14. Development and implementation of regular, effective education, and training that occurs annually.

15. Retain records of the annual training of employees, including attendance logs and material distributed at training sessions.

16. Policies to consistently enforce standards and addresses dealing with individuals or entities that are excluded from participating in CMS programs.

17. Include a system to receive, record, and responds to compliance questions, or reports of potential or actual non-compliance, while maintaining confidentiality. The delegated entity will report compliance concerns and suspected or actual misconduct without retaliation when reporting in good faith involving the MA or Group MA (GMA) to the MAO.

18. Policy shall allow any state, federal government or CMS to conduct on-site audits.

19. Performance of data analysis of procedures codes, diagnostic codes, utilization, quantity, etc., to detect fraud.

20. Ensure program includes the monitoring of claims for accuracy which includes ensuring coding reflects services provided.

21. Be able to produce proof to show compliance with all requirements.

22. Check the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the General Services Administration (GSA) exclusion lists for all new employees and on a regular basis or at least once a year thereafter to validate that employees and other entities that assist in the administration or delivery of services are not included on such lists.

23. Check the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the General Services Administration (GSA) exclusion lists for all providers on a regular basis to validate that the providers that assist in the administration or delivery of services are not included on such lists.
Best Practices and Claims Adjudication (cont’d.)

Compliance Program/Fraud, Waste, and Abuse (cont’d.)

Reporting
Please use one of the following ways to report fraud, waste, and abuse to Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan:

- Call the Blue Shield 24-hour Anti-Fraud Hotline at (800) 221-2367. This hotline is managed by Blue Shield’s Special Investigations Unit.
- Send an email to MedicareStopFraud@blueshieldca.com.

CMS mandates that each health plan and its delegated hospital have a Fraud, Waste, and Abuse program in place and further mandates that all employees are required to take the training, at a minimum, annually. To ensure Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan is meeting all CMS requirements, Delegated Claims Oversight will include in their annual claims oversight, the review of each delegated hospital’s Compliance Program, including a Fraud, Waste, and Abuse program and assurance that all employees have taken the Blue Shield Compliance Program training.

Contract Auditing

Federal Code of Regulations requires that specified provisions be present in all first tier and downstream contracts and/or agreements. Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan has the responsibility to ensure that delegated providers with hospital-risk comply with the CMS requirements. Specifications of the requirements are found in the provisions of the Medicare Modernization Act, the CMS Manuals (specifically chapter 11) and the provisions in the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2007 (MIPPA).

Date Stamping

Health plans and delegated claim operations must date stamp all claims including facsimiles with the date the claim was received. The stamp should identify the specific delegated hospital. Blue Shield recommends that each page of the claim including any attachments be date stamped. Federal procedures suggest that claims received from the US Postal Service after 4:30 in the afternoon may be considered “received” on the next business day. If a courier picks up the claims from the post office and transports them to the claim office, the time of pickup is what determines the date of receipt. The earliest received date by any Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan network provider must be utilized for Medicare Advantage and Group Medicare Advantage claims.

Delegated Claims Compliance and Self Reporting

Contact Delegated Claims Oversight at (818) 228-6092, fax (855) 895-3505, or Blue Shield of California, Delegated Claims Oversight, 6300 Canoga Ave, 9th Floor, Woodland Hills, CA 91367.
Best Practices and Claims Adjudication (cont’d.)

Denial Review – Second Level

It is recommended that all denial notices should be reviewed by supervisor, examiner-lead or manager review prior to release for mailing of the denial notice to ensure accuracy.

Forwarding Claims

Billing providers often submit claims and disputes to the incorrect payor. Blue Shield requires the delegated hospital to forward these claims and disputes directly to the financially responsible entity.

Commercial

Regulations require the delegated hospital to forward misdirected claims to the responsible payor within ten (10) working days of receipt. Health plans are required to forward misdirected claims to the responsible payor within ten (10) working days of receipt for non-contracted providers and all claims for emergent services. For providers contracted with the delegated hospital, the health plan may deny to the provider instructing them to submit their bill to the appropriate payor.

Blue Shield’s claims operations have implemented a program to forward claims within compliance. When Blue Shield receives claims that are the delegated hospital’s financial risk with requests for Blue Shield to process them, Blue Shield will forward the claims in an EDI 837 format or a paper format facsimile to the delegated hospital or otherwise give the delegated hospital an opportunity to process them with notification back to Blue Shield. If time is critical, Blue Shield may need to pay the claim and alert the delegated hospital to any deductions from the delegated hospital capitation payment after the fact.

Audits will be conducted to ensure that claims misdirected to the health plan and forwarded to the delegated hospital have been resolved by the IPA/medical group in a timely and accurate manner.

Group/Medicare Advantage

The claim processing cycle begins with the received date of the forwarding entity (earliest received date). Health plans and delegated hospitals should forward claims within ten calendar days of initial receipt.

If the delegated hospital is receiving a significant number of claims that are forwarded late by any entity and the volume of those late claims is enough to impair the delegated hospital’s timeliness performance, Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan will work with the entity forwarding the late claims. Documentation should be sent to your Delegated Claims Oversight Auditor for support.

Inpatient Non-Authorized Services

Prior to denying emergent out-of-network ancillary professional inpatient services for lack of authorization, the delegated hospital must contact Blue Shield to confirm that the health plan did not authorize the emergent inpatient stay. If services were authorized as medically necessary by Blue Shield, the ancillary professional inpatient services must be paid by the delegated hospital. If the inpatient stay was not authorized by Blue Shield and/or the delegated hospital, only then may the delegated hospital deny the ancillary services to the member as not authorized.
Offshore Monitoring

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) require all Managed Care Organizations to be “contractors,” for the purposes of delivering Medicare Part C benefits, responsible for safeguarding personal health information (PHI). “Subcontractor” refers to any organization that a sponsor contracts with to fulfill, or help fulfill, requirements in their Part C reporting. Subcontractors include all first tier, downstream, and/or related entities. The term “offshore” refers to any country that is not one of the fifty United States or one of the United States Territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands). In providing oversight, Blue Shield Medicare Advantage plan requires all delegated provider organizations to submit an annual attestation.

Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR) Process – Medicare Advantage

Non-Contracted

CMS requires Medicare Advantage Organizations (MAO) to apply the provider dispute resolution process for payment disputes between non-contracted and deemed providers. Non-contracted and deemed providers are defined as follows:

- A non-contracted provider is one that was not aware the patient was a private fee-for-service member at the time of service, e.g., an emergency situation.
- A deemed provider is one who was aware that the patient was a private fee-for-service member at the time of service, and therefore had the ability to view the plan’s terms and conditions of payment.

Note: The provider dispute resolution process for payment disputes between non-contracted and deemed providers does not include Part D claims.

Provider disputes include any decisions where a non-contracted/deemed provider contends that the amount paid by the organization (MAO and/or delegated entity) for a covered service is less than the amount that would have been paid under original Medicare. The disputes may also include instances where there is a disagreement between a non-contracted/deemed provider and the organization about the plan and/or delegated entity’s decision to pay for a different service than that billed. An example would include down-coding.

A provider or supplier has the right to dispute a reimbursement decision made by a MAO Plan and/or delegated entity. Submission of a first level Provider Dispute must be filed within a minimum of 120 calendar days after the notice of initial determination (i.e. EOB’s/RA’s/Letters).

The provider payment dispute process cannot be used to challenge denials by organizations that result in zero payment being made to the non-contracted provider. The payment dispute process may not be used to resolve payment disputes between contracted network providers and organizations covered by this process.

If the additional documentation is not received within 14 calendar days from the date of request, the payor conducts the review based on the information that is available.

Payors decision on the Payment Dispute must be within 30 calendar days from the date the Payment Dispute is first received by the payor. Must be in writing, include facts and rational pertaining to the resolution and inform the provider about their right to the MAO-Health Plan, Provider Dispute Resolution (Second Level) review process. In the event that the additional payment is warranted in favor of the provider and was due to an error, interest will be included along with the additional payment.
Best Practices and Claims Adjudication (cont’d.)

Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR) Process – Medicare Advantage (cont’d.)

After the delegated entity makes its Payment Review Determination (PRD) decision, if a deemed or non-contracted provider or supplier still disagrees with the decision, a second level review may be requested in writing within 180 calendar days of written notice from the payor.

Second level disputes must be submitted to:

Blue Shield of California
Medicare Provider Appeals Department
P.O. Box 272640
Chico, CA 95927

Self-Monitoring and Reporting

Health plans and the delegated hospital are responsible for paying or denying all claims received. In this section, claims are viewed based on who may be processing them and where that may occur. Whether a delegated hospital has permanent or temporary arrangements in place to process claims, every “reportable” claim must be included in the applicable reports and compliance must be monitored. This reporting and monitoring may involve multiple sites, multiple computer systems, and multiple organizations. Health plans and their delegated claim organization must continually report and audit claims for each and every one of these arrangements. That reporting must be consistent and comprehensive, whether reports are provided for senior management internally, or to external organizations that contract or license with Blue Shield.

Self-Monitoring

Blue Shield is required to monitor the delegated hospital’s compliance. Establishing a quality assurance program is a best practice and will enable the delegated hospital to ensure compliance. Such a process would include:

1. Regularly scheduled automated or manual reports;
2. Self-testing procedures to check timeliness and accuracy weekly or after each check run to allow for problems to be corrected before an entire month’s performance is below compliance. The delegated hospital should include some statistical testing of the staff’s adjudication accuracy and productivity that the health plans monitor, such as payment accuracy, incidence of payment, accuracy of data entry, etc.;
3. Regular internal reporting of results to your executive management;
4. Self-initiated corrective actions; and
5. Application of available standardized industry monitoring/audit and reference tools in order to measure actual performance in a similar manner as the health plans.
Best Practices and Claims Adjudication (cont’d.)

Self-Monitoring and Reporting (cont’d.)

Claims Reports

Monthly self-reports must be submitted on the ICE industry-standard formats. Report template forms and detailed instructions can be found on the ICE website at iceforhealth.org.

Commercial

The most current monthly and quarterly timeliness reports are available on the ICE website. The monthly claims timeliness report is due to Blue Shield on or before the 15th calendar day of the month following the month being reported. The quarterly report including the first two months of the quarter is due by the end of the first calendar month following the calendar quarter being reported. These include claims processed during the calendar quarter being reported regardless of date of service.

The reports are a validation of compliance for the delegated hospital and an extension of the delegated hospital’s self-monitoring. The delegated hospital should retain supporting documentation for each self-report as consistent with records retention time limitations. Copies of the supporting documentation may be requested and retained by Blue Shield for any non-compliant delegated hospital.

Commercial Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR) Reports

These are submitted quarterly and are due by the end of the first calendar month following the calendar quarter being reported. They include disputes over billing, claims, contracts, utilization management, and other provider appeals.

The reports are a validation of compliance for the delegated hospital and an extension of the delegated hospital’s self-monitoring. The delegated hospital should retain supporting documentation for each self-report as consistent with records retention time limitations. Copies of the supporting documentation may be requested and retained by Blue Shield for any non-compliant delegated hospital.

Group/Medicare Advantage

The most current monthly and quarterly timeliness reports are available on the ICE website at iceforhealth.org. The monthly claims timeliness report is due to Blue Shield on or before the 15th calendar day of the month following the month being reported. The quarterly report including the first two months of the quarter is due by the end of the first calendar month following the calendar quarter being reported. These include claims processed during the calendar quarter being reported regardless of date of service.

The reports include sections for reporting reopenings and claims source data and ODAG. These sections require specific formatting that is indicated in the instructions on each tab located at the bottom of the monthly claim’s timeliness report.

Group/Medicare Advantage Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR)

Provider dispute resolution self-reports are required for Medicare Advantage and Group Medicare Advantage on a quarterly basis and due by the end of the first calendar month following the calendar quarter being reported.

The reports are a validation of compliance for the hospital and an extension of the hospital’s self-monitoring. The hospital should retain supporting documentation for each self-report as consistent with records retention time limitations. Copies of the supporting documentation may be requested and retained by Blue Shield for any non-compliant hospital.
Sub-Delegated Claims Monitoring

When the delegated hospital engages a third-party administrator (TPA) or contracts with a management company to perform their claims processing. The delegated hospital’s contract with Blue Shield holds them ultimately responsible for claims compliance. Guidelines for sub-capitated and sub-delegated functions are interchangeable within this section.

If the delegated hospital sub-delegates their claims processing, no matter the extent, the delegated hospital is required to report to Blue Shield and monitor all sub-delegated claims that are reportable by the health plans to the regulators; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC).

The delegated hospital is expected to require the delegated claims organizations to meet all the criteria discussed in this supplement. These same criteria should be specified in the delegated hospital’s contract with Blue Shield and in the contract the delegated hospital executes with any sub-delegated organization. The delegated hospital must perform the same tasks Blue Shield carries out as the health plan, including obtaining timely monthly reporting from them, and include their statistics in the delegated hospital reports to Blue Shield. The delegated hospital must audit the sub-delegated organization periodically and require corrective action plan implementation when their performance results are not compliant. If the sub-delegated organization fails to achieve compliance, the delegated hospital needs to take the appropriate actions to achieve compliance. During the on-site audit if the delegated hospital sub-delegates claims functions they will need to demonstrate and provide evidence of their oversight of that entity. If the IPA/Medical Group outsources claims functions that will also need to be included how that is being monitored.

The delegated hospital must include claims-related contractual provisions in contract agreements with other provider organizations. Those provisions must be identical to all such provisions in the contract with Blue Shield regarding meeting all regulatory requirements.
Best Practices and Claims Adjudication (cont’d.)

Timely Filing

Commercial

The Department of Managed Health Care enacted regulations related to claims settlement and dispute resolution practices of health plans and their delegated hospitals (“AB 1455 Regulations”). Among other things, the AB 1455 Regulations provide timely filing limitations for commercial claims depending on the provider’s status. Timeframes for filing claims for contracted and non-contracted providers are as follows:

- Contracted – A deadline of less than ninety (90) days after the date of service may not be imposed.
- Non-contracted - A deadline of less than one hundred eighty (180) days after the date of service may not be imposed

Group/Medicare Advantage

- Claims with dates of service January 1, 2010 and later received more than one calendar year beyond the date of service will be denied as being past the timely filing deadline.

Group/Medicare Advantage Provider Dispute Resolution (PDR)

The submission of a first level provider dispute must be filed within a minimum of 120 calendar days after the notice of initial determination (i.e., explanation of benefits, remittance advice, and/or letters). Additional filing requirements are as follows:

- The payor may allow an additional 5 calendar days for mail delivery
- The payor may extend the time limit for filing a provider dispute if good cause is shown

Unclean or Contested Claims (Affiliated or Unaffiliated Providers)

Commercial

For commercial claims (including provider disputes), the delegated hospital may contest incomplete claims that are missing information. The claim may either be pended and/or contested to the provider and may include a statement that it will receive no further attention if no reply is received. Contested claims are not to be reported as member-denials. The contested or pended claims must be closed prior to the 45th working day. No denial notice should be sent to a commercial member when “closing” a claim pending receipt of additional information.

Group/Medicare Advantage

For Group/Medicare Advantage claims, two separate attempts are recommended to obtain missing information, allowing sufficient time for the provider to respond to each request and indicating the claim may be denied if no reply is received. When fewer than 55 calendar days remain in the 60-day deadline, make an initial determination to pay or deny the claim based on the information available. Health plans, delegated hospitals, as a best practice, are expected to make a reasonable attempt to acquire necessary information before paying or denying a Medicare Advantage and Group Medicare Advantage claim.
Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions regarding CMS or DMHC requirements and claims adjudication are answered below.

When is a claim considered paid?

A claim is only considered paid once the check has been mailed or electronically transmitted. Claims adjudicated, but waiting for a multiple-check run, the issuance of a single check, or the mailing of the check, are not considered paid until the check is actually mailed.

Are subcontracted providers considered “affiliated” providers for reporting purposes regarding their Medicare Advantage claims as 60-day claims?

Yes. Any provider that has a signed contract in place agrees to acceptance of a negotiated rate and therefore should be reported within the 60-day claims category. The provider may only collect applicable copayments, coinsurance and/or non-covered services.

Are providers who accept a one-time letter of agreement (LOA) or memorandum of understanding (MOU) considered “affiliated” providers for reporting purposes?

For audit purposes as well as for reporting on the ODAG Claims Source Monthly Timeliness report this is considered by CMS as a non-contracted provider. From a payment perspective the provider that has agreed to accept a negotiated rate and therefore should be reported within the 60-day category on a universe for delegation oversight audits. The provider may only collect applicable copayments, coinsurance and/or non-covered services.

If a claim is received without some information filled in or attached and that information can be obtained “in-network” at the HMO or IPA/medical group claims operation, can the claim be pended?

Commercial

It is acceptable to place a suspension status code, often called “pend” codes, in your claims computer system while you retrieve internal information. However, the claim may also be denied to the provider of service only requesting the missing information, which is termed contesting the claim.

Group/Medicare Advantage

It is acceptable to place a suspension status code, often called “pend” code, in your claims computer system while retrieving missing information. If the information is available internally, the claim is not considered “unclean.” CMS requires development of an “unclean” claim.

What happens if a group is found to be non-compliant with Claims Regulations?

Blue Shield grants a specific time period during which corrective actions must be implemented. If several attempts at correcting problems are unsuccessful, administrative actions may be applied to the delegated hospital’s claims operation.
Frequently Asked Questions (cont’d.)

Does a Group/Medicare Advantage non-contracted provider payment dispute have to be in writing?

No, the dispute can be received by any method, e.g., phone call, email, written, fax, etc.

Is an email or an electronically-submitted dispute via the internet a commercial PDR?

An electronic dispute would be one that comes through a website or web portal specifically established by the plan or the plan’s capitated provider for filing a provider dispute.

Is a claim initially denied correctly as not authorized and then submitted requesting a retrospective authorization considered a provider dispute?

Yes. If the request is in writing and disputing the original claim decision for lack of authorization.

Is a commercial provider dispute submitted via fax or email considered an electronic provider dispute?

No. At this time, the DMHC considers a fax or an email as a paper dispute.

If a provider calls and then faxes back-up documentation, is it now a provider dispute?

It is only considered a provider dispute resolution (PDR) if they completed and provided all the appropriate data needed for a PDR. If a provider call is inquiring regarding an original claim determination and then followed by a fax, regarding additional information from a contested claim it is considered a provider dispute.

If an original claim submission is contested for additional information and the provider submits the requested information through the commercial provider dispute process, would the requested information be considered a provider dispute?

No. The additional requested information makes the original claim complete and should be considered a new clean claim with a 45-working-day turnaround time.

What are the guidelines for record retention?

For Group/Medicare Advantage claims and corresponding payment activity, the requirement is ten (10) years. The regulation can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 42 CFR, Section 422.504.

For commercial claims, the requirement is at least seven years for the medical claims and corresponding payment activity. This can be found in CCR, Title 10, Section 2695.3.
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