

Temporary changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic

For Blue Cross commercial, Medicare Plus BlueSM,
Blue Care Network commercial and BCN AdvantageSM

Revised September 10, 2021

Here are some of the temporary actions Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network have taken to support providers and protect members during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will update this list with any additional changes or to revise the end dates of these changes, as needed.

Category	Item	Effective start date	Effective end date
Vaccine Administration	Member cost share for COVID-19 vaccine waived	Dec. 10, 2020	Until further notice
	Home health care agencies who enroll to provide expanded service can administer the COVID-19 vaccine to eligible patients with commercial Blue Cross or BCN coverage in their homes (see the June 17, 2021 Provider Alert for more detailed information)	July 1, 2021	Until further notice
Testing	Medically necessary COVID-19 diagnostic tests covered with no member cost share	Feb. 4, 2020	Until further notice
	Specific COVID-19 and influenza testing added to physician in-office laboratory testing (see COVID-19 patient testing recommendations for physicians)	Feb. 4, 2020	Until further notice
	COVID-19 specimen collection reimbursement increase and no member cost share	March 1, 2020	Until further notice
	Laboratory testing network for COVID-19 expanded to be consistent with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act	March 18, 2020	Until further notice
	Pharmacies can administer COVID-19 testing (see COVID-19 testing for pharmacies in Patient testing section of COVID-19 webpage)	April 8, 2020	Until further notice
Treatment	Member cost share for COVID-19 treatment waived	March 18, 2020	Sept. 30, 2021*
	EMS providers can administer COVID-19 monoclonal antibody infusions in the home (see the July 1, 2021 Provider Alert for more detailed information)	The effective date of specific codes beginning Nov. 10, 2020, or after	Until further notice
	Cost share waived for in-person primary care services and behavioral health office visits for Medicare Plus Blue SM PPO and BCN Advantage SM members*	May 1, 2020	Concluded Dec. 31, 2020**
	Licensed practitioners can provide COVID-19 covered countermeasures via telehealth to our members outside of their state of provider licensure	March 26, 2020	Until further notice

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Category	Item	Effective start date	Effective end date
Telehealth	Incentives introduced through Blue Cross' Physician Group Incentive Program to encourage physician offices to use telehealth	March 1, 2020	Until further notice
	Most common medical office visits, hospitalization follow-up visits and common behavioral health therapy available to members with an existing telehealth benefit with no member cost share (please consult the Telehealth procedure codes for COVID-19 and our telehealth guides)	March 16, 2020	Concluded June 30, 2020* (for Blue Cross' PPO and BCN HMO members)
	Member cost share waived for list of services payable under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule when furnished via telehealth (please consult the Covered telehealth services for PHE for the COVID-19 pandemic and our telehealth guides)	March 16, 2020	Concluded Dec. 31, 2020 (for Medicare Plus Blue SM and BCN Advantage SM members)**
	HIPAA enforcement by the Office for Civil Rights relaxed to allow for use of remote communication technologies, such as Skype and Apple FaceTime, for telehealth visits.	March 16, 2020	Until further notice
	Telephone assessment and management services (**98966, **98967 and **98968) covered for BCN Advantage members	March 16, 2020	Until further notice
	Autism spectrum disorder services for assessment (**97151) can be performed via telehealth and protocol modification (**97155) can be performed by a parent or caregiver 100% of the time via telehealth	April 14, 2020	Until further notice
	Intensive Outpatient Program and Partial Hospital Program services covered for members via telehealth	April 16, 2020	Until further notice
	Direct-line ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) interventions (**97153) covered for members via telehealth (please consult the Guidelines for ABA interventions delivered via telemedicine document)	Aug. 3, 2020	Until further notice
	Autism spectrum disorder services for skills training (**97154 and **97158) can be performed via telehealth	Nov. 9, 2020	Until further notice

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Category	Item	Effective start date	Effective end date
Utilization Management	Prior authorizations waived for diagnostic tests that are medically necessary if diagnosed with COVID-19	March 6, 2020	Until further notice
	Clinical review replaced with plan notification to AIM Specialty Health for CT scans of the chest for COVID-19	March 13, 2020	Concluded June 30, 2020
	Requirement for clinical review replaced with plan notification at acute care hospitals for all admissions (see below for admissions with COVID-19 related diagnoses)	April 3, 2020	Concluded June 12, 2020
	Requirement for clinical review replaced with plan notification at acute care hospitals for admissions with COVID-19-related diagnoses and for first three days of skilled nursing facility care following transfer from acute care	April 3, 2020	Concluded June 30, 2020
	Authorization durations for elective and non-urgent procedures, including PT, OT and ST extended for 180 days from the date the authorization was approved	For authorizations approved on or after: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 13, 2020 from Blue Cross or BCN Utilization Management April 6, 2020 from AIM Specialty Health March 26, 2020 from eviCore healthcare 	Concluded Dec. 31, 2020
	Extended the benefit period for PT, OT and ST from 60 to 270 days from the first treatment for BCN commercial members with a 60 consecutive day benefit	March 26, 2020	Until further notice

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Category	Item	Effective start date	Effective end date
Utilization Management, cont.	Extended the duration of global referrals for elective and non-urgent services for BCN commercial members	March 13, 2020	Concluded Dec. 31, 2020 (for referrals with end dates in 2020) Date shown in e-referral (for referrals with end dates after Dec. 31, 2020)
	Extended the benefit period for cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation from 90 to 270 days* from the first treatment or qualifying event depending on member coverage <small>*Some Blue Cross national contracts have different cardiac rehab visit maximums and day limits. Check web-DENIS for specific benefits.</small>	March 1, 2020	Until further notice
	Clinical review requirements for non-elective medical cases suspended for hospitals at 85% or higher bed occupancy. Admissions to skilled nursing facilities from these hospitals are automatically approved for the first three days. Long-term acute care hospital and inpatient rehabilitation facility admissions from these hospitals receive expedited processing.	Nov. 25, 2020	Concluded March 15, 2021
	Clinical review requirements for admission to skilled nursing facilities suspended for hospitals at 85% or higher bed occupancy. (See the <i>Temporary suspension of clinical review requirements to a skilled nursing facility (PDF)</i> posted under the <i>Utilization management</i> section of the <i>Coronavirus (COVID-19)</i> page on Provider Secured Services.)	April 12, 2021	Concluded May 31, 2021
	Clinical review requirements for admission to skilled nursing facilities suspended for hospitals in certain states (see the Sept. 9, 2021 Provider Alert for more detailed information)	Sept. 1, 2021	Until further notice

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Category	Item	Effective start date	Effective end date
Pharmacy	Early medication refill limits on 30-day prescription maintenance medications waived for Blue Cross commercial and BCN commercial members	March 6, 2020	Concluded July 14, 2020
	Early medication refill limits on 30- and 90-day prescription maintenance medications waived for Blue Cross commercial and BCN commercial members	Dec. 29, 2020	Concluded March 31, 2021
	Early medication refill limits on 30-day prescription maintenance medications waived for Medicare Plus Blue PPO and BCN Advantage members	March 6, 2020	Until further notice
	Quantity limits on some prescription drugs for Blue Cross commercial and BCN commercial members (please consult the Temporary quantity limits on some prescription drugs during COVID-19 pandemic document)	April 16, 2020	Concluded April 1, 2021
	No-cost substitutions if drugs are out of stock	March 6, 2020	Until further notice
	Authorization end dates extended for select medical and pharmacy benefit drugs for Blue Cross commercial and BCN commercial members	For authorizations scheduled to expire between March 1 and June 1, 2020	Concluded. The expiration date was Aug. 1, 2020
	Authorization end dates extended for select medical drugs for Medicare Plus Blue and BCN Advantage members	For authorizations scheduled to expire between April 1 and May 31, 2020	Concluded. The expiration date for these authorizations was Aug. 31, 2020
		For authorizations scheduled to expire between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, 2020	Concluded. The expiration date for these authorizations was Dec. 31, 2020

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Category	Item	Effective start date	Effective end date
Pharmacy, cont.	Authorization end dates extended for select pharmacy benefit drugs for Medicare Plus Blue PPO and BCN Advantage members	For authorizations scheduled to expire between April 1 and July 28, 2020	Concluded. The 90-day expiration extension for these authorizations ended by Oct. 26, 2020
		For authorizations scheduled to expire between July 29 and Dec. 31, 2020	Concluded. The expiration date for these authorizations was Dec. 31, 2020
	Pharmacies can administer COVID-19 testing (see <i>COVID-19 testing for pharmacies</i> in Patient testing section of COVID-19 webpage)	April 8, 2020	Until further notice
Claims	90-day extension of claim submission time limits for original claims with submission deadlines of Jan. 1, 2020, and after	Jan. 1, 2020	Concluded Sept. 30, 2020
	DRG enhancements of 20% for inpatient treatment for COVID-19 patients with Medicare Plus Blue PPO or BCN Advantage coverage	Jan. 27, 2020	Until further notice
	Increased fees for COVID-19 specimen collection	March 1, 2020	Until further notice
	Blue Cross commercial, BCN commercial and BCN Advantage rate reimbursement increase for home health care and home infusion therapy for in-home care	April 1, 2020	Until further notice
	Blue Cross PPO commercial professional provider rate reimbursement increase for select procedure codes	May 1, 2020	Until further notice
	2% sequestration is suspended to applicable providers for Medicare Plus Blue and BCN Advantage reimbursement	May 1, 2020	Dec. 31, 2021

None of the information included herein is intended to be legal advice and as such it remains the provider's responsibility to comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including all coding and documentation requirements.



Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees
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***Some commercial self-funded groups are extending the waiver of member cost share. In addition, some Medicare Advantage groups have a different end date for the waiver of member cost share. Providers are encouraged to submit claims to Blue Cross and BCN and wait for the voucher before charging member cost share, if applicable.**

****Effective Jan. 1, 2021, Medicare Plus Blue and BCN Advantage individual plan members have no member cost share for PCP and behavioral health telehealth visits, as well as in-person PCP visits. These are part of 2021 plan coverage (no longer temporary benefits). However, cost share applies to in-person behavioral health services. Check benefits for group members.**

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