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January 2018

Reviewed October 2017

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<th>Care Management 2018</th>
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### Hyperlinks to important information

**Links used in this chapter**

The following links to important utilization management information are provided within this chapter:

- [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferrals.bcbsm.com) website (BCN section)
- Training Tools page at [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferrals.bcbsm.com)
- Authorization Requirements & Criteria page at [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferrals.bcbsm.com)
- eviCore-Managed Procedures page at [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferrals.bcbsm.com)
- BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements
- Article titled “How to attach clinical information to your authorization request in the e-referral system,” in the November-December 2016 BCN Provider News (page 44)
- Medical Necessity Criteria / Benefit Review Requirements for Services Not Involving Drugs / Biologicals Covered under Medical Benefit
- Provider Inquiry Contact Information
- Woman’s Choice Referral and Authorization Guidelines
- Woman’s Choice specialty and procedure/diagnosis code requirements

Note: Blue Cross Complete information is available at [MiBlueCrossComplete.com/providers](http://MiBlueCrossComplete.com/providers).

**How to find billing / claim information**

Referral and authorization requirements affect claim payments.

Providers can find information about billing and claims at the following locations:

- Claims chapter of this manual
- Billing instructions, clinical editing information and other documents

Providers can access billing and claims information on BCN’s Billing / Claims page. Visit [bcbsm.com/providers](http://bcbsm.com/providers), log in to Provider Secured Services, click BCN Provider Publications and Resources and, finally, click Billing / Claims.

In addition, claims mailing addresses can be found at [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferrals.bcbsm.com) > Quick Guides > BCN Provider Resource Guide. Click to open the Claims page.
Overview of BCN Utilization Management

Scope of chapter
This chapter applies to BCN HMO℠ (commercial) products, BCN Advantage℠ HMO-POS products (group products and Basic, Classic, Elements and Prestige individual products) and BCN Advantage℠ HMO products (BCN Advantage℠ HMO ConnectedCare, BCN Advantage℠ HMO MyChoice Wellness, BCN Advantage℠ HMO HealthySaver and BCN Advantage℠ HMO HealthyValue), unless otherwise indicated.

Note: In this chapter, “BCN Advantage” refers to both BCN Advantage HMO-POS and BCN Advantage HMO products unless otherwise noted.

This chapter does not apply to Blue Cross Complete. Utilization management information for Blue Cross Complete is found in the Blue Cross Complete Provider Manual, available at MiBlueCrossComplete.com/providers.

This chapter also does not apply to MyBlue Medigap℠, which is a BCN product unique in that there are no utilization management requirements. Specifically, no referrals or authorizations are required in order for MyBlue Medigap members to access health care services covered under their plan from any provider who accepts Medicare.

Program goal
Blue Care Network’s utilization management program promotes the provision of cost-effective, medically appropriate services. This comprehensive approach employs key interactive medical management activities so that BCN can achieve its goals for BCN members.
Overview of BCN Utilization Management

BCN Utilization Management department provides the following services:

- Inpatient admission, concurrent review and discharge planning
- Utilization management activities
- Development and maintenance of medical review criteria
- Coordination of health care services with chronic condition management programs
- Continuity of care services
- Coordination of care among medical care providers and between medical and behavioral health care providers
- Member health care education
- Clinical review of select services
- Review and determination of requests for out-of-network services
- Joint medical policy development by BCN and Blue Cross
- Processing and management of referrals
- Benefit administration and interpretation, including new technology assessment and determinations regarding experimental procedures
- Processing appeals for physicians and other health care providers
- Postservice review determinations
- Quality improvement initiatives
- Assuring compliance with accrediting and regulatory governing bodies
- Oversight of delegated utilization activities

Contacting Utilization Management

Providers can contact BCN’s Utilization Management department during normal business hours at the number below, unless directed to use another number in this chapter.

Normal business hours are 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9:30 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday.

Toll-free telephone: 1-800-392-2512

Information on calling after business hours and on weekends and holidays is in the “After-hours care manager program” subsection later in this chapter.
Overview of BCN Utilization Management

**Monitoring utilization**

BCN uses various mechanisms to monitor and identify potential underutilization and overutilization of services. This helps ensure that BCN members receive the medical services required for health promotion, as well as acute and chronic illness management. Examples of these mechanisms include:

- Review of Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set data
- Results of member satisfaction surveys
- Rate of select procedures
- Rate of inpatient admissions
- Rate of emergency services
- Rate of primary care physician encounters
- Primary care physician and specialty utilization patterns
- Review of alternative levels of care such as observation

**Affirmation statement**

BCN bases its utilization decisions about care and service solely on their appropriateness in relation to each member’s specific medical condition. BCN’s review staff has no compensatory arrangements that encourage denial of coverage or service. Clinicians employed by BCN do not receive bonuses or incentives based on their review decisions. BCN bases all authorization decisions on medical necessity by applying approved clinical criteria and ensures that the care provided is within the limits of the member’s plan coverage.
## Managing BCN members’ care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus on primary care</th>
<th>The primary care physician plays a key role in patient care by providing and coordinating medical care for BCN members.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialist’s role</td>
<td>The specialist provides care within the scope of the primary care physician’s referral. The specialist’s timely communication with the referring physician is essential to effective management of the member’s care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCN support</td>
<td>BCN provides the structure to facilitate care to all members, regardless of the treatment setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral to BCN-contracted specialists</td>
<td>BCN offers a statewide network of specialty care providers. When members need specialty care, their primary care physicians refer them to participating providers within their product’s network. A list of BCN-participating providers can be accessed via the online provider search at <a href="bcbsm.com/find-a-doctor">bcbsm.com/find-a-doctor</a> &gt; Get Started. Enter the search criteria and click Search. Providers can also contact their medical care group administrator or provider consultant for more information about the BCN contracted provider network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to women’s health services through Woman’s Choice</td>
<td>Female BCN members may access services from participating BCN women’s health specialists without a referral from their primary care physician. Additional information on the Woman’s Choice program is available in the “Woman’s Choice” section later in this chapter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Managing BCN members’ care

Regional referral differences
BCN’s referral and authorization requirements vary based on the region assigned to the medical care group with which the member’s primary care physician is associated. All care must be coordinated by the member’s primary care physician.

For BCN members, the various regional requirements are reflected on the BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements document, which also shows procedure codes that require authorization. This document can be accessed by clicking on the following link:

**BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements**

This document can be accessed by visiting:

- [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferrals.bcbsm.com) > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria
- [bcbsm.com/provinces](http://bcbsm.com/provinces), logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Authorizations / Referrals

Providers who do not know which regional requirements to refer to should contact their Blue Cross/BCN provider consultant. To access provider consultant contact information, providers should visit [bcbsm.com/providers](http://bcbsm.com/providers) > Contact Us (Under Help) > Blue Care Network provider contacts. Click Provider consultants, then click on the appropriate region.

East and Southeast service areas
For members whose primary care physician is in the East or Southeast service area, providers should refer to the BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements document to see the referral, plan notification and authorization guidelines for those regions.

Mid, West and Upper Peninsula service areas
For members whose primary care physician is in the Mid, West or Upper Peninsula service area, the following guidelines apply when a referral is being made to a specialist contracted with BCN:

- When the specialist is located within the Mid, West or Upper Peninsula region, the primary care physician does not need to submit a referral or plan notification to BCN.
- When the specialist is located outside of the Mid, West or Upper Peninsula region, the primary care physician must submit a global referral to the plan.
The BCN referral process

Global referrals authorize a specialist’s care

Global referrals allow a contracted specialist to perform services necessary to diagnose and treat a member in the office setting, as long as those services do not require plan notification or authorization.

The specialist may also order diagnostic tests and schedule elective surgeries at a facility as long as those services fall within the date range of the global referral; plan notification and authorization requirements apply.

Separate requests must be submitted by the specialist, primary care physician or facility for services requiring plan notification or authorization. Without plan notification or authorization, when required, claims for services will not pay against a global referral.

Submitting a global referral

Global referrals are typically submitted by the member’s primary care physician. However, obstetric-gynecologic practitioners may submit a global referral when referring members to contracted specialists for obstetric-gynecologic-related services. All referrals to contracted specialists are considered to be global.

When a primary care physician (or OB-GYN, for obstetric-gynecologic-related services) determines there is a need for a specialist’s care and wants to submit a global referral, the following steps must be completed:

1. The primary care physician (or OB-GYN, for obstetric-gynecologic-related services) submits the global referral request to BCN for a minimum of 90 days.
2. BCN reviews all referrals to check the member’s eligibility, primary care physician assignment and primary care physician approval, when applicable.
3. BCN determines whether the global referral is approved.
   
   Note: If the member is not eligible or other problems are identified, the referral is pended until the issues can be worked out. If the referral is ultimately denied, all parties are notified. If the referral is approved, a letter is sent to the member; the specialist and primary care physician can check the status of the request on the e-referral system.
4. After the global referral is approved, the specialist performs the services necessary to diagnose and treat a member in the office setting, within the limits specified by the global referral.

Specialists cannot require that the member present a written copy of the referral and cannot expect that the primary care physician or BCN’s Utilization Management department fax the referral. Referrals should be confirmed by viewing them in the e-referral system or by calling PARS / Provider Inquiry.
The BCN referral process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialist responsible for obtaining additional approvals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the specialist determines services are needed outside those specified by the global referral, including further diagnosis or treatment in an alternate treatment setting (either outpatient or inpatient), the specialist is responsible for making additional referrals and for submitting all required plan notifications and authorization requests to BCN.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional information about global referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providers should be aware of the following additional information related to global referrals:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Global referrals should be written for a minimum of 90 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For members with chronic conditions, BCN recommends authorizing global referrals for a 365-day period to enhance member satisfaction. Note: For members with chronic conditions involving oncology, rheumatology and renal management, referrals should be issued for no less than one year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Global referrals that are not written for the 90- or 365-day requirements are automatically corrected within the e-referral system. Providers who try to enter a referral for less than the minimum requirement receive a warning message. The system then enters the correct minimum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Referrals should be submitted to BCN within one business day via e-referral (or by phone, if e-referral is not available).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If a member seeks services or a specialist provides services without prior approval from the primary care physician (or OB-GYN, for obstetric-gynecologic-related services) in the form of a global referral, the primary care physician (or OB-GYN, for obstetric-gynecologic-related services) is not obligated to issue a referral after services have been provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Providers should refer to the *BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements* document for additional guidelines related to referrals.
The BCN referral process

Global referral limitations
A global referral is not a direct path from the member to the specialist. The following limitations apply:

- Members may not refer themselves to a specialist.
  Exception: BCN Blue Elect Plus$^\text{SM}$ SRO members may refer themselves to a specialist.
- Global referrals may be generated only by the member’s primary care physician (or OB-GYN, for obstetric-gynecologic-related services).
- Global referrals may be issued for no less than a 90-day period and for no more than 365 days. After 365 days, a new referral must be submitted for ongoing care.
- Specialists may not refer a member to other specialists, with the exception of referrals for occupational, physical and speech therapy when the therapy provider is in network.
- Select services are subject to benefit and authorization — for example: chiropractic manipulations, chiropractic physical medicine services, physical/occupational/speech therapy and any services from a noncontracted provider.

Refer to other sections in this chapter for additional information:

- See the section titled “The BCN referral process” for the regional differences in referral requirements.
- See the section titled “Requests requiring clinical information” for the requirements related to services from noncontracted providers.
- See the sections titled “BCN’s Medicare products” and “Other BCN products with provider networks” for the requirements related to providers who are outside the provider network associated with the member’s plan.
- See the section titled “Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors” section for the requirements related to physical/occupational/speech therapy and physical medicine services delivered by chiropractors.

Referral not required
Some services do not require a referral or authorization as long as the service is performed by a contracted practitioner or provider.

For more information about referral requirements, providers should refer to the BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements document, which is found by visiting:

- ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria
- bcbsm.com/providers, logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Authorizations / Referrals
The BCN referral process

Referral submission to BCN not required for Mid, West and Upper Peninsula regions and BCN AdvantageSM

As indicated in the BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements document for the Mid, West and Upper Peninsula regions and for BCN Advantage members, some services do not require a referral or authorization as long as the member is referred for the service by the primary care physician. These referrals do not need to be submitted to the health plan. Notification to the specialist can be made by phone or fax or through instructions on a prescription. Both the primary care physician and the provider to whom the member is referred should include written documentation of the referral in the member’s medical record.

Those services for which no referral is required are noted on the BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements document, which can be accessed at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria > BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements. The document can also be accessed via BCN’s Authorizations / Referrals page within Provider Secured Services.

Plan notification required

Routine plan notifications alert BCN to a scheduled service and are used for claims processing purposes. BCN does not perform clinical review on these services. Primary care physicians and specialists with global referrals must submit plan notifications to BCN prior to the member obtaining the service, to allow for timely claim payment.

Services for which plan notification is required are noted on the BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements document, which can be accessed at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria > BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements. The document can also be accessed via BCN’s Authorizations / Referrals page within Provider Secured Services.

Authorization required

Select services require review for the application of medical necessity criteria or benefit determination or both prior to the delivery of the service.

For additional information, refer to the section titled “BCN authorization requirements.”
The BCN referral process

Referral processing

All service requests are reviewed to verify the member’s eligibility, primary care physician assignment or the presence of an active global referral to the submitting provider. The member is notified in writing of the status of the service request.

Electronically submitted global referrals and plan notifications are automatically checked for eligibility and the appropriate submitting provider. Approval is given upon submission if the member is eligible and the submitting provider is the member’s primary care physician or a specialist with a global referral. Approval notification is then sent to the member.

How to submit referrals

There are two methods for submitting a referral:

- **Electronic** —
  - Service requests should be submitted via e-referral, BCN’s customized Web-based referral entry system.
  - Referrals can also be submitted by medical care groups via Electronic Data Interchange, using the HIPAA 278 electronic standard transaction. For information on the 278 transaction, providers should email EDICustMgmt@bcbsm.com.

- **Phone** — Phone submissions may be necessary if e-referral is not available. Urgent requests must always be submitted by phone. Providers should call BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512.

To avoid delays in payment or denial of claims, providers should submit all referrals to BCN within one business day of ordering or authorizing the service.

E-referral

BCN’s web-based referral submission tool, e-referral, enables providers to submit and update all referral requests — including global referrals, routine plan notifications, routine obstetric admissions and services requiring authorization — over the Internet. Referrals appear online as soon as they are entered and are visible to the contracted provider receiving the referral. The use of e-referral allows specialists and facilities to view any global referral or authorization written to them. Specialists and facilities also receive electronic notification of new referrals made to them. Primary care physicians receive electronic notification of referrals made for their members.

Services that do not require authorization by BCN are automatically approved online at the time of submission. Other services that may require benefit eligibility determination, member eligibility determination or clinical review are reviewed by BCN’s Utilization Management staff. Providers can look up the status of a request via e-referral. Written notification is sent to the member.
The BCN referral process

Sign up for e-referral

Providers who are not already e-referral users can sign up to experience the benefits of fast, easy, paperless referral processing. There is no cost for e-referral. Internet access with 128-bit encryption is needed.

Detailed instructions for signing up for e-referral are found at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > Sign Up or Change a User.

Instructions for using e-referral

For complete e-referral instructions, providers can access training resources at the following locations:

- *Authorizations Quick Reference Guide* at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > eviCore-Managed Procedures
- General information on Web-based training at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > Training Tools > Online self-paced learning modules

For additional information on e-referral, providers should contact their Blue Cross/BCN provider consultant. They can refer to the BCN System of Managed Care chapter of this manual for contact information.

Avoid HIPAA violations: Use caution when selecting members in the e-referral system

When using the e-referral system, providers should avoid violations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 by making sure they have selected the right member under the correct contract before submitting their request. Providers should avoid errors that involve selecting the correct member under the wrong contract number or selecting the wrong member under the correct contract.

Incorrect submissions could result in violations of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and BCN may be required to treat them as reportable disclosures of protected health information.

Errors in selection also slow BCN’s referral process and lead to increased member dissatisfaction and improper claim denials.
The BCN referral process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty group NPIs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referrals are usually issued to individual practitioners except in the case of Michigan Medicine (formerly called the University of Michigan Health System) and the Henry Ford Health System. When issuing referrals to Michigan Medicine or Henry Ford Health System specialty providers, referring providers should use the specialty group National Provider Identifier. No referrals or authorizations should be issued to individual providers in those groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providers may obtain more specific information at <a href="https://ereferrals.bcbsm.com">ereferrals.bcbsm.com &gt; Provider Search &gt; Specialty Group NPIs (for referrals)‌.</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BCN Referral Notification Form</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCN provides written notification of all approved services to its members, including changes to the date of service and/or extensions of services via the Referral Notification Form. The Referral Notification Form is mailed within one business day of the decision. Providers can obtain the status of approved services via e-referral. See “Sign up for e-referral” earlier in this chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved elective services have a specific date range on the notification form indicating the effective period:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Approvals for elective services are based on clinical criteria and are valid for six months from the date of the service request. Examples are bariatric surgery and breast reduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Approvals for transplants and orthognathic services are valid for one year from the date of the service request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective services must be reauthorized after the approved time period has passed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCN assumes no responsibility for the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Services provided to a person who is not an eligible BCN member on the date services are performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Services not covered under the member’s BCN contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Services provided to a person who has used all available benefits as defined by their BCN contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Referral Notification Form is not a guarantee of payment or an assurance of benefits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The BCN referral process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extending a referral</th>
<th>There are times when it is necessary for the member’s primary care physician to extend an existing referral. The primary care physician may extend an existing referral to cover the member’s specialty care for up to one year. Situations requiring a referral extension can include allergy injections, or nephrology, rheumatology, oncology or other conditions that require ongoing long-term care with a specialist. Unless otherwise specified, referrals for extended care are authorized for one year. Referrals can be easily extended by primary care physicians via e-referral. Primary care physicians should find the referral using the treatment search feature, select the Extend button and make the necessary changes. The Extend button will be available for only 90 days after the original referral end date has passed. In the case of extended care, the specialist should confirm the member’s continued eligibility and coverage each month.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Updating a referral</td>
<td>There are also times when it is necessary for the member’s primary care physician or specialist to update an existing referral. Situations requiring a referral update can include a change in facility, a change in treatment setting (for example, outpatient rather than inpatient) or a change in date of service. These changes cannot be done via e-referral. Providers should contact BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512 to make these types of updates to referrals or authorizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect of change of primary care physician or end of eligibility</td>
<td>If the member is no longer eligible for BCN coverage, the referral is no longer valid. If the member has changed primary care physicians, the member needs to get a new referral from his or her new primary care physician.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The BCN referral process

Tips for making the process run smoothly

Providers should follow these tips to make the referral process run smoothly:

• Managing member expectations is critical to the member’s satisfaction with specialist referrals and referral processing regardless of whether the referral needs to be sent to BCN.
  - Providers who don’t think a referral to a specialist is necessary should take the time to explain the reason to the member. Practitioners with high member satisfaction consistently explain the entire treatment plan, including when it is appropriate to refer to a specialist.
  - If a member requests a referral to a specialist or another provider other than the primary care physician’s specialist of choice, providers should explain the rationale for the clinically based decision to the member.

• Communication should occur between the specialist and referring practitioner. Members should not serve as a go-between.
  - Instructions issued to the specialist regarding care or the course of treatment should be communicated directly by the primary care physician or office staff to the specialist. Similarly, if the specialist has any special requests or questions, communication should be between the specialist and primary care physician.
  - Specialists are expected to communicate their findings and treatment plan to the primary care physician as soon as possible but not later than 30 days after the visit.

• Referral start and end dates should accommodate the type of services being requested. Start and end dates are strongly recommended, even for referrals that do not need to be sent to BCN. For example:
  - If a member is being referred for treatment of a chronic condition, referrals should be written for up to 12 months of care.
  - If the referral is for a specialty for which an appointment might not be readily available (for example, neurology or oncology), the provider should leave the referral open long enough to accommodate the future appointment. The provider can also schedule the appointment for the member and build the referral around the appointment date.

• Referrals should be processed promptly.
  - One of the attributes most often mentioned by practitioners who have very high member satisfaction is the speed with which referrals are processed.
  - If referrals are necessary, they should be submitted daily to BCN or to the medical care group for timely processing.
  - Referrals should be done as far in advance of the specialist appointment as possible so that any questions or problems can be resolved prior to the appointment.
## The BCN referral process

### Postservice referrals

The primary care physician is not obligated to issue a referral after services have been provided if the member did not request a referral prior to the date of service. BCN accepts postservice referrals that are received within one year of the date of service.

### Ensuring prompt payment

If referral submission to BCN is required for the region in which the primary care physician is located, claims submitted must correspond to an authorized referral to facilitate payment. If a referral was not submitted in a timely manner, the claim may be denied for payment.

Providers should not perform services requiring BCN approval until that approval has been obtained. Providers should verify approval on e-referral or contact the primary care physician or attending physician for an authorization number prior to performing services that require BCN approval.

### Role of the primary care physician

BCN members rely on their primary care physician to do the following:

- Manage their overall health care
- Explain their treatment plan
- Communicate with them in easy-to-understand language
- Create and submit referrals promptly
- Determine the date span of referrals
- Select a referral specialist and explain the rationale for selecting that specialist
- Provide specific instructions to the specialist
- Define the conditions for which they are being referred
- Direct care to specific facilities as necessary
- Instruct specialists regarding facility and urgent care usage
- Provide expectations regarding written reports by the specialist to the primary care physician (if the referral is for an extended period)
The BCN referral process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of the specialist provider</th>
<th>BCN members rely on their specialist to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow all referral instructions provided by the primary care physician or contact the primary care physician to discuss suggested changes to instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Notify the primary care physician of all services performed and the results of services or tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Refer the member back to the primary care physician if the services of another specialist are required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verify member eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contact the primary care physician for a referral extension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a specialist plans to perform any service requiring plan notification or authorization in an inpatient or outpatient facility setting, the specialist must:

• Submit the required clinical information at the same time as the referral if the service requires authorization

• Refer members to contracted facilities designated by the primary care physician

Specialists must follow these guidelines:

• For office services, always abide by the start and end dates of the global referral. Do not order or provide a service after the end date of the global referral, as the claim may not be paid.

• When required, submit a plan notification or authorization request to BCN’s Utilization Management department via e-referral prior to the date of service for services that are outside of the scope of the global referral, including those ordered or performed in an outpatient or inpatient facility setting. Providers must submit the required clinical information along with the request. For all urgent requests, call BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512.

• Call within the time frame of the global referral for a service that will be performed within 30 days of the end date of the referral (inpatient or outpatient in a facility).

• Honor the request from the primary care physician to perform services at the facility that the primary care physician specifies.

• Provide a consultation report to the primary care physician within 30 days of treating the member.
BCN authorization requirements

Overview of authorization

BCN’s authorization process is established to do the following:

- Ensure uniformity in the provision of medical and behavioral health care
- Ensure the medical appropriateness and cost effectiveness of certain services
- Improve the overall quality of care BCN members receive
- Lower the cost of coverage for BCN members

BCN determines which services are subject to authorization by analyzing the plan’s utilization data and comparing it with the following:

- Internal goals
- External benchmarks, such as HEDIS®
- Medical policies

Other factors are also taken into consideration, such as:

- Procedures high in cost or volume
- Trends toward increasing use of a procedure or service
- Evidence of or reason to suspect actual or potential misuse
- Variations in practice patterns
- Services provided without direct physician oversight
- Services provided without any method of cost or quality control — for example, services not subject to capitation or physician referral processes

In deciding which services require authorization, BCN also looks carefully at:

- The negative impact the proposed review program might have on providers
- The acceptability of any existing criteria, such as InterQual® criteria, Medicare guidelines or information from the medical literature
- Administrative impacts to the health plan and providers
- Market analysis or benchmarking, to determine whether the procedure is within the range of reasonable or accepted practice
- Net cost savings, considering any possible administrative cost offset

Prior to implementation, proposed authorization requirements are vetted internally and also externally, with actively practicing BCN-contracted providers.
BCN authorization requirements

Authorization required

BCN must review and approve select services before they are provided. The primary reason for authorization is to determine whether the service is medically necessary, whether it is performed in the appropriate setting and whether it is a benefit. Clinical information is necessary for all services that require authorization, to determine medical necessity.

All pertinent clinical information must be submitted with the authorization request. For requests submitted through the e-referral system, the clinical information can be attached to the case. For instructions on how to attach the clinical information, refer to the subsection titled “Submit the required clinical information with the initial authorization request” found elsewhere in this section.

A complete list of the clinical criteria and required information that apply to each requested service can be accessed at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria > Medical Necessity Criteria / Benefit Review Requirements for Services Not Involving Drugs / Biologicals Covered under Medical Benefit.

This list is also available on BCN’s Authorizations / Referrals page within Provider Secured Services.

Note: This list shows the clinical information required for services that do not involve drugs or biologicals covered under the medical benefit. For the clinical information required for drugs covered under the medical benefit, providers should refer to “Medications covered under the medical benefit” later in this section.

Services for which authorization is required are noted on the BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements document, which can be accessed at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria > BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements. The document can also be accessed via BCN’s Authorizations / Referrals page within Provider Secured Services.

In this chapter, statements about providers submitting required clinical information are updated to emphasize the importance of submitting the information when an authorization is first requested.
BCN authorization requirements

Submit the required clinical information with the initial authorization request

Providers are encouraged to submit the required clinical information with the initial request for authorization sent via e-referral. The clinical information can be submitted in one of the following ways:

- By entering it directly into the Case Communication section in the e-referral system

  Note: Clinical information can also be attached to the case. Instructions for attaching a document from the member’s medical record are outlined in the article “How to attach clinical information to your authorization request in the e-referral system,” in the November-December 2016 BCN Provider News. These instructions are also in the e-referral User Guide, in the subsection titled “Create New (communication).”

- By faxing it to BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-675-7278

  Note: If the information is being faxed, providers should indicate that in the e-referral Case Communication section.

For clinically urgent procedures, providers can call BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512.

BCN is required by regulatory agencies and by Medicare to notify members as to what clinical information is needed to process a request for authorization. When providers submit the clinical information with the initial request, it decreases the number of letters that BCN is required to send to members.

Providers must complete a questionnaire in e-referral for some procedures

For some procedures, providers must complete a questionnaire regarding the need for the procedure when submitting the request through e-referral.

If the provider’s responses indicate that the procedure meets criteria, the procedure will automatically be approved. If the criteria are not met, the request will be pended for clinical review by BCN’s Utilization Management staff.

For cases that are not automatically approved via e-referral after a questionnaire is completed, providers must include additional clinical information in e-referral using the Case Communication section, to help facilitate a determination by BCN’s Utilization Management department.

For instructions on how to attach the clinical information, refer to the subsection titled “Submit the required clinical information with the initial authorization request” found elsewhere in this section.

Preview questionnaires for several procedures are available at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria. Providers can use these preview questionnaires to prepare their responses, to save time when submitting their request.
BCN authorization requirements

Procedures reviewed by eviCore healthcare for BCN

For information about the procedures reviewed by eviCore healthcare for BCN, providers should do the following:

- For information on the select cardiology, interventional pain management, radiation therapy and radiology procedures that eviCore reviews for BCN, refer to the section titled “Procedures reviewed by eviCore for BCN,” later in this chapter.

- For information on physical, occupational and speech therapy by therapists and physical medicine procedures by chiropractors, which are reviewed by eviCore for BCN, refer to the section titled “Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors,” later in this chapter.

Sleep Management Program

Detailed information about BCN’s Sleep Management Program is available at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Sleep Management Program.

Providers may also access the medical necessity criteria for sleep studies at:

- Medical Necessity Criteria / Benefit Review Requirements for Services Not Involving Drugs / Biologicals Covered under Medical Benefit

- Medical policy on sleep studies, accessed by logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Medical Policy Manual > Policies by Name > S > Sleep Disorders, Diagnosis and Medical Management

Medications covered under the medical benefit

Medications that are not self-administered are generally covered under the medical benefit rather than the pharmacy benefit. These are medications that are typically administered in a specialty clinic or practitioner office.

For additional information on these drugs, refer to the Pharmacy chapter of this manual. Look in the section titled “Drugs covered under the medical benefit.”
BCN authorization requirements

NOC codes require clinical information

Services with “not otherwise classified” codes* require authorization, including the clinical information, prior to the service being performed.

Note: NOC codes are also referred to as “unclassified codes,” “unlisted codes” and “unspecified codes.”

If it is determined that an NOC code is the most appropriate code only after the service has already been provided, the provider must call BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512. This applies even if BCN had previously approved the service with a non-NOC code.

If the request involving an NOC code is submitted to a vendor (for example, J&B Medical Supplies, Northwood or JVHL) and the vendor cannot approve it, the request is forwarded to BCN Utilization Management for review.

Providers should have the following information available when calling BCN Utilization Management for a review by telephone related to an NOC code:

• The member’s information, including name and member number
• The member’s diagnosis
• The NOC code to be submitted and the name of the service
• The clinical information relevant to the service being reviewed (for example, the operative report or the office medical record notes), including information that specifically describes the procedure being reported with the NOC code and the reason the NOC code is being used

If the necessary clinical information is readily available, the case is entered or updated with the NOC code and the call is transferred directly to a BCN Utilization Management nurse.

If the necessary clinical information is not readily available, the case is entered or updated with the NOC code and is pended until the clinical information is available. If the clinical information is not received within the required time frame, the request is denied for lack of clinical information.

Note: Information on the time frames within which decisions are made can be found in the “Utilization management decisions” section of this chapter.

To avoid claim payment delays or denials, providers should contact BCN Utilization Management for authorization of services with NOC codes.

When a claim is submitted with an NOC code, the following occurs:

• If the case has been pended and a claim is submitted before the clinical information is received, the claim may be denied for lack of authorization.
  Note: If BCN does not receive the clinical information within 45 days of the request, the request will be denied for lack of clinical information.

• If the service was performed and the claim was denied because BCN’s Utilization Management department was not contacted at all, the provider may contact BCN Utilization Management. The claim may be resubmitted if the service is authorized.
BCN authorization requirements

Criteria and guidelines for decisions

The criteria adopted by the plan are updated annually and include CMS Medicare Guidelines and also the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InterQual® Acute – Adult and Pediatrics</td>
<td>• Inpatient admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continued stay and discharge readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterQual Level of Care – Subacute and Skilled Nursing Facility</td>
<td>• Subacute and skilled nursing facility admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterQual Rehabilitation – Adult and Pediatrics</td>
<td>• Inpatient admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continued stay and discharge readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterQual Level of Care – Long Term Acute Care</td>
<td>• Long-term acute care facility admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterQual Level of Care – Home Care</td>
<td>• Home care requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterQual Imaging</td>
<td>• Imaging studies and X-rays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterQual Procedures – Adult and Pediatrics</td>
<td>• Surgery and invasive procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Cross/BCN medical policies (jointly developed)</td>
<td>• Services that require clinical review for medical necessity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCN-developed imaging criteria</td>
<td>• Imaging studies and X-rays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCN-developed Local Rules</td>
<td>• Exceptions to the application of InterQual criteria that reflect BCN’s accepted practice standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obtaining criteria

The review criteria related to a specific decision are available to practitioners upon request by calling BCN’s Utilization Management department at 248-799-6312.

Providers who wish to purchase InterQual criteria in their entirety should call the InterQual Support unit at McKesson Health Solutions at 1-800-274-8374.
Requests requiring clinical information

How to submit clinical information

Clinical information is required for all authorization requests to ensure timely decisions by BCN. The preferred method of submitting clinical information is through e-referral. (There is more information about the e-referral system earlier in this chapter.)

Supporting clinical information must be included in the Case Communication section in the e-referral system. Clinical information can be attached to the case. Instructions for attaching a document from the member’s medical record are outlined in the article “How to attach clinical information to your authorization request in the e-referral system,” in the November-December 2016 BCN Provider News. These instructions are also in the e-referral User Guide, in the subsection titled “Create New (communication).”

Clinical information may also be sent to BCN’s Utilization Management department as follows:

- By phoning it in to 1-800-392-2512
- By faxing it to 1-800-675-7278

The caller and the nurse review the clinical information, using established criteria, and the member’s benefits. Whenever possible, the provider receives a determination during the discussion. Clinical information includes relevant information regarding the member’s:

- Health history
- Physical assessment
- Test results
- Consultations
- Previous treatment

Clinical information should be provided at least 14 days prior to the service. The facility is responsible for ensuring authorization. BCN provides a reference number on all referrals.

If clinical information is not received with the request, BCN’s Utilization Management department contacts the practitioner verbally to request the necessary documentation. In addition, follow-up letters are sent to the member and the provider requesting the required information. If documentation is not submitted within the designated time frame, the request is denied.

The most efficient way to submit clinical information is through the e-referral system. Providers should use the Case Communication section to document how the clinical criteria are met.
Requests requiring clinical information

How a determination is made

In addition to reviewing clinical information, BCN evaluates the following:

- The member’s eligibility and coverage
- The medical need for the service
- The appropriateness of the service and setting

If additional clinical information is required to approve the service, a BCN Utilization Management representative telephones the specialist’s or primary care physician’s office. To ensure that all needed information is received in a timely manner, a written request may also be sent to the member, the primary care physician and the specialist or other provider receiving the referral.

Notification of determination

When the determination is made, notification is sent as follows:

- If the request is approved, BCN sends written notification to the member. Providers can look up the status of the request via e-referral.
- If the request is denied, BCN sends a letter to the member and the primary care physician and to other providers and practitioners, as appropriate, explaining the reason(s) for the denial along with instructions for filing an appeal and information on how to reach the BCN plan medical director who made the decision. Providers who have access to e-referral may also view the determination online as soon as one is made.

Referrals to noncontracted providers

Noncontracted providers are those who do not have an affiliation agreement with BCN. For members whose coverage requires use of a designated provider network, the primary care physician must coordinate care with specialists and hospitals within that network.

BCN must review and approve all requests to noncontracted providers before services are provided, to determine medical necessity and the availability of contracted providers or practitioners. This is true whether the provider is in state or out of state. Redirection to a contracted provider is attempted, to promote the use of network resources.

Referrals to noncontracted providers may be approved when medically necessary in emergency situations or when an in-network provider cannot provide the necessary service.

A plan medical director reviews all requests to noncontracted providers. A plan medical director also reviews instances in which the primary care physician declines redirection to a contracted practitioner or provider.
## Requests requiring clinical information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps to take before providing services that are not or may not be covered</th>
<th>It is recognized that the member may consent to receive services that are not or may not be covered by BCN and that therefore may be payable by the member. Providers should refer to the BCN Advantage chapter of this manual for the steps they should take before providing a service that is not or may not be covered. The information is in the “Exclusions and limitations” section. Providers should follow the same steps for BCN HMO (commercial) members as for BCN Advantage members.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Referrals and authorizations summary

The vendor information in this chapter is updated to show that Northwood, and not J&B, provides diabetic shoes and inserts effective June 1, 2018.

What providers need to know

When providing services to BCN members, providers should make sure they are aware of these referral and authorization highlights:

- BCN’s referral program guidelines differ by region. Providers should remember to access the regional program grid applicable to the region in which they are located. Providers should refer to the referral and authorization requirements for each region at e-referrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria > BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements.

- The facility is responsible for verifying the authorization prior to providing a service. Up-to-date referral information is available on e-referral.

Global referrals

Only the member’s primary care physician can issue a global referral.

- If a global referral is available, the specialist can request authorization from BCN, according to the referral and authorization requirements applicable to the region in which he or she is located.

- Global referrals may be issued for no less than a 90-day period and no more than 365 days.

- Global referrals may not be submitted to any noncontracted provider or to any facility.

Referral not required

- Select services do not require a referral or authorization submission to BCN as long as the service is performed by a contracted practitioner or provider and both the primary care physician and the provider who received the referral can document that a referral was made.

Referral submission to BCN not required

- Select services do not require a referral or authorization as long as the member is referred for the service by the primary care physician.

Plan notification

- BCN must be notified of the service in order for a facility or professional provider to be paid.

- Hospitals should contact the primary care physician prior to urgent or emergency admissions and notify BCN within one business day with the member’s demographic and clinical information.
Referrals and authorizations summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What providers need to know (continued)</th>
<th>Authorization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• BCN should be notified at least 14 business days before elective services start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All out-of-network services require authorization prior to the service being provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All services with unclassified medical codes (CPT and HCPCS codes) require authorization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The most efficient way to submit an authorization request is through e-referral, documenting how the clinical criteria are met in the Case Communication section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Photographs and/or written documentation may be required for review of selected services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Authorization must be obtained prior to the service being provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Approved elective services date range**

- Bariatric surgery and breast reduction services are valid for six months from the date of the service request.
- Transplants and orthognathic services are valid for one year from the date of the service request.
- All other elective services must be reauthorized after the approved time period has passed.

**Air ambulance transports, for BCN HMO (commercial) members only**

Submit authorization requests for non-emergency air ambulance transports to Alacura Medical Transport Management. by faxing a completed Air ambulance flight information (non-emergency) form, along with clinical documentation in support of the request, to Alacura at 1-844-608-3572. Then call Alacura at 1-844-608-3676 to obtain the authorization number.

Emergency air ambulance transports do not require authorization. Additional information is available in the section titled “Air ambulance services.”

**Behavioral health services**

Contact BCN’s Behavioral Health department as follows:

- For BCN HMO (commercial) members, call 1-800-482-5982.
- For BCN Advantage members, call 1-800-431-1059.

**Outpatient diabetic supplies**

Contact J&B Medical Supply at 1-888-896-6233.

Exception: Diabetic shoes and inserts are handled through Northwood, Inc.
Referrals and authorizations summary

What providers need to know (continued)

Outpatient durable medical equipment and P&O
Contact Northwood’s customer service department at 1-800-393-6432 to identify a contracted supplier. The supplier submits the request to Northwood for review.

Note: As a rule, Northwood provides nondiabetic outpatient medical items. Exception: Northwood provides diabetic shoes and inserts.

Outpatient laboratory services
Contact Joint Venture Hospital Laboratories at 1-800-445-4979.

Pharmacy inquiries
For pharmacy inquiries about eligibility and benefits, providers should call PARS / Provider Inquiry using the appropriate number as indicated on the Provider Inquiry Contact Information list.

Physical, occupational and speech therapy services by therapists in office and outpatient settings, including outpatient hospital settings, and physical medicine services by chiropractors
- For information on referral and authorization requirements, including contact information for eviCore healthcare, providers should refer to the “Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors” section of this chapter.

For claims questions, providers should call PARS / Provider Inquiry using the appropriate number as indicated on the Provider Inquiry Contact Information list.

Select cardiology, interventional pain management, radiation therapy and radiology procedures
Submit requests for authorization to eviCore healthcare online at www.evicore.com or by telephone at 1-855-774-1317. Providers should also refer to the “Procedures reviewed by eviCore for BCN” section of this chapter.

Member responsibilities
- Members should be aware of their benefits and are advised to direct questions to Customer Service at the number on the back of their BCN ID cards.
- BCN members are responsible for coordinating out-of-state care with BlueCard for urgent or emergency and follow-up care at 1-800-810-BLUE (2583).
Procedures reviewed by eviCore for BCN

Overview of eviCore-managed procedures

The information in this section does not apply to physical, occupational and speech therapy by therapists and physical medicine services by chiropractors, which are managed by eviCore for BCN. For information on those services, refer to the section titled “Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors,” later in this chapter.

The information in this section does apply to select non-emergency outpatient cardiology, interventional pain management, radiation therapy and radiology procedures require authorization when performed in freestanding diagnostic facilities, outpatient hospital settings, ambulatory surgery centers and physician offices for BCN HMO (commercial) and BCN Advantage members.

All BCN-participating freestanding diagnostic facilities, outpatient hospital settings, ambulatory surgery centers and practitioner offices that provide these services must submit authorization requests by visiting www.evicore.com or by calling 1-855-774-1317, preferably prior to providing services.

Information about the eviCore review process is available on BCN’s Procedures Managed by eviCore for BCN page. Specifically:

• The document eviCore Management Program Frequently Asked Questions offers an overview of the eviCore authorization requirements.

• Refer to the list of procedure codes that require authorization by eviCore.

• The Authorizations Quick Reference Guide tells how to submit authorization requests through the www.evicore.com website.

• The document Guidelines for services reviewed by eviCore healthcare for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network offers contact numbers and other information.

Services performed in conjunction with an inpatient or observation stay or during an emergency visit do not require authorization.

Urgent requests — in which the member’s medical condition is jeopardizing his or her life or health and is deemed life-threatening — should be called in to eviCore at 1-855-774-1317. Providers should ask the eviCore representative to expedite the request because the member needs medically urgent care. Refer to the Guidelines document for more details about the correct number to call for each type of service.
Procedures reviewed by eviCore for BCN

What providers should be aware of

With regard to the outpatient cardiology, interventional pain management, radiation therapy and radiology procedures managed by eviCore for BCN, providers should be aware of the following:

- Except for interventional pain management services, “add-on” codes do not require authorization. Authorization is required only for the primary code. A separate authorization is not needed to bill Blue Care Network for add-on codes if there is a valid authorization on file for the primary code. Claims submitted to BCN for add-on codes without authorization for the associated primary code will not be reimbursed.

- When multiple radiology and cardiology services are to be performed, a separate authorization is needed through eviCore for each procedure code. This occurs when there are both primary and secondary procedures being performed and the secondary codes are not add-on codes. An example is when procedures associated with both the following codes are being performed and both require authorization: *78459 and *78491.

- eviCore makes radiation therapy worksheets available on its website. Providers must complete a worksheet with pertinent clinical information and attach it to the case in eviCore’s online system when submitting authorization requests for radiation therapy procedures. eviCore updates its radiation therapy worksheets from time to time. To access the most current worksheets:
  2. Click Radiation therapy, on the Solutions tab.
  3. Click Clinical Guidelines.
  4. Scroll down and click View more physician worksheets, under the Educational Links heading.
  5. Click to open the desired worksheet.

- For procedures other than radiation therapy, worksheets are available but providers are not required to submit them to eviCore with the case.

Note: For physical, occupational and speech therapy and for physical medicine procedures by chiropractors, worksheets are not available but providers may need to complete treatment plan forms and submit them to eviCore through the [www.LMhealthcare.com](http://www.LMhealthcare.com) provider portal. For more information, see the section titled “Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors” later in this chapter.

(continued on next page)

* CPT codes, descriptions and two-digit modifiers only are copyright 2017 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.
Procedures reviewed by eviCore for BCN

### What providers should be aware of (continued)

• For interventional pain management services, authorization is required for all diagnoses, for adult and pediatric members. These services include epidural and facet joint injections, sacroiliac joint injections, epidural adhesiolysis, radiofrequency ablation and regional sympathetic blocks.

For multiple pain management injections:

- eviCore will authorize only a single injection per date of service. The single injection could be the same injection at various levels.

- An additional authorization is needed for each subsequent injection. This is because eviCore does not authorize “a series of injections.” Instead, eviCore will evaluate the medical necessity of each subsequent injection after considering the member’s response to the previous injection.

• All requests should be submitted to eviCore first. If the eviCore system responds that a particular request should be reviewed by BCN’s Utilization Management department instead, the request should be submitted through the e-referral system. (This occurs when the code submitted to eviCore is not included on the list of codes eviCore reviews.)

• For all procedures, the provider office submitting the e-referral request and the hospital performing the procedure should make sure the codes submitted and the procedures to be performed match those requested by the ordering practitioner and are authorized by eviCore. If there is a discrepancy, the hospital should contact the ordering provider and ask him or her to submit the request for the appropriate procedure. This should occur prior to the service being provided, if possible. Errors related to procedure codes can result in delays in processing the request and in billing problems.

Providers with additional questions can also refer to the [eviCore training material](https://www.evicore.com).

### Scheduling phone appointments for eviCore clinical consultations about radiology reviews

For radiology authorization requests, providers can schedule phone appointments online with an eviCore healthcare clinical representative and not have to wait on hold. This applies only to radiology services reviewed by eviCore healthcare for BCN HMO (commercial) and BCN Advantage members.

For instructions on how to schedule an appointment for a phone consultation, refer to the article “Providers can schedule a phone appointment for eviCore clinical consultations on BCN radiology reviews,” in the July-August 2017 issue of *BCN Provider News* (page 39).

Before this scheduling option was made available, providers had to call eviCore and wait on hold until an eviCore physician was available.
Blue Elect Plus Self-Referral Option

Blue Elect Plus Self-Referral Option is a self-referral option product. Members covered by this product must select a primary care physician from BCN’s provider network. Members may choose to self-refer to any in-network or out-of-network provider, but are always encouraged to partner with their primary care physician for their health care.

Members pay the lowest costs when their care is provided by their primary care physician or by another provider in the BCN network. Certain services are covered only when provided by a BCN provider. Requirements for plan notification and authorization apply whether services are performed by BCN or non-BCN providers.

No referrals needed

Providers do not need to give referrals to Blue Elect Plus Self-Referral Option members.

General utilization management requirements

For detailed guidelines on plan notification and authorizations for Blue Elect Plus Self-Referral Option members, providers should refer to the Blue Care Network Referral and Authorization Requirements document, which can be accessed at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria > BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements.

When authorization is required, it needs to be completed in advance regardless of network affiliation. The requirements for plan notification and authorization apply whether services are performed by in-network or out-of-network providers.

Other utilization management requirements

The following utilization management requirements also apply:

• If a specific service is not available from an in-network provider and the member wishes to see an out-of-network provider, the provider must request and receive authorization from BCN’s Utilization Management department for the member to receive the in-network benefit.

• If a member wishes to see an out-of-network provider for a service that normally requires an authorization, the out-of-network provider in coordination with the member must contact BCN’s Utilization Management department in advance to obtain authorization.

Provider Information Card

Blue Elect Plus Self-Referral Option members receive a Provider Information Card along with their new ID card. The Provider Information Card provides a brief overview of Blue Elect Plus Self-Referral Option billing and utilization management requirements for participating and nonparticipating providers.

BCN instructs members to carry both cards and present them together when visiting their provider. Providers should place a copy of both cards in the member’s file.
### BCN’s Medicare products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medicare products offered by BCN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCN offers three products for Medicare-eligible members that are subject to utilization management: BCN Advantage HMO-POS products (group products and Basic, Classic, Elements and Prestige individual products), BCN Advantage HMO products (BCN Advantage HMO ConnectedCare, BCN Advantage HMO MyChoice Wellness, BCN Advantage HMO HealthySaver and BCN Advantage HMO HealthyValue) and BCN 65. The BCN Advantage products provide comprehensive HMO benefits, and all benefits are provided by and managed by BCN. BCN 65 coordinates with Medicare coverage. It covers the deductibles and copayments for all services that Medicare covers and also offers additional benefits. Additional information on BCN 65 is available in the “BCN 65 and secondary coverage” section of this chapter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BCN Advantage products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCN Advantage HMO-POS and BCN Advantage HMO products function as Medicare replacement products rather than as supplemental products. Members use their BCN Advantage HMO-POS or BCN Advantage HMO membership card instead of the government-issued red, white and blue Medicare card to get covered services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BCN Advantage HMO-POS provider network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The BCN Advantage HMO-POS network is separate from the BCN network but includes primary care physicians, specialists, hospitals and other providers who are licensed and certified by Medicare and by the state to provide health care services. Not all BCN providers are included in the BCN Advantage HMO-POS network. Primary care physicians must refer BCN Advantage HMO-POS members to providers in the BCN Advantage HMO-POS network.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referrals outside the provider network</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes, a BCN Advantage product has a designated provider network associated with that product. When that is the case, the general rule is that if a member is referred to a provider who is not included in the network for that member’s product, authorization from BCN’s Utilization Management department is required in order to provide services to the member. The member’s primary care physician must request authorization through BCN’s Utilization Management department and may be asked to supply supporting clinical information as to why the member needs to be referred to an out-of-network provider. If the services are available through an in-network provider, the primary care physician is asked to redirect the member to an in-network provider. Additional information on products with designated provider networks is provided in the “Other BCN products with networks” section, which appears later in this chapter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BCN’s Medicare products

BCN Advantage HMO MyChoice Wellness provider network

The BCN Advantage HMO MyChoice Wellness product has a designated provider network that consists primarily of providers and hospitals affiliated with Mercy Health. Not all BCN Advantage HMO-POS providers are part of the MyChoice Wellness network.

Primary care physicians (or OB-GYN, for obstetric-gynecologic-related services) must refer MyChoice Wellness members to providers in the MyChoice Wellness network. If a service needed by a member is not available within the BCN Advantage HMO MyChoice Wellness network, the primary care physician can submit a request for authorization to BCN to send the member to a provider in the wider BCN Advantage network. This request should be submitted on the e-referral system as an outpatient or inpatient authorization request.

BCN Advantage HMO ConnectedCare provider network

The BCN Advantage HMO ConnectedCare product has a designated provider network that includes providers and hospitals that serve members who live in Arenac, Genessee, Iosco, Kalamazoo, Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, Saginaw, St. Clair, Washtenaw or Wayne County. Not all BCN Advantage HMO-POS providers are part of the BCN Advantage HMO ConnectedCare network.

Members with this product must select a BCN Advantage HMO ConnectedCare primary care physician. The primary care physician coordinates care and refers within the BCN Advantage HMO ConnectedCare network when specialty or hospital care is needed. If a service needed by a member is not available within the BCN Advantage HMO ConnectedCare network, the primary care physician can submit a request for authorization to BCN to send the member to a provider in the wider BCN Advantage network. This request should be submitted on the e-referral system as an outpatient or inpatient authorization request.

Obstetric-gynecologic care must be provided within the BCN Advantage HMO ConnectedCare network. If a member wishes to visit an OB-GYN outside of the BCN Advantage HMO ConnectedCare local network, the primary care physician (or OB-GYN, for obstetric-gynecologic-related services) must submit a request for authorization to BCN.

For additional information about referring BCN Advantage HMO Connected Care members, see the BCN Advantage chapter of this manual.
### BCN’s Medicare products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider network for BCN Advantage HMO HealthySaver and BCN Advantage HMO HealthyValue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The BCN Advantage HMO HealthySaver and BCN Advantage HMO HealthyValue products are available to individuals who reside in Arenac, Genesee, Iosco, Kalamazoo, Kent, Livingston, Macomb, Muskegon, Oakland, Oceana, Ottawa, Saginaw, St. Clair, Washtenaw or Wayne county. In the West region of Michigan, HealthySaver and HealthyValue members are served by the doctors and hospitals of Mercy Health. In Southeast Michigan, the Bay area and Kalamazoo, HealthySaver and HealthyValue members are served by the doctors and hospitals of Together Health Network, formed by Ascension Health Michigan and Trinity Health. Care provided outside the HealthySaver / HealthyValue provider network requires authorization from BCN.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BCN Advantage referral and authorization requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| For details of the BCN Advantage referral and authorization requirements, providers should consult the relevant information on the following link: **BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements** This information is also available by visiting:  
  - [ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria](#)  
  - [bcbsm.com/providers](#), logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Authorizations / Referrals |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessing more information on BCN’s Medicare products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicians and other providers who have questions regarding participation with BCN Advantage HMO-POS or BCN Advantage HMO products should refer to the BCN Advantage chapter of this manual or contact their Blue Cross/BCN provider consultant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other BCN products with provider networks

Provider networks connected with other BCN products

Providers need to be aware of provider network considerations when referring members or when accepting members who are referred.

Network considerations that need to be taken into account include:

- For members with coverage through the Blue Cross® Select product, services provided by providers outside of the network designated for that product require a referral from the primary care physician (or OB-GYN, for obstetric-gynecologic-related services) and submission of a request for authorization.

- Members with coverage through Blue Cross® Metro Detroit HMO select their primary care physician from provider network associated with that product. The primary care physician coordinates care with local network specialists and hospitals. The primary care physician’s medical care group can provide guidance on which specialists and hospitals should be used for Metro Detroit HMO members. The following guidelines also apply:
  - If the primary care physician refers a member for services within the Metro Detroit HMO local network or within the larger BCN network, standard BCN referral and authorization requirements will apply. If the primary care physician refers a member for services outside of the BCN network, out-of-network rules apply. (A request for authorization must be submitted to BCN.)
  
  Note: When selecting a servicing provider during the submission of a request in the e-referral system, the system will indicate “In” or “Out” in the Network column. In this case, “In” means the provider is in the large BCN network. The e-referral system does not yet identify providers by the local Metro Detroit HMO network.

  - BCN’s Woman’s Choice program allows members to seek care with a BCN network OB-GYN without a referral. Members are instructed to remain within the Metro Detroit HMO network.

- Members with coverage through BCN Local NetworkSM Southeast select their primary care physician from provider network associated with this product. The provider network includes Ascension Health-affiliated primary care physicians and specialists and these seven hospitals: Crittenton; Providence Park Novi; Providence Southfield; St. John Hospital and Medical Center, Detroit; St. John Macomb-Hospitals in Madison Heights and Warren; and St. John River District Hospital in East China Township. Standard Southeast region referral and authorization requirements apply.
Other BCN products with provider networks

| Provider networks connected with other BCN products (continued) | Network considerations that need to be taken into account include (continued):
<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Members with coverage through BCN Local Network℠ West select their primary care physician from provider network associated with this product. The provider network includes Mercy Health-affiliated primary care physicians and specialists and these four hospitals: Mercy Health Hackley; Mercy Health Lakeshore; Mercy Health Muskegon; and Mercy Health St. Mary’s. Services provided outside the local network require authorization from BCN.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For members with coverage through Trinity Health and Metro Health products, services provided by providers outside of the network designated for each product may require BCN approval and typically result in higher out-of-pocket costs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For University of Michigan Premier Care, Premier Care 65 and GradCare members, when a member assigned to a non-UM primary care physician is referred to any specialist (U-M or non-UM), a referral is required. This guideline applies regardless of where the member lives or where the practitioners are located.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For members with coverage through an MSU plan, refer to the MSU Health Plans page in the BCN section at ereferrals.bcbsm.com for information on referral requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referral and authorization requirements

For details about referral and authorization requirements, providers should consult the relevant information at the following link:

**BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements**

This information is also available by visiting:

- **ereferrals.bcbsm.com** > BCN > **Authorization Requirements & Criteria**
- **bcbsm.com/providers**, logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Authorizations / Referrals
BCN 65 and secondary coverage

**BCN 65**

BCN 65 is an HMO product that is secondary to Medicare. It covers Medicare copayments and deductibles and provides some additional benefits such as preventive care.

**BCN 65 referrals**

Members with the BCN 65 certificate are required to have all nonemergency care coordinated by their primary care physician. BCN 65 members are expected to seek care from providers contracted with both BCN and Medicare. Referrals are not required for claims processing.

BCN’s Utilization Management department must be notified in the following circumstances:

- Before a member’s Medicare days are exhausted, for inpatient and skilled nursing facility services
- For infusion services not routinely covered by Medicare

**When BCN is secondary to another insurance**

When BCN is the secondary health plan, no referral or authorization will be required as long as the member is eligible for BCN coverage, the service is a covered benefit, information about the primary plan’s payment is provided and the member has followed the rules of the primary carrier.

If the primary plan denied the claim because its rules were not followed, one of the following applies:

- If BCN requires a referral or authorization for the service and it was not obtained, BCN will deny the claim.
- If BCN does not require a referral or authorization, BCN will pay the claim, but only after validating that all other BCN requirements were met.
**What is Woman’s Choice?**

Woman’s Choice is a program that allows female BCN members to do the following:

- Directly access affiliated practitioners who perform women’s health services without a referral from their primary care physician
- Obtain certain professional services from primary care-related specialists without either a referral or a specific diagnosis code
- Obtain other professional services from primary care-related specialists without a referral but with a specific diagnosis code

All female BCN members are eligible to participate in the Woman’s Choice program.

**Woman’s Choice documents**

Providers can access the following detailed information about Woman’s Choice at [ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria](ereferrals.bcbsm.com). This information is also accessed by visiting [bcbsm.com/providers](bcbsm.com/providers), logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Authorizations / Referrals, or by clicking on the links provided here:

- **Woman’s Choice Referral and Authorization Guidelines**: This document describes which Woman’s Choice services require referral, plan notification or authorization and which are direct-access services (not requiring referral, plan notification or authorization).
- **Woman’s Choice specialty and procedure/diagnosis code requirements**: This document outlines the women’s health specialists who can provide services without a referral and the procedure/diagnosis code requirements that apply to the Woman’s Choice program.

**For more information**

BCN-affiliated practitioners should direct any questions about Woman’s Choice to their Blue Cross/BCN provider consultant or to PARS / Provider Inquiry using the appropriate number on the [Provider Inquiry Contact Information](Provider%20Inquiry%20Contact%20Information) list.
Contracted facilities must notify BCN of all admissions and provide clinical information within one business day of the admission. Timely notification helps ensure that BCN members receive care in the most appropriate setting, that BCN is involved in the evaluation and coordination of discharge planning and that there are appropriate referrals to case management for members who need those services, including those managing active disease processes, those demonstrating high use of health resources or those who are at high risk for health complications.

Refer to the document Submitting acute inpatient admission requests to BCN for the details about which requests must be submitted through the e-referral system and which must be faxed.

Clinical information must be submitted with the request. Providers may submit the required clinical information by completing the Request for Review of Initial Inpatient Admission form and attaching it to the case in the e-referral system. Providers who choose not to submit the form should use it as a guide in determining which parts of the medical record to submit. Providers should not submit the entire medical record; they should submit only the parts that are outlined on the form.

Providers can access the form at e-referrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria > Request for Review of Initial Inpatient Admission form.

Note: Instructions for attaching a document to the request in e-referral are outlined in the article “How to attach clinical information to your authorization request in the e-referral system,” in the November-December 2016 BCN Provider News. These instructions are also in the e-referral User Guide, in the subsection titled “Create New (communication).”
Guidelines for observations and inpatient hospital admissions

The following table outlines the times within which BCN’s Utilization Management department makes decisions on admission reviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If…</th>
<th>Then…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The information provided meets BCN’s criteria without requiring additional information</td>
<td>The case is approved within one calendar day of receipt of the request if the member has not been discharged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The admission or continued stay cannot be approved with the information provided</td>
<td>If the member has not been discharged at the time BCN is notified of the admission, the BCN nurse may ask the facility and/or attending physician for more information within 24 hours of receipt of request and makes a determination within 72 hours of receipt of request. Note: BCN may request that clinical documentation be submitted on weekends or holidays so that the 72-hour time frame for determinations can be met. Refer to the BCN Advantage chapter of this manual for additional information on reviews of those admissions. Look in the section titled “BCN Advantage Utilization Management Program.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After obtaining all available information, the case still cannot be approved</td>
<td>The BCN nurse discusses the information with BCN’s plan medical director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The plan medical director cannot approve the case based on the information available</td>
<td>The plan medical director may contact the attending physician for additional information related to any review, as deemed necessary. The BCN nurse notifies the practitioner, primary care physician, member and facility of the determination within 72 hours of receipt of the request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification of the admission is received after the member is discharged</td>
<td>BCN has up to 30 days after receipt of the request to make a determination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidelines for observations and inpatient hospital admissions

Decision criteria and guidelines

BCN criteria for certifying services are based on input from appropriate providers, nationally recognized criteria adopted by the plan or a combination of both. Individual circumstances of a member are taken into consideration when applying the criteria, as are characteristics of the local delivery system such as:

- Availability of skilled nursing facilities, subacute care facilities or home care in the network to support the member after discharge
- Member’s coverage of benefits for skilled nursing facilities, subacute care facilities or home care, where needed
- Ability of network hospital(s) to provide all recommended services within the established length of stay

The criteria adopted by the plan are updated annually and include:

- InterQual Acute
  Note: In reviewing acute inpatient medical admissions, BCN uses the InterQual criteria as a guideline. BCN’s medical directors make the final determination about the most appropriate level of care based on their medical judgment.
- InterQual Level of Care, Subacute and Skilled Nursing Facility
- InterQual Rehabilitation
- InterQual Level of Care — Long Term Acute Care
- InterQual Level of Care — Home Care
- InterQual Imaging
- InterQual Procedures
- Jointly developed BCN and Blue Cross medical policies
- BCN-developed medical policies
- BCN-developed Local Rules
- CMS Medicare Guidelines

The review criteria are available to practitioners upon request by calling BCN’s Utilization Management department at 248-799-6312.

Emergency admissions

When an admission occurs through the emergency room, BCN asks that the facility contact the primary care physician prior to admission to discuss the member’s medical condition and to coordinate care prior to admitting. A member’s primary care physician assignment is available via PARS (Provider Automated Response System), formerly known as CAREN. (Providers should refer to “Emergency room and urgent care services” later in this chapter.)
Guidelines for observations and inpatient hospital admissions

Elective admissions

Primary care physicians and specialists are required to notify BCN at least 14 days before arranging elective inpatient and certain outpatient facility services, whenever possible. When a specialist has received a referral from the primary care physician, the specialist is responsible for contacting BCN for selected services that are ordered or performed in a facility setting and for all services requiring authorization. (Providers should see the referral and authorization requirements at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria and by visiting bcbsm.com/providers, logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Authorizations / Referrals.) The specialist should call within the time frame of the referral for a service that will be performed in the inpatient or outpatient facility within 30 days of the end date of the referral.

BCN reviews the request to determine whether the setting is appropriate and, if required, meets criteria. BCN notifies the member, primary care physician, attending physician and facility of the determination.

Facilities must provide clinical information to BCN’s Utilization Management department within one business day of the elective admission.

Obstetrical admissions

BCN requires that facilities provide both admission and discharge information on normal deliveries at the time of discharge via e-referral. For all deliveries, the facility should notify BCN one day after discharge. The following information must be provided:

- Admission date, delivery date and discharge date
- Type of delivery
- Whether the baby was born alive
- Whether both mother and baby were discharged alive

Sick newborn baby admissions

Newborn babies who are discharged home with their mothers from the newborn nursery do not require a separate authorization from their mother’s. However, a separate authorization is required when the newborn requires services of greater intensity. Examples include when a newborn:

- Is transferred to a neonatal intensive care unit or special care nursery from the newborn nursery (The admit date is the date the transfer occurred.)
- Is admitted directly into the neonatal intensive care unit or special care nursery from the delivery room (The admit date is the date of birth.)
- Remains in the nursery after the mother is discharged (The admit date is the mother’s discharge date.)
Guidelines for observations and inpatient hospital admissions

BCN 65 admissions
For BCN 65 admissions, providers should contact BCN’s Utilization Management department before the member’s Medicare days are exhausted.

Observation care
Observation care is a well-defined set of specific, clinically appropriate services that are described as follows:

- The services include ongoing short-term treatment, assessment and reassessment.
- The services are provided while a decision is being made regarding whether a member requires further treatment as a hospital inpatient or is able to be discharged from the observation bed.

Observation stays of up to 48 hours for BCN commercial and BCN Advantage members may be eligible for reimbursement when providers need more time to evaluate and assess a member’s needs in order to determine the appropriate level of care. Examples (not all-inclusive) of diagnoses that may be treated in an observation setting include:

- Chest pain
- Syncope
- Cellulitis
- Asthma
- Pneumonia
- Bronchitis
- Abdominal pain or back pain
- Pyelonephritis
- Dehydration (gastroenteritis)
- Overdose or alcohol intoxication
- Closed head injury without loss of consciousness

Note: Providers should refer to the “Billing guidelines for observation stays” section in the Claims chapter of this manual for information on billing observation stays.

Requirements for observation stays
For BCN commercial and BCN Advantage members, observation stays do not require referral, plan notification or authorization.

Requirements for services provided during observation stays
For the most current information on requirements for services provided during an observation stay, the provider should refer to the referral and authorization requirements atereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Authorization Requirements & Criteria.

The only exceptions are the cardiology, radiation therapy and radiology procedures reviewed by eviCore healthcare; while those procedures require authorization when performed in an office, outpatient or ancillary care setting, they do not require authorization when performed in an observation, emergency or inpatient care setting. Refer to the document Procedures that require authorization by eviCore healthcare to identify which procedures are reviewed by eviCore.
Guidelines for observations and inpatient hospital admissions

Options available beyond the observation period

For members who require care beyond the observation period, the following options are available:

- Contact BCN’s Utilization Management clinical staff to discuss alternate treatment options such as home care or home infusion therapy.
- Request an inpatient admission.

Note: If the member is not discharged within the 48-hour observation stay limit covered by the plan, the provider should re-evaluate the member’s need for an inpatient admission. Approval of an inpatient admission is dependent upon criteria review and plan determination. Additional information about medical necessity considerations as applied to questions of inpatient vs. observation stays for BCN Advantage members is available in the BCN Advantage chapter of this manual.

For members who are ready for discharge, providers may call BCN’s Utilization Management department 1-855-724-4285 for assistance with discharge planning.

Review of readmissions that occur within 14 days of discharge

BCN reviews inpatient readmissions that occur within 14 days of discharge from a facility reimbursed by diagnosis-related groups (DRGs) when the member has the same or a similar diagnosis. BCN reviews each readmission to determine whether it resulted from one or more of the following:

- A premature discharge or a continuity of care issue
- A lack of, or inadequate, discharge planning
- A planned readmission
- Surgical complications

In some instances, BCN combines the two admissions into one for purposes of the DRG reimbursement. BCN’s guidelines for bundling a readmission with the initial admission are available by visiting bcbsm.com/providers, logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Billing / Claims > Guidelines for Bundling Admissions.

BCN requests that inpatient facilities complete the 14-Day Readmission Checklist when a member is readmitted within 14 days of discharge from the initial admission with the same or a similar diagnosis. This checklist helps ensure that all the necessary information is available when a decision must be made as to whether to bundle the two admissions together or approve the second admission separately. The checklist is one of the utilization management forms that can be accessed by visiting bcbsm.com/providers, logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Forms.
Guidelines for observations and inpatient hospital admissions

**Facility transfers**
Requests for transfers of patients from one acute care facility to another are permissible for medical necessity reasons (when required services or procedures are not available or cannot be provided safely at the referring facility) only when the attending physician determines that the member is stable or a medical emergency exists. Primary care physicians may request that their patients be directly admitted from an ER to another acute care facility when the attending physician determines the member’s medical condition is stable. Facilities must obtain authorization from BCN prior to any nonurgent transfer.

Members requiring urgent transfers due to medical necessity should be transferred as soon as the attending physician deems the member medically stable. BCN must be notified of the transfer within one business day of the occurrence.

Note: BCN Advantage members may request a non-emergency transfer to a facility of their choice at any time.

During normal business hours, the facility should contact the BCN nurse reviewer or call 1-855-724-4285. After normal business hours and on weekends and holidays, the facility should call the after-hours care manager at 1-800-851-3904.

**Discharge planning**
Discharge planning begins at the time of admission and is a collaborative effort involving:
- Member
- Family members
- Primary care physician
- Specialist
- Hospital discharge planning staff
- Ancillary providers, as necessary

BCN monitors all hospitalized members to assess their readiness for discharge and assist with posthospital arrangements to continue their care. The goal is to begin discharge planning before or at the beginning of the hospital stay. BCN nurses work in conjunction with members’ primary care physicians to authorize and coordinate posthospital needs, such as home health care, durable medical equipment and skilled nursing placement. For these members, providers should follow the processes described in the “Guidelines for transitional care” section of this chapter.

Note: For BCN-contracted providers, home health care services do not require authorization except in the case of BCN members who are covered through the UAW Retiree Medical Benefits Trust. For BCN members with coverage through the URMBT, home health care services require authorization.
Guidelines for observations and inpatient hospital admissions

Postdischarge follow-up care program

All members who are discharged home from an inpatient admission are contacted by BCN nurses either by letter or by phone. The purpose of this program is to support the discharge plan prescribed by the member’s practitioner by assessing the member’s knowledge level, evaluating the effectiveness of the discharge instructions and offering additional information and/or services to the member when indicated. During the postdischarge phone call to the member, the nurse:

- Assesses comprehension of the discharge instructions received in the hospital
- Recommends scheduling a follow-up visit with his or her practitioner
- Provides instructions about medications
- Assists in arranging prescribed services after discharge
- Determines whether additional services may be indicated
- Provides information on community resources as needed
- Offers information about BCN’s applicable utilization management programs
Guidelines for transitional care

Transitional care services assist members in meeting their health care needs following discharge from an inpatient care setting when placement in a transitional setting is necessary or to prevent inpatient hospitalization through the provision of skilled care in the home. The following types of transitional services are coordinated by BCN’s Utilization Management nurses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service type</th>
<th>Services / settings</th>
<th>Additional information</th>
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</table>
| Home health care (traditional, not including infusion and enteral/parenteral feedings) | In the member’s home, traditional home health care can be provided. This involves services such as nursing visits and physical, occupational and speech therapy. Note: Members do not need to be homebound to qualify for traditional home health care services. | • Traditional home health care may be provided only by agencies contracted with BCN to provide those services.  
• For BCN members with coverage through the URMBT, traditional home health care services require authorization. For all other members, no referral or authorization is required. |
| Home infusion and enteral/parenteral feedings | In the member’s home, care can be provided that involves infusion and enteral/parenteral feedings. Note: Members do not need to be homebound to qualify for home infusion or enteral/parenteral feedings. | • Home infusion and enteral/parenteral feedings may be provided only by agencies contracted with BCN to provide those services.  
• For all members, authorization is required only for services involving enteral/parenteral feedings.  
• For members receiving long-term enteral or parenteral feedings, providers should follow the process outlined in “Nutrition Assessment/Follow Up form for members with long-term feedings” later in this section. |
| Rehabilitation care                   | Typically provided in an inpatient rehabilitation facility or a rehabilitation unit in an inpatient hospital | Providers should follow the process described in “Expediting admissions for rehabilitation or skilled nursing care” later in this section. |
| Skilled nursing care                  | Typically provided in a skilled nursing facility                                                     |                                                                                                                             |
| Long-term acute care                  | Typically provided in a long-term acute care hospital                                                 | Providers should follow the process described in “Expediting admissions for long-term acute care” later in this section. |
| Hospice care                          | Can be provided in one of the following settings:  
• Member’s home  
• Skilled nursing facility  
• Palliative care unit of an inpatient hospital                                                        | • For BCN Advantage members, hospice care is covered through traditional Medicare.  
• For all other members, BCN’s Utilization Management department coordinates the member’s entry into hospice care. |
## Guidelines for transitional care

### Contacting BCN’s Utilization Management department

Providers can contact BCN’s Utilization Management department for any transitional care services using the following phone numbers:

- When the member is transitioning to home care, call 1-855-724-4285.
- When the member is transitioning to a skilled nursing or rehabilitation facility or to a long-term acute care hospital, call 1-855-724-4286.

The hours of operation for transitional care services are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

BCN requires that requests for transitional or discharge planning services be handled during the business hours noted above.

In the event that an emergency need arises for these services after the hours noted above or on weekends or holidays, providers can call 1-800-851-3904 to reach an after-hours care manager. Additional information on the after-hours care manager program can be found later in this chapter.

### Expediting the transition to home care

To expedite the transition to home care for BCN members with coverage through the URMBT, providers should call BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512 to submit the initial review.

For visits requested beyond the initial review, providers should fax the following documents to 1-866-578-5482:

- Form 485 for initial request
- One evaluation or synopsis from each discipline for each month of additional services being requested

### Expediting admissions for rehabilitation or skilled nursing care

To expedite a same-day-as-discharge request for transitional care placement in a rehabilitation or skilled nursing setting, providers should fax the following documents to 1-866-534-9994:

- A completed Rehabilitation Assessment Form
  
  Note: The Rehabilitation Assessment Form can be accessed at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Forms. It can also be found on BCN’s Forms page within Provider Secured Services.
- History and physical from the hospital admission
- Physical medicine and rehabilitation consultation notes, as appropriate
Guidelines for transitional care

To expedite a request for transitional care placement in a long-term acute care setting, providers should fax the following documents to 1-866-534-9994:

- A completed LTACH Assessment Form

  Note: The LTACH Assessment Form can be accessed at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Forms. It can also be found on BCN’s Forms page within Provider Secured Services.

- History and physical from the hospital admission

- Physical medicine and rehabilitation consultation notes, as appropriate

- Last two days of practitioner progress notes (admission and concurrent)

- Current intravenous and subcutaneous medication lists

Before placement in a long-term acute care setting can be considered, BCN also requires that the member be assessed by three skilled nursing facilities affiliated with BCN, two of which must be facilities identified by BCN as accepting members who require higher levels of care such as ventilators. A determination must be made by these three facilities that they cannot provide the level of care the member needs. For information on higher-acuity skilled nursing facilities capable of doing these assessments, providers should call BCN at 1-855-724-4286, ext.122584.

Note: If the member was placed on a ventilator during an inpatient admission and failed to wean during the inpatient stay, the member can be assessed for appropriateness for the long-term acute level of care by applying the criteria for long-term acute care rather than the criteria for skilled nursing care.

For those members receiving long-term enteral or parenteral feedings in a home care setting, providers should complete the Nutrition Assessment/ Follow Up form every three months and fax it to BCN at 1-866-313-8433.

This form can be accessed at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Forms. It can also be found on BCN’s Forms page within Provider Secured Services.
Guidelines for transitional care

Process for approval and review by plan medical director

When a request is submitted, if all or part of the clinical information is provided within the required time frame, the following occurs:

- If the member meets the appropriate criteria, the provider receives an approval.
- If the member does not meet the criteria, the case is forwarded to a plan medical director for review. The BCN case manager notifies the provider that the case is pending review by a plan medical director and indicates the date by which a determination can be expected.
Emergency room and urgent care services

| Emergency care defined | BCN provides eligible members with coverage for emergency and urgent care services necessary to screen and stabilize their condition without precertification or primary care physician referral.

**Emergency care definitions:**

- **Medical emergency:** The sudden onset of a medical condition that manifests itself by signs and symptoms of sufficient severity, including severe pain, such that the absence of immediate medical attention could reasonably be expected to result in serious jeopardy to a member’s health or pregnancy (in the case of a pregnant woman), serious impairment to bodily functions or serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.

- **Accidental injury:** A traumatic injury that, if not immediately diagnosed and treated, could be expected to result in permanent damage to the member’s health.

BCN members should not be referred to emergency rooms or urgent care centers for services that can be performed in the primary care physician’s office during regular business hours or that do not meet emergency or urgent care definitions.

| Access to emergency and urgent care | Primary care physicians are responsible for providing on-call telephone service 24 hours a day, seven days a week for BCN members. With the exception of severe injuries and life-threatening medical emergencies, members should always contact their primary care physician for assistance before seeking medical treatment elsewhere. It is not necessary to submit a referral to BCN for urgent or emergency services.

For information about members who require care while traveling outside BCN’s service area, providers should refer to the Member Benefits chapter in this manual.

| Coordination of emergency and urgent care services | Members are encouraged to contact their primary care physician to assist in arranging urgent care services required after hours. It is not necessary to submit a referral to BCN for urgent or emergency services. Emergency and urgent care providers should send a written summary of the services provided and the treatment plan to the primary care physician within 30 days of the date of service.

| Emergency care requiring outpatient surgery | Facilities do not need to submit a referral request when the member is transferred directly to surgery or observation from the emergency room.

Note: The ER service (revenue code 450) must be billed on the same claim as the surgical service (for example, revenue codes 360 and 361) in order for the surgery to be paid without an authorization from BCN.
### Emergency room and urgent care services

| Excessive use of emergency services | All BCN members receive information on the appropriate use of emergency room services, as well as guidelines to follow when a situation does not require emergency care.  
Case managers address the unique needs of the high-volume ER user. The member is assessed and interventions are employed including interaction with the BCN Pharmacy Services department as well as the member and primary care physician. Members are educated regarding appropriate ER usage and follow up with the primary care physician is arranged as appropriate. In addition, members identified for case management services are sent a document with tips for appropriate ER usage.  
The case manager provides written communication to the practitioner regarding opportunities to assist the member and coordinate an appropriate plan of care. |
|---|---|
| After-hours care managers | BCN has care managers available after normal business hours Monday through Friday from 5 p.m. to 7 a.m. and on weekends and holidays, with 24-hour service to assist physicians and other providers.  
Providers should call 1-800-851-3904 and follow the prompts to reach a care manager for any of the following needs:  
• Determining alternatives to inpatient admissions and triaging members to alternate care settings  
• Arranging for emergency home health care, home infusion services and in-home pain control  
• Arranging for durable medical equipment  
• Coordinating and obtaining authorization for emergency discharge plans  
  Note: Precertifications for admission to skilled nursing facilities and other types of transitional care services should be called in during normal business hours unless there are extenuating circumstances that require emergency placement.  
• Expedited appeals of utilization management decisions  
Note: The dates on which BCN is closed for holidays are published in the *BCN Provider News*.  
The after-hours care manager phone number can also be used after normal business hours to discuss any urgent or emergency determinations with a plan medical director.  
This number should **not** be used to notify BCN of an admission for commercial or BCN Advantage members. Admission notification for these members should be done through the e-referral system. |
# Air ambulance services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicability of requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The requirements described in this section apply as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They apply only to BCN HMO (commercial) and Blue Cross PPO (commercial) members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They do not apply to BCN Advantage or to Blue Cross Medicare Plus Blue℠ PPO members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They apply to both in-state and out-of-state providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They apply seven days a week, 24 hours a day.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency air ambulance transports do not require authorization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency air ambulance transports do not require authorization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency transports are those that meet the following criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The flight is medically necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The patient cannot safely wait six hours to take off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Delays due to weather or stabilizing the patient are not counted as part of the six hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The flight will take the patient to the nearest acute care facility capable of providing the care necessary or to a capable facility within a 25-mile radius of the nearest facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providers transporting a member on an air ambulance flight that meets these emergency criteria should go ahead and fly the member and bill Blue Cross or BCN. The provider must keep the pertinent documentation on hand and must make it available in the event of an audit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-emergency air ambulance transports require authorization</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-emergency air ambulance transports require authorization from Alacura Medical Transport Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and other providers should submit authorization requests by taking the following steps:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Faxing a completed <a href="#">Air ambulance flight information (non-emergency) form</a>, along with clinical documentation in support of the request, to Alacura at 1-844-608-3572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Calling Alacura at 1-844-608-3676 to obtain the authorization number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorization requests should be submitted prior to the service being provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Providers calling PARS about an air ambulance transport will be given the Alacura number to call.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Air ambulance services

How Alacura handles authorization requests

When Alacura receives an authorization request for a non-emergency air ambulance transport, they take the following steps:

- Use web-DENIS to verify the member’s eligibility and confirm that the member has coverage for air ambulance services
- Let the provider requesting authorization know what the member’s benefits are, including any cost-sharing that applies, so that the member can be informed before the service is provided
- Request that the provider fax a completed Air ambulance flight information (non-emergency) form and any pertinent clinical information in support of the request, to them at 1-844-608-3572
- Review the request using the Blue Cross/BCN Air Ambulance Services medical policy
- Make a determination as to whether the request meets medical policy guidelines and:
  - Approve any request that clearly meets the guidelines
  - Contact Blue Cross/BCN Utilization Management staff about any request that does not clearly meet the guidelines
  Note: For requests referred to them, Blue Cross/BCN Utilization Management staff conduct a standard authorization review using medical policy guidelines, which includes an assessment of medical necessity that may involve a plan medical consultant.
- Document all information and any actions taken and send the information to Blue Cross/BCN Utilization Management staff

Notification of decisions on authorization requests

The provider requesting authorization for a non-emergency air ambulance transport is notified of the decision as follows:

- For requests that are approved, either Alacura or Blue Cross/BCN Utilization Management, as appropriate, informs the provider of the approval decision and sends a letter to both the provider and the member indicating the approval and the rationale for the decision.
  Note: For requests approved by Blue Cross/BCN Utilization Management, Alacura will be contacted to coordinate the transport.
- For requests that are denied, Blue Cross/BCN Utilization Management sends a letter to both the provider and the member indicating the denial and the rationale for the decision. The letter also describes the process for appealing the decision.

Case management referrals

Members covered through the UAW Retiree Medical Benefits Trust who have received an air ambulance transport are referred for case management services, as appropriate, for help in coordinating services to meet complex medical needs.
### Air ambulance services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Billing guidelines</th>
<th>Guidelines on billing air ambulance services are found in the Claims chapter of this manual, in the section titled “Other billing and payment guidelines.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other information</td>
<td>Providers can find a description of the air ambulance initiative in the document titled Air ambulance initiative: Description. This document is available at ereferrals.bcbsm.com &gt; BCN &gt; Authorization Requirements &amp; Criteria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A link to the Air ambulance initiative: Description document is added to this section.
## BCN case management activities

| BCN's case management program | BCN’s case management program helps manage health care resources for members with a variety of health care needs in multiple care settings. The program works with members who have complex or chronic illness and who exhibit high use of services or who are at risk for progression of illness. The program provides patient-focused, individualized case management for members who meet trigger criteria, including the following:
|                                | • Are dealing with an active complex or chronic disease process  
|                                | • Are at high risk for health complications, such as those that may result from medication compliance issues  
|                                | • Demonstrate high use of health care resources  
|                                | • Experience readmissions to an inpatient care setting  
|                                | Members with complex conditions who need coordination of care may be eligible for the case management services described in this section. Members with chronic conditions who require less coordination of care may be eligible for one of BCN’s chronic condition management programs. Information on the chronic condition management programs is found in the Health Education and Chronic Condition Management chapter of this manual. |}

| Case management direct referral sources | Typical case management referral sources include:  
|                                        | • BCN Customer Service  
|                                        | • BCN chronic condition management programs  
|                                        | • Completion of health assessments (for BCN Advantage members only)  
|                                        | • Employer groups  
|                                        | • Inpatient admissions  
|                                        | • Discharges from skilled nursing facilities and rehabilitation centers  
|                                        | • BCN Medication Therapy Management program (for BCN Advantage members only)  
|                                        | • 24-hour Nurse Advice Line  
|                                        | • Caregivers and members  
|                                        | • Practitioners and medical care groups  
|                                        | • Vendor partners  

| Predictive modeling indicators | In addition to the typical direct referral sources for case management, BCN uses a predictive modeling approach to prospectively identify members who might benefit from case management. Predictive modeling allows for assessment of the entire BCN population and identification of members who are most apt to experience high health care costs or disease complications in the absence of intervention. |
## BCN case management activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calling for case management services</th>
<th>Providers can contact BCN’s Case Management staff during normal business hours for any case management services at 1-800-943-9744.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case management team</td>
<td>The case management team is staffed by registered nurse case managers. Case managers receive extensive training in case management and many are certified in case management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Conditions addressed by case management services | Case management services are available for the following:  
• Asthma (for BCN commercial members only)  
• Catastrophic health event  
• Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease  
• Complex conditions  
• Diabetes  
• Heart failure  
• High-risk pregnancy  
• Ischemic heart disease  
• Kidney health management  
• Oncology  
• Pediatric care, including asthma, diabetes, heart failure and heart disease (for BCN commercial members only)  
• Transplants, including bone marrow, stem cell and solid organ  
A licensed medical social worker is also available to provide support to the member and to case managers in addressing the member’s psychosocial needs. |
| Tracking members using case management services | Providers can find information about members enrolled in case management programs via BCN Health e-Blue℠, the web-based clinical support tool that helps providers track the health of BCN members.  
Case managers may also call a provider about a member’s condition, such as when there is a significant change in health status, a compliance issue or any potential urgent or emergency situation that requires immediate attention. |
BCN case management activities

The case manager role

Case managers, in collaboration with the member’s treating practitioners, provide education and coordination of services in an effort to help the member achieve optimal health outcomes and prevent disease complications. The case manager contacts members by phone to perform an assessment of the member’s health care status. Goals are identified and interventions are implemented to support the practitioner’s treatment plan. The case manager provides personalized support and education on disease, nutrition, medication and managed care processes and also identifies and facilitates access to benefits and resources available to prevent complications and progression of disease.

The case manager coordinates care with the treating practitioner and offers suggestions to practitioners for member management. Timely communication with the treating practitioner is essential in the performance of case management activities. Ongoing communication is based on changes in the member’s condition or identified needs.

The case manager may contact the treating practitioner, and talk with the plan medical director, as necessary, in the following circumstances:

- When there are significant changes in the member’s health status
- When intervention on the part of the treating practitioner is thought to be necessary
- When the member uses emergency room services or is admitted for inpatient care
- To review the member’s progress at various intervals in the case management process
- To obtain the health information necessary to ensure the highest quality of care
- To notify the treating practitioner about a member who has not been compliant with the recommended plan of care
- To notify the treating practitioner of a member who was in the complex case management program but who refuses further intervention prior to goals being met

To contact a case manager or to provide comments and feedback regarding case management services, providers should call 1-800-943-9744 during normal business hours.
BCN case management activities

Possible referral for 2nd.MD consultation

For complex cases, the case manager, in conjunction with a plan medical director, may refer the member to 2nd.MD for an expert medical consultation. 2nd.MD is a vendor with access to medical experts in various specialties on a nationwide basis. The 2nd.MD consultation helps the plan ensure that the member is receiving the best care possible and that all treatment options are considered.

This service can be requested for BCN HMO (commercial) and BCN Advantage members and for Blue Cross PPO (commercial) and Blue Cross Medicare Plus BlueSM PPO members as well.

Note: 2nd.MD consultations may be requested only for members with fully insured coverage. 2nd.MD consultations are not available for members with coverage through self-insured plans.

When the member is referred, the medical director contacts the member’s treating physician to discuss the case and to advise that a referral to 2nd.MD has been made. The case manager sends the provider a Notice of 2nd.MD consultation request. The member is notified as well.

2nd.MD contacts all the member’s treating physicians to obtain the member’s medical records.

Once the 2nd.MD consultation is available, a copy of it is provided to the treating physician and the member. Neither the treating physician nor the member is obligated to follow the recommendations made by 2nd.MD.

Information is added showing that the case manager, in conjunction with a plan medical director, may obtain a consultation from 2nd.MD for members with complex cases.

BCN’s social worker

A licensed medical social worker is available to help practitioners locate community resources for members. For members who have complex family situations, a social worker is available to develop a plan addressing the member’s psychosocial needs. For more information, providers should call BCN’s Case Management staff at 1-800-943-9744 during normal business hours.
BCN case management activities

What practitioners can expect from case management

Case managers recognize the provider’s right to:

- Obtain information about BCN’s case management programs and staff, including staff qualifications, with which the provider’s members are involved
- Be informed about how BCN coordinates case management activities, interventions and treatment plans
- Be supported by the case manager in making decisions interactively with members regarding member health care needs
- Receive courteous and respectful treatment from the case management staff
- Communicate a complaint to the case manager or to BCN’s Case Management staff and receive appropriate follow up on the complaint
- Know how to contact the person responsible for managing and communicating with the provider’s patients

Note: Case managers may receive requests for services specifically excluded from the member’s benefit package. BCN does not make exceptions to member benefits, which are defined by the limits and exclusions outlined by the individual member’s certificate and riders. In these situations, BCN case managers inform the member about alternative resources for continuing care and how to obtain care, as appropriate, when a service is not covered or when coverage ends.

Renal management

A number of BCN-contracted nephrologists participate as renal management practitioners. The renal management practitioner has the responsibility of providing and arranging care for their members, as well as issuing referrals for non-ESRD services as necessary. BCN encourages members with ESRD to select a renal management practitioner to act as their primary care physician. Members who do not choose a renal management practitioner can continue to access their internal medicine physician, pediatrician or family practice physician for services within the scope of the practitioner’s practice. Primary care physicians receive fee-for-service for these members, and members in the renal program are not included in the practitioner’s eligibility data files. The practitioner no longer receives a capitation reimbursement for these members. In addition, the renal management practitioner and primary care physician may refer members with ESRD to specialists for service without a referral if the services do not require authorization.

Authorization is not required for dialysis services with BCN-contracted providers. Requests for dialysis services provided by noncontracted providers, however, must be submitted to BCN’s Utilization Management department prior to the initiation of the services. Providers should consult the online provider search (available at bcbsm.com/find-a-doctor) or contact BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512 to confirm the status of dialysis providers.
BCN case management activities

AMC Health monitors members with CHF and COPD

BCN partners with AMC Health to manage high-risk BCN commercial and BCN Advantage members with congestive heart failure and BCN Advantage members with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

The goals for these high-risk populations are to promote optimal health status and quality of life and reduce the number of avoidable admissions, readmissions and emergency room visits related to their conditions.

The key features of this program include:

• Home biometric monitoring for blood pressure, weight and oxygen saturation using remote monitoring technology

• Nurse review of symptom information 365 days a year and comparison of this information to preset parameters for each member

• Notification to the member’s practitioner by fax when the member’s symptoms exceed the preset parameters

The member’s biometric information is communicated to AMC Health through a remote monitoring device. If AMC Health does not receive any alerts about changes in the member’s symptoms, AMC Health simply sets up a regular schedule of educational sessions with the member. When AMC Health receives an alert, AMC Health calls and engages the member in a one-on-one assessment discussion about what’s going on. AMC Health lets the member’s primary care physician know about any concerning changes in the member’s condition that are being transmitted.

AMC Health’s biometric monitoring provides the treating practitioner with timely alerts about changes in the member’s symptoms while the members are at home. Through its monitoring activities, AMC Health also gathers data from individual members’ responses to tailored questions that are based on each member’s specific plan of care.

BCN identifies members eligible for in-home biometric monitoring through a predictive model database using claims and demographic data. Once a member is identified, AMC Health contacts the member directly. AMC Health notifies the member’s primary care physician when the member agrees to enroll in the program.

Practitioners can refer members for AMC Health monitoring by calling BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512.
Coordination of care

Expectation that information is shared with primary care physician

As part of BCN’s continuing commitment to ensure that members receive the highest quality and safest care possible, specialists, including OB/GYNs and behavioral health practitioners, are expected to share members’ clinical information with members’ primary care physicians.

BCN medical record and National Committee for Quality Assurance standards require evidence of continuity and coordination of care. In addition, provider contracts specify that the specialist’s timely communication with the referring practitioner is essential to effectively manage the member’s care. This requires providing information to the member’s primary care physician about the episodes of care provided in different settings. Documentation should be sent to and received by the primary care physician within 30 days of service.

Note: Behavioral health specialists should refer to the Behavioral Health chapter of this manual for information on the laws governing what information can be shared and what consents are required. Look in the “Coordination of care”

Coordination of medical and behavioral health care needs

Members with potential coexisting medical and behavioral health care needs are identified through clinical case management and medical management activities. A process is in place to ensure concise communication among the medical and behavioral health teams and the member’s practitioners, to coordinate the member’s care.

The practitioner is encouraged to discuss potential concerns with the member (prior to discharge, if inpatient), if indicated, and offer the member the phone number of the BCN Behavioral Health department.

Members can contact the BCN Behavioral Health department at the number listed on their ID card or arrange for behavioral health services or can contact a BCN-affiliated behavioral health provider directly.

Depression screening tools

Depression screening is conducted by BCN nurses periodically during member contacts. For members identified to be at risk for depression, the nurse sends a BCN-approved Depression Screening tool from the Center for Epidemiological Studies – Depression to the primary care physician. The form should be placed in the member’s medical record for use at the member’s next visit.

Depression screening tools can be accessed by visiting bcbsm.com/providers, logging in to Provider Secured Services and clicking BCN Provider Publications and Resources > Forms.
# Continuity of care

**Written notification required within 15 days for continuity of care**

Continuity of care services are available for the following members:

- Existing BCN members whose primary care physician, specialist or behavioral health provider voluntarily or involuntarily disaffiliates from BCN
- New BCN members who require an ongoing course of treatment

Members cannot see their current practitioner if that practitioner was terminated from BCN for quality reasons. In this instance, the member must receive treatment from an in-network practitioner.

BCN provides notification to members within 15 days after learning of the effective date of the practitioner’s termination.

**Appropriate notification permits members to continue treatment, with constraints**

BCN permits the member to continue treatment in the situations described in the subsection “Continuity of care available for certain situations,” when the disaffiliated practitioner:

- Continues to accept as payment in full reimbursement from BCN at rates applicable prior to the termination
- Adheres to BCN standards for maintaining quality health care and provides the necessary medical information related to the member’s care
- Adheres to BCN policies and procedures regarding referral and authorization requirements
Primary care physicians may provide continuity of care for a member in the situations described in the table below. Specialists may provide continuity of care for a member receiving an ongoing course of treatment in the situations described in this table.

Note: An ongoing course of treatment is one in which a disruption of the current course of treatment could cause a recurrence or worsening of the condition under treatment and interfere with anticipated outcomes. Some examples of an ongoing course of treatment include:

- Postsurgical care
- An acute episode of a chronic illness
- An acute medical condition
- Behavioral health services for an acute exacerbation of a chronic psychiatric condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Length of continuity of care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General care</td>
<td>90 days after the date of the practitioner notification to the member of the practitioner’s disaffiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>Through postpartum care directly related to the pregnancy, if the member is in the second or third trimester of pregnancy at the time of the practitioner’s disaffiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal illness</td>
<td>For the remainder of the member’s life for treatment directly related to the terminal illness, if the member was being treated for terminal illness prior to the practitioner’s disaffiliation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disaffiliating practitioners must notify both BCN and their BCN members of their intention to disaffiliate.

A disaffiliating practitioner who would like to offer a member continuity of care in accordance with BCN’s conditions of payment and BCN policies must notify both BCN and the member.

Practitioners may contact BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512 to arrange for continuity of care services.

Members should contact Customer Service by calling the number on the back of their ID card.

A nurse provides written notification of continuity of care decisions to the member and practitioner.

Newly enrolled members must select a primary care physician before requesting continuity of care services. The request for continuity of care services must be made within the first 90 days of enrollment.
BCN — a resource for physicians

BCN as a resource for physicians: overview
Plan medical directors and other clinical staff work with affiliated practitioners and providers to ensure appropriate care and service for BCN members. Plan medical directors and BCN’s Utilization Management staff are available throughout the state.

BCN’s medical directors are a resource
Medical directors at the BCN corporate offices in Southfield:
• Provide clinical support for utilization management activities, including investigation and adjudication of individual cases
• Assist in the design, development, implementation and assessment of clinical protocols, practice guidelines and criteria that support the appropriate use of clinical resources
• Adjudicate provider appeals

Medical directors in the local service areas (East, Mid, Southeast, West and Upper Peninsula):
• Work with physicians and other health care providers to improve performance with regard to clinical outcomes, appropriate use of clinical resources, access to services, effectiveness of care and costs
• Serve as a liaison with the physician community in each of the BCN service areas
• Adjudicate provider appeals

How to contact a medical director
Plan medical directors are available in BCN’s local service areas to discuss specific cases involving BCN members, as follows:
• To discuss medical services for a specific BCN HMO (commercial) case, providers may call BCN’s Utilization Management department at 248-799-6312 to reach a medical director to discuss a case.
• To discuss medical services for a specific BCN Advantage case, refer to the BCN Advantage chapter of this manual. Look in the section titled “BCN Advantage member appeals,” in the “Who may file a member appeal” subsection.
• For decisions on pharmacy services for BCN HMO (commercial) members, refer to the Pharmacy chapter of this manual. Look in the section titled “Appealing pharmacy decisions.”
• For decisions on pharmacy services for BCN Advantage members, refer to the BCNA chapter of this manual. Look in the section titled “BCN Advantage member appeals,” in the “Who may file a member appeal” subsection.

Information is added that clarifies how to contact a medical director to discuss a case.
### BCN — a resource for physicians

#### Role of BCN clinical review coordinators
Clinical review coordinators are nurses who review select elective inpatient, outpatient, out-of-network and ancillary authorization requests in addition to assisting in the coordination of care through the health care continuum. In conjunction with the medical director, the clinical review coordinators utilize jointly developed Blue Cross/BCN medical policy, member benefit certificates, applicable riders, and InterQual criteria when reviewing requests. Clinical review coordinators can be reached at 1-800-392-2512.

#### 24-hour Nurse Advice Line available to members
The Nurse Advice Line is telephone-based, toll-free, confidential service available to members 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service is available to members who have BCN HMO (commercial), BCN Advantage, BCN 65 and MyBlue Medigap coverage.

Members can call 1-855-624-5214 to get a nurse’s help in assessing their symptoms and determining the most appropriate level of care. (TTY users should call 711.)

With the consent of the member, the nurse may communicate the details of a call to the member’s practitioner or case manager.

The Nurse Advice Line does not take the place of the member’s relationship with his or her practitioner. Instead, the service is intended to complement the relationship by offering an opportunity for members to talk to a health care professional when their practitioner is not readily available or when they have additional questions after a practitioner visit, especially when the questions arise late at night or on weekends. The service is also intended to help members avoid the unnecessary use of emergency services and related cost-sharing responsibilities. In some instances, the nurse places follow-up calls to the member, when self-care was recommended.

After conferring with a Nurse Advice Line nurse, it remains the caller’s responsibility to seek medical care. Practitioners continue to be responsible for managing the care of the members who contact their office, clinic or hospital.
New technology assessment

In order to keep pace with change and to assure that members have access to safe and effective care, BCN has a formal committee process to evaluate and address developments in medical technology. The Joint Uniform Medical Policy Committee evaluates new technologies as well as new uses of existing technologies. The JUMP Committee conducts a comprehensive assessment using the following resources, as indicated:

• Food and Drug Administration status on drugs or devices
• Peer reviews of medical literature
• Published scientific evidence
• Information from the treating physician and the primary care physician
• Status on the procedure with other organizations, including as appropriate, representative Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans
• Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association medical policy
• National Cancer Institute
• National Institutes of Health
• National Medicare coverage decisions
• Medicare intermediaries and carriers
• Federal and state Medicaid coverage decisions
• Specialty consultant panel

A provider may request committee review of a new technology by contacting BCN’s Utilization Management medical policy staff at 1-800-392-2512.

Experimental treatment

BCN has a formal process for evaluating medical necessity requests and coverage decisions for experimental treatment, procedures, drugs or devices. BCN’s process includes compiling information from various sources. (Providers may refer to the list in the “New technology assessment” subsection earlier in this chapter.) BCN communicates all determinations in writing, with detailed information on members’ right to appeal if a requested service is not authorized. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that appropriate professionals participate in the evaluation process.
Utilization management decisions

**Appropriate professionals**  

BCN continues to demonstrate its commitment to a fair and thorough utilization decision process by working collaboratively with its participating physicians.

A plan medical director reviews all medical necessity determinations that cannot be approved through the application of decision criteria by BCN Utilization Management nurses. It may be necessary for the plan medical director to contact physicians for additional information about their patients to assist in making a determination.

Providers are encouraged to discuss any decision with a plan medical director by contacting BCN’s Utilization Management department at 248-799-6312 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays. To contact a plan medical director after normal business hours, call 1-800-851-3904. This applies to medical services only (not pharmacy services) for BCN HMO (commercial) members.

When a service request is denied for a BCN HMO (commercial) member, written notification is sent to the requesting physician, primary care physician, facility, if applicable, and member. The notification includes the reason(s) the service was denied as well as the phone number to use in contacting a plan medical director to discuss the decision and the process for filing an appeal. When urgent or concurrent services are denied, BCN also provides initial verbal notification to the facility and the primary care and attending physicians within 72 hours of receipt of the request.

Note: For information on the BCN Advantage utilization management process, refer to the BCN Advantage chapter of this manual; look in the section titled “BCN Advantage utilization management program.”

A psychiatrist, a doctoral-level clinical psychologist or a certified addiction medicine specialist reviews all denials for behavioral health or substance abuse that are based on medical necessity. To discuss a behavioral health determination for a BCN member, providers should call 734-332-2567.

*The information in the “Appropriate professionals” subsection is updated and clarified.*
Utilization management decisions

BCN’s Utilization Management staff conduct timely reviews of all requests for service, by the type of service requested.

The time frames for decisions on BCN Advantage requests are found in the BCN Advantage chapter of this manual. Look in the section titled “BCN Advantage Utilization Management program,” in the subsection titled “Standard time frames for BCN Advantage decisions.”

The time frames for decisions on BCN HMO (commercial) requests are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of request</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Initial notification</th>
<th>Written notification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservice urgent with information*</td>
<td>Within 24 hours of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 24 hours of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 3 days of receipt of request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservice urgent without information**</td>
<td>Within 3 days of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 3 days of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 3 days of initial notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgent concurrent*</td>
<td>Within 24 hours of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 24 hours of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 3 days of receipt of request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservice concurrent</td>
<td>Within 3 days of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 3 days of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 3 days of initial notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservice nonurgent*</td>
<td>Within 14 days of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 14 days of receipt of request</td>
<td>Within 14 days of receipt of request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postservice*</td>
<td>Within 30 days of receipt of request</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Within 30 days of receipt of request</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These time frames apply when all required information is received at the time of the initial request. See the subsection “Request for an extension of the standard time frames” for additional information.

**These time frames apply when all required information is not received at the time of the initial request.

For preservice nonurgent and postservice requests, an extension of the standard time frames is allowed if BCN needs more information to make a decision.

For these requests, an extension of up to 14 days is allowed. BCN notifies the provider and the member in writing about the specific information required to make the decision. BCN gives the member or the provider acting on behalf of the member a minimum of 45 days within which to provide the information required.

The extension period after which a decision must be made by BCN begins on either of the following:

- The date on which the complete information is received by BCN
- The end of the 45 days allowed for the information to be provided, if an incomplete response or no response is received
## Utilization management decisions

### Final decision and written notification on requests for which extensions have been granted

For all requests for which extensions have been granted, depending on the information received, BCN makes a final decision as follows:

- When the requested information is received within the 45-day period allowed, BCN makes a decision and sends written notification within 14 days of receipt of the information.
- If an incomplete response or no response is received, BCN makes a final decision and sends written notification when the 45-day period expires.

Approvals can be viewed by the provider on e-referral.

### Members held harmless

In accordance with their affiliation agreement, providers may not seek payment from members for elective services that have not been approved by BCN unless the member is informed in advance regarding his or her payment responsibility. Some of the circumstances in which members are held harmless for denied covered services include:

- Urgent or emergency admission denials
- Partial denial of a hospital stay
- Requests for elective services provided by contracted providers that require authorization but were not forwarded to BCN’s Utilization Management department prior to the service being provided
- Denials issued for postservice requests for services provided by contracted providers when the information submitted is not substantiated in the medical record

### Members at risk

In certain instances, members are held at financial risk for denied services. These instances occur when:

- The member’s primary care physician or specialist did not provide a referral.
- The member’s contract was not in effect on the date of service.
- The member refuses to leave an inpatient setting after the attending physician has discharged the member.
- A denial has been issued for precertified services.
- Services are provided that are not a covered benefit under the member’s certificate.
- Services are provided at a noncontracted facility.
## Utilization management decisions

| **Quality initiatives** | The BCN’s Utilization Management staff undertakes numerous initiatives to facilitate the provision of care to BCN members. One of these initiatives is to identify the number of members who are hospitalized with an acute myocardial infarction and who are prescribed a beta blocker at discharge. Clinical research indicates that appropriate use of beta blocker therapy can reduce mortality in these members and that therapy should be continued for life. Occasionally, BCN’s clinical staff may contact the primary care physician or cardiologist to obtain beta blocker information. BCN members and their providers may also receive informational mailings following discharges from admissions for selected diagnoses or procedures. Examples of these mailings include mailings encouraging members to receive a postpartum checkup at some point from the 21st through the 56th day after delivery. |
| **Medical records requests** | Medical records may be requested to make a medical management decision or to investigate potential quality concerns. The member’s contract allows BCN to review all medical records. BCN must receive all records within 10 days of the request. Providers cannot charge a copying fee for medical records requested by BCN. |
Appealing utilization management decisions

Appealing BCN’s decision

Denials of care related to medical necessity or medical appropriateness are made by plan medical directors and are based on:

- Review of pertinent medical information
- Consideration of the member’s benefit coverage
- Information from the attending physician and primary care physician
- Clinical judgment of the medical director

All providers have the right to appeal an adverse decision made by BCN’s Utilization Management staff. The two-step appeal process is designed to be objective, thorough, fair and timely.

At any step in the appeal process, a plan medical director may obtain the opinion of a same-specialty, board-certified physician or an external review board.

When a provider appeal request is received and a member appeal or grievance is in process, the member appeal or grievance takes precedence. When the member process is complete, the decision is considered to be final and the provider appeal request is not processed.
### Filing deadlines for provider appeal requests

The table that follows outlines the filing deadlines for provider appeal requests.

#### Filing deadlines for provider appeal requests

| Expedited appeals | May be requested by a practitioner when circumstances require that a decision be made in a short period of time because a delay in making the decision may seriously jeopardize the life or health of the member. Retrospective appeals (when service has already been provided to the member) will not be considered for an expedited appeal. Requests for expedited appeals may be initiated verbally for decisions regarding precertification of urgent care and concurrent cases that result in denial. BCN notifies the provider of the decision within 72 hours of receiving the request. An expedited appeal can be initiated by calling a plan medical director or designee at 248-799-6312. This decision is final and no other appeal option is available to the provider. |
| Level One appeals | Must be submitted to BCN within 45 calendar days of the date noted on the written denial notification. Requests are to be in writing and must include additional clarifying clinical information to support the request. BCN notifies the provider of the decision within 30 calendar days of receiving all necessary information. Mail appeal requests to: Utilization Management — Provider Appeals, Mail Code C336 Blue Care Network P.O. Box 5043 Southfield, MI 48076-5043 |
| Level Two appeals | Must be submitted to BCN within 21 calendar days of the date noted on the Level One appeal decision notification. Level Two appeal requests must be submitted in writing and must contain at least one of the following:  
  - New or clarifying clinical information  
  or  
  - A clear statement that the provider is requesting a BCN physician reviewer different from the one who reviewed the Level One appeal  
If neither the clinical information nor the request for a different physician reviewer is included, BCN is not obligated to review the Level Two appeal request.  
All Level Two requests should be sent to the same address to which Level One appeal requests are sent.  
BCN notifies the provider of the decision within 45 calendar days of receiving all the necessary information. This decision is final. |

**Note:** If an appeal request is received by BCN outside the designated time frame, BCN is not obligated to review the case. A letter is sent to the requesting provider either advising that the appeal was not reviewed or notifying the physician of the outcome of the request if the plan has chosen to review the case.
Administrative denials

Administrative denials are determinations made by BCN in accordance with administrative policies and procedures and/or contract language. These determinations are not based on medical necessity or appropriateness. Administrative denials can be issued by BCN with or without review by a plan medical director. Examples of situations likely to result in administrative denials include but are not limited to:

• Provider noncompliance with authorization requirements for elective procedures requiring BCN approval
• Provider noncompliance with providing clinical information needed to make a decision for inpatient admissions within 48 hours of BCN’s request

The administrative determination appeal process affords providers and practitioners one level of appeal for BCN’s Utilization Management department determinations related to administrative denials.

Appealing administrative denials

Administrative appeal requests must be submitted to BCN within 45 calendar days of the provider’s receipt of the denial decision. Documentation submitted must include a written appeal request along with the rationale and supporting documentation, if applicable, related to the denial and any other information pertinent to the request. BCN notifies the provider of the decision within 30 calendar days of receiving all necessary information.

Providers should mail appeal requests to:

Utilization Management — Provider Appeals, Mail Code C336
Blue Care Network
P.O. Box 5043
Southfield, MI 48076-5043

The decision regarding the administrative determination appeal process is final. If the administrative denial is overturned but a denial determination is subsequently made in accordance with BCN criteria, the provider is eligible to appeal through the clinical determination appeal process described on the previous page.
Medical supplies, durable medical equipment, prosthetics and orthotics

| BCN uses J&B Medical Supply for outpatient diabetic supplies | BCN contracts with J&B Medical Supply to provide outpatient diabetic supplies for BCN members statewide.  
Exception: Diabetic shoes and inserts are handled through Northwood, Inc.  
To locate the nearest provider affiliated with J&B Medical Supply, providers should call J&B Medical Supply at 1-888-896-6233.  
Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. On-call associates are available after normal business hours at 1-888-896-6233. |
|---|---|
| BCN uses Northwood, Inc. for outpatient DME and P&O services | BCN contracts with Northwood, Inc. to provide outpatient home durable medical equipment, as well as prosthetic and orthotic appliances for BCN members statewide.  
Note: As a rule, Northwood provides nondiabetic outpatient medical items.  
Exception: Northwood provides diabetic shoes and inserts.  
To locate the nearest provider affiliated with Northwood, providers should contact Northwood’s customer service department at 1-800-393-6432 to identify a contracted supplier. The supplier submits the request to Northwood for review.  
Representatives are available from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. On-call associates are available after normal business hours at 1-800-393-6432. |
### Medical supplies, durable medical equipment, prosthetics and orthotics

#### Primary care physician initiates services

The primary care physician is responsible for:

- Determining the member’s need for medical supplies or DME and P&O services
- Issuing a prescription for the equipment or services and instructing the member to have the prescription filled at a provider affiliated with J&B Medical Supply (for diabetic supplies, not including diabetic shoes and inserts) or Northwood (for outpatient DME and P&O).
- Contacting the vendor and requesting services as follows:
  - For diabetic supplies contact J&B Medical Supply at 1-888-896-6233. Exception: Diabetic shoes and inserts are handled through Northwood.
  - For outpatient DME and P&O, contact Northwood’s customer service department at 1-800-393-6432 to identify a contracted supplier. The supplier submits the request to Northwood for review.

Note: As a rule, Northwood provides nondiabetic outpatient medical items. Exception: Northwood provides diabetic shoes and inserts.

The vendor verifies the member’s benefits and either refers the member to a network provider in the member’s geographic area or otherwise fills the request.

Note: A specialist may also directly contact the vendor when the primary care physician has referred the member to that specialist.

#### Covered supplies and equipment provided

Northwood and J&B Medical Supply follow BCN benefit criteria. BCN’s clinical review staff reviews all requests that Northwood or J&B Medical Supply determine do not meet criteria and provides written notification to the provider and member if the service cannot be approved.

Coverage is provided for basic supplies, equipment or appliances and for any medically necessary features prescribed by the primary care physician.

Members who have coverage for basic items only but wish to receive items deemed deluxe may pay the difference between the deluxe item charge and the charges covered under their benefit. For requests that exceed the basic benefit and quantity limitations, the primary care physician may need to document medical necessity. These requests are reviewed individually.

#### Wound care

BCN’s home care policy covers wound care supplies if ordered by a physician in conjunction with skilled nursing visits in the home. Providers may contact Northwood for the physician-ordered supplies necessary to provide wound care. The member’s BCN case manager can answer questions related to wound care supplies.
Medical supplies, durable medical equipment, prosthetics and orthotics

Outpatient and inpatient settings

In general, medical supplies and durable medical equipment are only covered when appropriate for use outside of a hospital, skilled nursing facility or hospice program setting. The following guidelines apply to inpatient settings:

• For members in a hospital, skilled nursing facility or hospice program, neither J&B Medical Supply nor Northwood provides supplies or equipment.

• For members who are receiving custodial or basic care (not skilled care) in an extended care facility, the facility must contact J&B Medical or Northwood to arrange for supplies or equipment.

  Note: When calling Northood, contact their customer service department at 1-800-393-6432 to identify a contracted supplier. The supplier submits the request to Northwood for review.

Providers can contact BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512 and follow the prompts for case management for questions regarding medical supplies or DME and P&O services or to coordinate these services.

Servicing equipment

Northwood and J&B Medical Supply are accountable for servicing equipment to BCN members in their home. This also applies to members receiving custodial or basic care in an extended care facility (not skilled care).

Hospital or ancillary providers must contact Northwood or J&B Medical Supply prior to dispensing supplies and equipment for in-home use. Otherwise, liability for costs may reside with the provider.
## Outpatient laboratory services

**BCN uses JVHL for outpatient laboratory services**

Joint Venture Hospital Laboratories is BCN’s contracted provider for outpatient laboratory services. The entire laboratory procedure, from taking the specimen to conducting the test, may be done at a JVHL network laboratory or patient service center. Physicians may also choose to draw blood and send the specimen to a JVHL network laboratory.

Refer to “BCN in-office laboratory billable procedures” in the Claims chapter of this manual for a description of laboratory services that can be performed by BCN providers in their office.

JVHL is also contracted to conduct in-home laboratory services when the member does not have a skilled need. JVHL coordinates home draw services with the appropriate JVHL hospital. Providers should be sure to allow 24 to 48 hours’ advanced notice for routine home draws. STAT draws are available when medically necessary.

**JVHL network information**

Providers should call the JVHL administrative offices at 1-800-445-4979 for assistance with the following:

- Identifying a JVHL network laboratory to service a practice
- Locating the nearest patient service center
- Following up if a member receives a bill for laboratory services
- Arranging for in-home laboratory services for a member who does not have a skilled services need
- Providing clinical review for genetic testing authorization requests

**Test results**

**Routine lab reports:**

- JVHL issues test results within 24 hours for most routine testing.
- Test results are distributed via U.S. mail, courier, fax or electronic transmission depending on the provider’s specific arrangement.

**Critical test results:**

The physician is contacted directly by JVHL immediately upon the availability of a critical result.

**STAT test results:**

The physician’s office is contacted directly by JVHL with all STAT results within four hours of initial telephone contact or within three hours of receipt of the specimen by the laboratory.

**Confirmation and questions**

Any test-related questions or requests for result confirmation should be directed to JVHL.

**Forms and supplies**

JVHL provides all required forms and laboratory supplies.
Outpatient laboratory services

In-office tests

Although JVHL is BCN’s statewide laboratory vendor, BCN recognizes that physicians should be able to perform specific procedures in their offices to promote the continuity of patient care. See the section titled “BCN in-office laboratory billable procedures” in the Claims chapter of this manual for a list of the lab procedures that physicians are authorized to conduct and bill for in their offices. The list includes lab services that both primary care physicians and specialists can perform in the office, as well as those procedures only specialists are allowed to perform.
Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors

BCN uses eviCore healthcare for management of physical, occupational and speech therapy services provided by therapists and physical medicine services provided by chiropractors

BCN is contracted with eviCore healthcare to provide utilization management for members receiving physical, occupational and speech therapy services in office and outpatient settings, including outpatient hospital settings.

eviCore also manages physical medicine services provided by BCN-contracted chiropractors for BCN HMO (commercial) members, using select *97XXX procedure codes.

Under their agreement, BCN and eviCore collaborate to establish evidence-based clinical practice standards that help ensure the best possible outcomes for members.

eviCore is responsible for authorizing therapy or physical medicine services and managing the benefit limits for physical, occupational and speech therapy services provided by therapists and physical medicine services provided by chiropractors.

Note: eviCore does not handle authorization requests for physical, occupational and speech therapy services related to autism spectrum disorders. These requests pay without a referral if billed by a BCN-contracted provider with an autism diagnosis code.

BCN’s Utilization Management department reviews requests for the treatment of autism and related disorders and all requests for treatment by noncontracted providers. With some exceptions, physical, occupational and speech therapy services used as part of the autism benefit do not count toward the number of medical rehabilitation visits or day limits for these therapies.

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Monitoring and reporting on utilization

eviCore monitors the compliance of each therapist and chiropractor with evidence-based practice standards and compares this performance to BCN peer performance standards. eviCore uses these data to work with therapists and chiropractors to increase the use of efficient best practice patterns, as appropriate.

Note: eviCore reports utilization data to physical therapists (only) on a regular basis in the form of Provider Performance Summary reports. Physical therapists can also access this information at www.evicore.com at any time through the secure provider portal.
Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors

Accessing patient information using eviCore’s secure provider portal

A user identification number and password is required to access patient information using eviCore’s secure provider portal. Providers can apply for access in one of the following ways:

- Online, at www.LMhealthcare.com > Click Here > Landmark Connect (in the Providers section) > Register
- By calling eviCore at 1-877-531-9139

Overview: How the referral and authorization process works

* Global referral is required only when the member is from the East or Southeast region or has a plan with a designated provider network the chiropractor or specialist does not belong to. Otherwise, the chiropractor or specialist can initiate the authorization request with the primary care physician’s approval.
Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors

Global referrals for office visits

Global referrals are not issued directly to therapists. However, they are required for chiropractors or MD/DO specialists in the following instances:

- When the member is from the East or Southeast region
  Note: Global referrals are not required for members outside the East and Southeast regions.
- When the member has a plan with a designated provider network the chiropractor or MD/DO specialist does not belong to

With a global referral:

- The chiropractor can request authorizations for physical medicine services and/or manipulations without having to re-contact the primary care physician.
- The MD/DO specialist can write a prescription for the patient to take to the therapist who, in turn, can request authorization for therapy without having to re-contact the primary care physician.

Writing the prescription for a therapist

When referring a member for physical, occupational or speech therapy from a therapist, the referring physician may write the prescription for “evaluate and treat.” Writing the prescription for “evaluate and treat” allows the therapist the latitude needed to plan upcoming visits in line with the progress the member makes.

Writing the prescription in this way allows the treating therapist to work with the member in establishing a treatment plan based on both medical necessity and the member’s anticipated response to treatment over a period of time. The treatment plan should include the proposed frequency and duration necessary to reach the expected outcomes.
Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors

Providers who request authorization for therapy or physical medicine services must follow the process described here.

The therapist, the chiropractor performing physical medicine services or the referring physician submits an authorization request for an episode of care via the e-referral system or by calling BCN. Therapists must request one evaluation and one treatment; chiropractors must request one treatment only.

Note: The therapist or chiropractor may enter an authorization request for an episode of care with approval from the physician’s office. In the e-referral system, the therapist or chiropractor enters the name of the physician in the Requesting Provider field. The need for later revisions is decreased when the therapist or chiropractor enters the authorization request with the correct location, start date, end date (60 days after the start date), therapy discipline and treatment diagnosis.

Separate authorization requests must be submitted for each type of treatment the member needs — physical, occupational and speech therapy from a therapist or physical medicine services from a chiropractor — and for each new episode of care.

Note: Authorization requests submitted by chiropractors for physical medicine services (*97XXX procedure codes) must be separate from authorization requests submitted for manipulation services.

A request for the approval of the evaluation and first treatment visit (for occupational and physical therapy), the first treatment visit (for physical medicine services provided by chiropractors) and the evaluation only (for speech therapy) must be submitted to BCN through the e-referral system or by calling BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512.

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(continued on next page)
To save time and avoid delays or pends, therapists and chiropractors should submit the initial authorization requests with the correct codes, as follows:

- **Physical therapy (physical therapists):**
  - Service 1: *97110 for treatment
  - Service 2: *97161, *97162 or *97163 for evaluation (These codes cannot be used by chiropractors.)

- **Occupational therapy:**
  - Service 1: *97535 for treatment
  - Service 2: *97165, *97166 or *97167 for evaluation

- **Speech therapy:**
  - Service 1: *92521 through *92524, for evaluation
  - Do not enter Service 2.

- **Physical medicine services (chiropractors):**
  - Service 1: *97110 for treatment
  - Do not enter Service 2.

In addition, therapists and chiropractors who practice within a group should select the practitioner’s ID that is affiliated with that group. For detailed information about this, refer to the article “Therapists and physical medicine providers in a group practice should select correct providers in electronic systems,” in the July-August 2016 BCN Provider News.

BCN’s Utilization Management department will route the member’s case to eviCore. The therapist or chiropractor can view the number of visits authorized on eviCore’s secure provider portal. (The therapist or chiropractor and the referring physician can view them on the e-referral system, once it has been updated with the information).

The total number of visits may be authorized at one time, or additional visits may be authorized as needed. The referring physician does not need to be involved in this process.

To register for eviCore’s secure provider portal, providers should visit [www.LMhealthcare.com](http://www.LMhealthcare.com) > Click Here > Landmark Connect (in the Providers section) > Register.

eviCore works with the therapy provider to ensure that the member receives medically necessary treatment.

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Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors

For additional services after the evaluation, therapists and chiropractors must obtain treatment plan authorization from eviCore according to the guidelines that apply for the type of service to be provided. The guidelines are outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical therapy services provided by physical therapists</th>
<th>Physical medicine services provided by chiropractors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eviCore assigns physical therapists as Category A, B or C providers based on their utilization of therapy. Utilization category assignments are based on the claims data reported for each provider and on an understanding of the best practices in the field. Physical therapists’ utilization category assignments are reviewed every six months, based on the most recent paid claims data.</td>
<td>For chiropractors, the requirement for treatment plan authorization of physical medicine services is waived through the sixth treatment visit. This waiver is available for the member’s first covered condition in a calendar year. Treatment plan authorization, including the submission of updated clinical information from the six waived visits, is required for all treatment visits starting with the seventh visit.**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Category A providers: No treatment plan authorization is required for post-evaluation therapy visits up to the benefit limit.</td>
<td>The waiver and any subsequent authorization from eviCore are for physical medicine services (*97XXX procedure codes). eviCore does not review requests to authorize chiropractic manipulation, which may also be performed during the authorized treatment period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Category B providers: Treatment plan authorization is waived through the sixth post-evaluation therapy visit. This waiver is available for the member’s first covered condition in a calendar year. Treatment plan authorization, including the submission of updated clinical information from the six waived visits, is required for all post-evaluation visits starting with the seventh visit.**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Category C providers: Treatment plan authorization is required for all post-evaluation visits following the evaluation. Providers may submit the authorization request at the conclusion of the first post-evaluation therapy visit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A physical therapist who wants to request a reconsideration of the assigned utilization category should follow the steps outlined in “Process for reconsideration of utilization category (for physical therapists only)” later in this chapter. Information about the reconsideration process is also included in the semi-annual categorization letter that is mailed.

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** Therapists and chiropractors are encouraged to use the six waived visits before requesting additional care. Typically, eviCore will not approve additional visits before the six waived visits are used. Once the six waived visits are used, therapists and chiropractors must submit a treatment plan to eviCore, including updated information from the six waived visits, to request additional care. When the treatment plan is submitted, eviCore can see how much progress the member made during the initial six visits and can use that information to guide the authorization of additional visits. In addition, even though the first six visits are waived by eviCore from a treatment standpoint, the therapist or chiropractor must submit an authorization request for the visits through the e-referral system or by calling BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512. The authorization request is required so the claims for the waived visits can be paid.

(continued on next page)
Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors

For additional services after the evaluation, therapists and chiropractors must obtain treatment plan authorization from eviCore according to the guidelines that apply for the type of service to be provided. The guidelines are outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eviCore healthcare: Authorization guidelines by therapy type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational therapy services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all providers, the requirement for treatment plan authorization is waived through the sixth post-evaluation therapy visit. This waiver is available for the member’s first covered condition in a calendar year. Treatment plan authorization, including the submission of updated clinical information from the six waived visits, is required for all post-evaluation visits starting with the seventh visit.**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speech therapy services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All providers must submit a treatment plan authorization request for all therapy visits after the evaluation. The request must include the results of the evaluation and the proposed treatment plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Therapists and chiropractors are encouraged to use the six waived visits before requesting additional care. Typically, eviCore will not approve additional visits before the six waived visits are used. Once the six waived visits are used, therapists and chiropractors must submit a treatment plan to eviCore, including updated information from the six waived visits, to request additional care. When the treatment plan is submitted, eviCore can see how much progress the member made during the initial six visits and can use that information to guide the authorization of additional visits. In addition, even though the first six visits are waived by eviCore from a treatment standpoint, the therapist or chiropractor must submit an authorization request for the visits through the e-referral system or by calling BCN’s Utilization Management department at 1-800-392-2512. The authorization request is required so the claims for the waived visits can be paid.
Managing PT, OT and ST / Managing physical medicine services by chiropractors

To submit a treatment plan authorization request, therapists and chiropractors must log in to eviCore’s secure provider portal at www.LMhealthcare.com > Click Here > Landmark Connect (in the Providers section).

From within the secure portal, the provider may submit requests for authorization in one of two ways:

• **By e-form:** Click on the e-Forms tab in Landmark Connect to access the appropriate treatment plan authorization request. Complete the required forms and submit them electronically.

• **By fax:** Be sure to use the forms available on the Landmark Connect secure provider portal. Do not use the forms found on the eviCore website, as these are not the correct forms for BCN authorization requests. The treatment plan forms are located on the Administrative Resources tab, under Forms. Print the form(s), complete them and fax them to eviCore at 1-888-565-4225, which is the fax number listed on the forms.

Note: Providers who are having difficulty submitting their treatment plans using the 1-888-565-4225 fax number may either try again or may contact eviCore’s Customer Service department at 1-877-531-9139 for additional options.

The therapist or chiropractor must submit a separate request for each type of service the member needs — physical, occupational or speech therapy provided by therapists or physical medicine services provided by chiropractors. Chiropractors performing physical medicine services (*97XXX procedure codes) must submit requests to authorize those services separately from requests to authorize manipulation services.

Note: Only eviCore treatment plans are accepted. Additional information on eviCore’s treatment plan forms and the process of requesting authorization is available at referrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Outpatient PT, OT, ST > Tips about eviCore Authorizations for BCN Members.

* CPT codes, descriptions and two-digit modifiers only are copyright 2017 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.

Providers must establish medical necessity for the initiation of treatment by objectively documenting any or all of the following, as applicable, using a validated tool whenever possible and reporting the scores on the eviCore treatment plan form:

• Level of impairment or significant functional limitations
• Deficits in strength or motion
• Pain-limiting function
• Altered neurological signs
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**eviCore reviews treatment plans submitted by providers**
Qualified licensed clinical peers at eviCore review all treatment plans submitted by providers.

**eviCore uses proprietary practice guidelines**
evCore’s proprietary clinical practice guidelines are the basis for the clinical rationale. These guidelines are developed by content experts and practicing clinicians and are reviewed annually.

**Criteria used in making decisions**
evCore’s judgments about treatment frequency and duration are based on the following:
- Severity of the clinical findings
- Presence of complicating factors
- Natural history of the condition
- Expectation of functional improvement
- Need for skilled therapy or physical medicine services

Judgments about frequency and duration require continuous assessment and modification based on patient progress and response to treatment.

Discharge from treatment may be considered appropriate when one of the following conditions is present:
- Reasonable functional goals and expected outcomes have been achieved.
- The caregiver and the member can continue management of symptoms with an independent home program.
- The member is unable to progress toward outcomes because of medical complications or psychosocial factors.
- Services become routine and repetitive in nature, indicating they are not of a skilled nature.
- The member is no longer objectively demonstrating benefit from treatment.

Additional information on the efficient use of treatment services is available at [ereferals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferals.bcbsm.com) > BCN > Outpatient PT, OT, ST > **Suggestions for the Efficient Utilization of Therapy and Physical Medicine Services**.
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Elements of a BCN authorization

eviCore sends written notification of authorization to providers, by fax or U.S. mail. The written notifications are also posted on eviCore’s secure provider portal.

Each notification includes two elements:

• The number of visits authorized
• The time period (duration) in which those authorized visits should be used

Providers should note that the benefit duration is the period of time included in the member’s contractual benefit; it is **not** the same as the authorized duration. Examples include:

• 60 calendar days for a benefit that allows unlimited visits over 60 consecutive calendar days
• 120 calendar days for a benefit that allows 60 visits over the benefit year. (Additional days are added if necessary.)

The member’s visits must be spread through the authorized duration to avoid a gap in care at the end of the time period (duration). If the member has a setback or complication, additional visits may be requested before the authorized time period is over. An updated treatment plan must be submitted with this request and must include objective clinical findings and a detailed explanation of the reasons for the early request for additional visits. Without this information, the request will be denied.

**IMPORTANT!** All therapists and chiropractors are constrained by the limits of the member’s benefits, including the number of visits and the duration of treatment. The visits are allocated and coordinated among therapists and chiropractors based on medical necessity so as not to exceed the member’s benefit limits.

Requesting a copy of the criteria or clinical judgment

Providers may request a copy of the clinical criteria or clinical judgment used in making a determination by sending a request, along with a copy of the determination letter, to:

eviCore healthcare
Attention: QM Department – Clinical Director
1610 Arden Way, Suite 280
Sacramento, CA 95815
Fax: 1-888-565-4225
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Checking the status of the treatment request

Providers may check the status of their treatment plan request in one of the following two ways:

• Check electronically via eviCore’s secure provider portal at www.LMhealthcare.com > Click Here > Landmark Connect (in the Providers section).
• Call eviCore’s Customer Service department at 1-877-531-9139.

Correcting or changing a request and guidelines for covering providers

Instructions for correcting or changing a request in the e-referral system are available at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Outpatient PT, OT, ST > Correcting or changing an e-referral request.

These instructions are also available via BCN’s Learning Opportunities page within Provider Secured Services.

Note: No change is required when one provider is covering for another. These instructions include guidelines related to covering providers.

Other documents with information about handling outpatient physical, occupational and speech therapy and physical medicine requests are found at ereferrals.bcbsm.com > BCN > Outpatient PT, OT, ST.
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Provider appeals process for BCN-participating providers

BCN-participating providers who disagree with a determination made by eviCore should follow eviCore’s process for standard or expedited appeals, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eviCore healthcare: Filing deadlines for provider appeal requests (medical necessity or medical appropriateness determinations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard appeals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expedited appeals</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provider appeals process for providers not participating with BCN

Providers who disagree with a determination made by eviCore and who do not participate with BCN should follow BCN’s process for standard or expedited appeals.

Information on BCN’s provider appeals process is found in the “Appealing Utilization Management decisions” section of this chapter.
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Provider appeals decision-making

Appeals from therapists related to physical, occupational or speech therapy are reviewed by an eviCore physician.

Appeals from chiropractors related to physical medicine services are reviewed by an eviCore chiropractor.

For all provider appeals, the individual who made the original denial determination is not the same individual who makes the appeal decision.
Every six months, eviCore assigns each physical therapist to a utilization category based on the provider’s risk-adjusted utilization of services. Physical therapists who believe that circumstances beyond their control affect their utilization may request reconsideration of their utilization category.

To request reconsideration, physical therapists should follow these steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Specific steps and time frames</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Therapist initiates request for reconsideration of assigned utilization category.</td>
<td>Within 14 calendar days of the date of the utilization category assignment letter, the physical therapist must notify eviCore of his or her intent to initiate a reconsideration review. This notification must include a brief summary of the aspects that make the therapist’s practice different from the practices of peers and may be sent by U.S. mail or by email to <a href="mailto:ProviderServices@eviCore.com">ProviderServices@eviCore.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>eviCore sends request for data.</td>
<td>Within one business day of receiving a reconsideration request, eviCore sends the therapist a list of patient claim data included in the categorization reporting period. eviCore communicates instructions for the therapist to identify cases to be considered in eviCore’s review of the reconsideration request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Therapist identifies cases to be considered in review.</td>
<td>Within 14 days of the date eviCore sends the patient data, the therapist must identify specific cases to be considered in eviCore’s review, describing aspects that contributed to the variance between the therapist’s practice and the practice of peers within the network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>eviCore sends request for more data, as needed.</td>
<td>If more data are needed to complete the review, eviCore sends the therapist a request for additional data. The therapist must respond within seven calendar days of receiving the request or the request is considered withdrawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>eviCore shares recommendation with BCN.</td>
<td>Within 14 calendar days of receiving all the information needed from the therapist, eviCore develops a recommendation and shares it with BCN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>BCN decides whether to accept eviCore’s recommendation.</td>
<td>Within seven calendar days of receiving eviCore’s recommendation, BCN communicates its decision to eviCore on whether to accept the recommendation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>eviCore shares BCN’s decision with provider.</td>
<td>Within one calendar day of receiving BCN’s decision, eviCore shares the decision with the physical therapist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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The contact information related to physical, occupational and speech therapy or physical medicine services is as follows:

- For claims issues, providers should call PARS / Provider Inquiry using the appropriate number as indicated on the Provider Inquiry Contact Information list.
- For authorization or treatment questions, providers should contact eviCore’s Customer Service at 1-877-531-9139.
- For questions about the utilization management program, providers should contact their Blue Cross/BCN provider consultant.