



A nonprofit corporation and independent licensee
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Intensive outpatient program and partial hospitalization program

Coverage, authorization and billing guidelines

For Blue Cross commercial

April 2024

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This document describes the intensive outpatient program and partial hospitalization program services that are included in the mental health – substance use disorder treatment and psychiatric care benefits.

Coverage may vary under different contracts and for different groups. If there's a difference between what's described in this document and the patient's Blue Cross contract, the contract applies.

To learn how to check your patient's eligibility and coverage through our provider portal (availability.com*), refer to the “Patient Eligibility” chapter of the *Blue Cross Commercial Provider Manual*. Also use Benefit Explainer to check for benefit, medical and payment policy information, which will help ensure that you're reporting a code correctly on a claim.

Intensive outpatient program (IOP)

Overview

Intensive outpatient treatment programs provide more intensive treatment compared to traditional outpatient therapy yet not intensive enough to meet the requirements of a partial hospitalization level of care. An Intensive outpatient treatment program typically



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provides treatment at least 3 days a week for 3 hours a day. Intensive outpatient programs provide treatment to individuals with moderate to severe behavioral health disorders and related impairments who require interventions associated with improvement in level of functioning, skill building, and symptom management.

Covered services

We pay for the following program services under the mental health and substance use disorder treatment benefit:

- Services provided by facility staff
- Individual psychotherapeutic treatment
- Family counseling for members of a patient's family
- Group psychotherapeutic treatment
- Prescribed drugs given by the facility in connection with the member's treatment plan

Conditions and limitations

In addition to the payment conditions and limitations stated in our provider portal, in Benefit Explorer, and in the "Documentation Guidelines" chapter of the *Blue Cross Commercial Provider Manual*, the following criteria must be met:

Individuals that would benefit from IOP treatment

Members that may benefit from intensive outpatient treatment include those exhibiting:

- The presence of moderate symptoms of a serious behavioral health disorder
- A significant impairment in one or more areas of personal functioning
- The clear potential to decline further without this level of care
- The need for direct monitoring less than daily but more than weekly
- Identified deficits that can be addressed through IOP services
- A significant variability in daily capacity to cope with life situations

Use the services of a multidisciplinary treatment team

The multidisciplinary treatment team may use the following specialties:

- Psychiatry



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- Psychology
- Master's level providers
- Addiction medicine
- Nursing

IOP treatment requirements

Blue Cross requires intensive outpatient treatment programs to take place at a minimum of 3 days a week for 3 hours a day.

The program must be able to provide supervision and treatment as outlined below:

- Psychosocial assessment at first visit
- Substance use evaluation by second visit
- Medication reconciliation at first visit
- Individual therapy - 1 session per week
- Group therapy- 3 sessions per week
- Family therapy - 1 session per week (could be substituted for individual therapy)
- Psycho-education - 3 sessions per week
- Expressive therapies/ mindfulness/ activities at least 1x/week
- Psychiatric or medication evaluation as needed
- Toxicology screen, self-help/12-step, didactic education groups, as needed
- Care coordination with other providers and social services

Noncovered services

We do not pay for the following services under the mental health and substance use disorder treatment benefit:

- Court-ordered services
- Staff consultations required by a facility's or program's rule
- Marital counseling



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- Services provided by a facility located in Michigan that does not participate with Blue Cross or by a facility located outside of Michigan that does not participate with its local Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan
- An admission to a residential psychiatric facility or services provided by such a facility that have not been preauthorized by Blue Cross or its representative before they occur
- Services that are not focused on improving the member's functioning
- Services that are primarily for the purpose of maintaining long-term gains made by the member while in another treatment program

Partial hospitalization program (PHP)

Overview

Partial hospitalization treatment programs for behavioral health disorders are provided in a freestanding state-licensed and accredited Outpatient Psychiatric Care Facility or hospital. A partial hospitalization treatment program provides daily psychosocial milieu treatment including group therapy, individual therapy, family therapy, expressive therapies, psychoeducational training, and other types of appropriate therapy as the primary treatment modalities.

The facility must participate with Blue Cross (if located in Michigan) or with its local Blue Cross Blue Shield plan (if located outside of Michigan) for its services to be covered.

Prior authorization is required for partial hospitalization treatment and must meet medically necessity, use and quality criteria. Refer to the Prior authorization section for information about obtaining a prior authorization for treatment.

Note: If prior authorization is not obtained, a participating or in-network facility that provided the care cannot bill the member for the cost of the admission or services; a nonparticipating or out-of-network facility that provided the care may require the member to pay for the admission and services.

Covered services

We pay for the following program services under the mental health and substance use disorder treatment benefit:

- Services provided by facility staff



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- Individual psychotherapeutic treatment
- Family counseling for members of a patient's family
- Group psychotherapeutic treatment
- Prescribed drugs given by the facility in connection with the member's treatment plan

Conditions and limitations

In addition to the payment conditions and limitations stated in our provider portal, in Benefit Explainer, and in the “Documentation Guidelines” chapter of the *Blue Cross Commercial Provider Manual*, the following criteria must be met:

Individuals that would benefit from PHP treatment

Members that may benefit from partial hospitalization treatment within an outpatient psychiatric care facility include those:

- At risk for inpatient hospitalization and require the intensity of partial hospitalization treatment due to acute debilitating symptoms and/or some risk of harm to self or others.
- Experiencing increased symptoms of a diagnosed behavioral health disorder and exhibit a decline in functioning compared to baseline. The change in symptoms requires this level of care to avoid further deterioration.
- Exhibiting a relatively high baseline functioning prior to the onset of a behavioral health disorder yet require treatment at this level of care to provide medication stabilization, insight and self-management skills to reduce symptoms and risk to self.

Outpatient Psychiatric Care Facility requirements

For a complete list of OPC qualification requirements as approved by Blue Cross, refer to the [General Outpatient Psychiatric Care Facilities information](#) document on **bcbsm.com**.

To access these requirements:

1. Go to the [Provider enrollment](#) webpage on **bcbsm.com/providers**.
2. Click *Enroll Now*.
3. Select *Hospitals and Facilities* and then click *Next*.
4. Select *Outpatient Psychiatric Care Facilities* and then click *Next*.



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5. Click *General Outpatient Psychiatric Care Facilities information*.

Use the services of a multidisciplinary treatment team

Staff must hold the appropriate academic degrees, licensure or certification as well as experience with the particular population being treated. Core clinical staff must come from diverse disciplines such as psychiatry, psychology, social work, counseling, addiction medicine, medicine and nursing. Each program should have an identified medical director. This role is typically held by a person with advanced training in psychiatry, such as a psychiatrist.

PHP treatment requirements

Blue Cross requires partial hospitalization treatment programs to take place at a minimum of 5 days a week for 5-6 hours a day.

The facility must be able to provide supervision and treatment as outlined below:

- Psychiatric evaluation within 24 hours of admission (face to face or virtual).
- Psychosocial assessment on day 1
- Substance use evaluation within first 2 days.
- Medication reconciliation on day 1
- Medication review advised frequency: daily (at minimum 1 per week)
- Clinical assessment at least daily
- Individual therapy - 1 session per day
- Group therapy - 2 sessions per day
- Family therapy – 1 to 2 times weekly (could be substituted for individual therapy)
- Expressive/ mindfulness/activities therapy - 1 session per day
- Toxicology screen, self-help/12-step/education groups as needed
- Eating Disorder PHP is recommended to be minimum 5 days/week, 8hrs/day
- Care coordination with other care providers and social services

Noncovered services

We do not pay for the following services under the mental health and substance use disorder treatment benefit:



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- Staff consultations required by a facility's or program's rule
- Marital counseling
- Services provided by a facility located in Michigan that does not participate with Blue Cross or by a facility located outside of Michigan that does not participate with its local Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan
- An admission to a residential psychiatric facility or services provided by such a facility that have not been preauthorized by Blue Cross or its representative before they occur
- Services that are not focused on improving the member's functioning
- Services that are primarily for the purpose of maintaining long-term gains made by the member while in another treatment program
- Services, treatment, or supplies that are court-ordered or related to a court order
- Milieu therapies, such as wilderness program, supportive housing or group homes
- Custodial care
- Treatment or programs for sex offenders or perpetrators of sexual or physical violence
- Services to hold or confine a member under chemical influence when the member does not require medical treatment
- Non-medical services including, but not limited to enrichment programs, dance therapy, art therapy, music therapy, equine therapy, yoga and other movement therapies, ropes courses, guided imagery, consciousness raising, socialization therapy, social outings and educational or preparatory courses or classes. These services may be paid as part of a treatment program, but they are not payable separately

Prior authorization for partial hospitalization

Blue Cross requires facilities to submit prior authorization requests electronically or by phone for partial hospitalizations. Starting January 1, 2024, Blue Cross Behavioral Health will begin managing requests for prior authorization.



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For more information and complete instructions on submitting a prior authorization request to Blue Cross Behavioral Health through our provider portal (availability.com*) or to submit a retroactive authorization request, refer to these documents:

- [Blue Cross Behavioral Health: Frequently asked questions for providers](#) on the Blue Cross Behavioral Health webpage at ereferrals.bcbsm.com.
- [Prior authorization requirements for Michigan and non-Michigan providers for Blue Cross commercial and Medicare Plus BlueSM](#) on bcbsm.com.

Blue Cross Behavioral Health will use medical necessity criteria to determine the appropriate level of care. This criteria is available in the *Behavioral Health Services* section on our [Services That Need Prior Authorization](#) webpage at bcbsm.com.

Outpatient Psychiatric Care Facilities are required to call the behavioral health manager prior to admitting a member into a partial hospitalization program (PHP). For more information regarding the prior authorization process, refer to the “Psychiatric Care Services” chapter of the *Blue Cross Commercial Provider Manual*.

To access the provider manual:

1. Log in to our provider portal (availability.com*).
2. Click *Payer Spaces* on the menu bar and then click the BCBSM and BCN logo.
3. Click the *Resources* tab.
4. Click *Secure Provider Resources (Blue Cross and BCN)*.
5. Click *Provider manuals*.

Billing guidelines

How to bill for services

For guidelines on how to bill for IOP and PHP services, refer to the “Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services” and “Psychiatric Care Services” chapters in the *Blue Cross Commercial Provider Manual*.

To access the provider manual:

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3. Click the *Resources* tab.
4. Click *Secure Provider Resources (Blue Cross and BCN)*.
5. Click *Provider manuals*.

*Clicking this link means that you're leaving the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network website. While we recommend this site, we're not responsible for its content.

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