

## **Initiative: Non-emergency air ambulance flights for Blue Cross and BCN commercial members require authorization by Alacura Medical Transport Management starting April 2, 2018**

### **a. What are the highlights of this initiative?**

For dates of service on or after April 2, 2018, non-emergency air ambulance flights for Blue Cross PPO (commercial) and BCN HMO<sup>SM</sup> (commercial) members require authorization through Alacura Medical Transport Management, LLC. Authorization requests must be submitted to Alacura using the [Air ambulance flight information \(non-emergency\) form](#).

No authorization is required for emergency flights. The definitions of emergency and non-emergency flights are available on page 2 of the form.

In addition, a document titled *Billing instructions: Air ambulance services* was published on how to bill emergency flights with an ET modifier and providing other details about billing these services properly. These guidelines apply to dates of service on or after Jan. 1, 2017.

### **b. What lines of business does this affect?**

This change affects Blue Cross PPO (commercial) and BCN HMO (commercial) members and both in-state and out-of-state providers.

Note: For Blue Cross Medicare Plus Blue PPO and BCN Advantage members, nothing has changed. Here are the requirements for these Medicare Advantage products:

- For Michigan providers, no authorization is required for Medicare Advantage members, for either emergency or non-emergency flights.
- For non-Michigan providers:
  - For BCN Advantage members, authorization is required for non-emergency flights only. The authorization request is submitted directly to the plan, not to Alacura, and the form is not used.
  - For Medicare Plus Blue members, no authorization is required, for emergency or non-emergency flights.

### **c. Why was the initiative undertaken?**

An authorization process for non-emergency flights was implemented for Blue Cross PPO (commercial) and BCN HMO (commercial) members involving Alacura, to reduce the high out-of-network costs for air ambulance services that are not medically necessary. These costs largely fall to the members and they put significant financial pressure on both groups and members to assume financial responsibility. The authorization process lowers costs by directing services to in-network providers.

### **d. Where can I find the details about the authorization requirements?**

- In the *Blue Cross PPO Provider Manual*. Look in the Ambulance chapter.
- In the *BCN Provider Manual*. Look in the [Care Management chapter](#), in the “Air ambulance services” section.
- In the [Air ambulance flight information \(non-emergency\) form](#)
- In the updated [BCN Referral and Authorization Requirements](#) document
- In the [Air Ambulance Services Medical Policy](#)
- In the [BCN Non-Michigan providers: Referral and authorization requirements](#) document
- In the [Provider Preauthorization & Precertification Requirements](#) document for Blue Cross PPO (commercial), for non-Michigan providers

## e. Where can I find the details about the billing instructions?

Look for the *Billing instructions: Air ambulance services* document within Provider Secured Services, in the Provider Publications & Resources websites. Complete the following steps:

1. Visit [bcbsm.com/providers](http://bcbsm.com/providers).
2. Log in to Provider Secured Services.

To access the document posted in Blue Cross Provider Publications and Resources, do the following:

3. Click *BCBSM Provider Publications and Resources*.
4. Click *Newsletters & Resources*.
5. Click *Clinical Criteria & Resources*.
6. Click *Billing instructions*, under the Air Ambulance Services heading.

To access the document posted in BCN Provider Publications and Resources, do the following:

3. Click *BCN Provider Publications and Resources*.
4. Click *Billing / Claims*.
5. Scroll down and click to open the *Billing instructions: Air ambulance services* document.

## f. How was this initiative communicated to providers?

- Re. the authorization requirements:
  - A web-DENIS message and a news item at [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferrals.bcbsm.com) were posted Jan. 19, 2018, about Alacura handling the authorization requests.
  - An article titled [Starting April 2, 2018, non-emergency air ambulance services require authorization for commercial members](#) was published in the March 2018 issue of *The Record*.
  - An article titled [Non-emergency air ambulance services require authorization starting April 2, 2018, for commercial members](#) was published in the March-April 2018 issue of *BCN Provider News*, on page 41.
  - A web-DENIS message and a news item at [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferrals.bcbsm.com) were posted March 28, 2018, about submitting authorization requests to Alacura using the form
  - An article titled [Use flight information form for non-emergency air ambulance authorization requests](#) was published in the April 2018 issue of *The Record*.
  - An article titled [Use the flight information form for non-emergency air ambulance authorization requests](#) was published in the May-June issue of *BCN Provider News*, on page 43.
- Re. the billing guidelines:
  - A web-DENIS message was posted Jan. 12, 2018, telling providers where to locate the instructions for billing air ambulance services for dates of service on or after Jan. 1, 2017.
  - An article titled [Air ambulance billing instructions are now available](#) was published in the March-April 2018 issue of *BCN Provider News*, on page 40.
  - The article titled [Starting April 2, 2018, non-emergency air ambulance services require authorization for commercial members](#), published in the March 2018 issue of *The Record*, includes information on where to find the billing instructions.