

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

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 commercial and BCN 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.

What lines of business does this affect?

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

Note: For Medicare Plus BlueSM and BCN AdvantageSM 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.

Why was the initiative undertaken?

An authorization process for non-emergency flights was implemented for Blue Cross commercial and BCN 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.

Where can I find the details about the authorization requirements?

- In the *Blue Cross Commercial Provider Manual*. Look in the Ambulance Services chapter.
- In the *BCN Provider Manual*. Look in the [Utilization 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 commercial, for non-Michigan providers

Where can I find the details about the billing instructions?

Look for the *Billing instructions: Air ambulance services* document on our secure Provider Resources site within our provider portal. To access the document:

1. Log in to availity.com.
2. Click *Payer Spaces* on the menu bar.
3. Click the BCBSM and BCN logo.
4. Click the *Resources* tab.
5. Click *Secure Provider Resources (Blue Cross and BCN)*.
6. Select *Billing and Claims* on the menu bar.
7. Select either *Blue Cross* or *BCN and BCN Advantage*.
8. Click the link for the air ambulance billing instructions document.

How was this initiative communicated to providers?

- Re. the authorization requirements:
 - A web-DENIS message and a news item at ereferrals.bcbsm.com were posted Jan. 19, 2018, about Alacura handling the authorization requests.
 - Articles about non-emergency air ambulance services requiring authorization starting April 2, 2018, were published in the March 2018 issue of *The Record* and the March-April 2018 issue of *BCN Provider News*.
 - A web-DENIS message and a news item at ereferrals.bcbsm.com were posted March 28, 2018, about submitting authorization requests to Alacura using the form.
 - Articles about using the flight information form to request authorization were published in the April 2018 issue of *The Record* and the May-June 2018 issue of *BCN Provider News*.
- 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.
 - Articles about where to find the air ambulance billing guidelines were published in the March 2018 issue of *The Record* and the March-April 2018 issue of *BCN Provider News*.