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Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network-approved autism evaluation centers, or AAECs, must:

- Meet the requirements outlined in this document.
- Follow the terms and conditions of the participation agreement for both Blue Cross and BCN.

If a center doesn't meet these requirements, it may lose its designation as an approved autism evaluation center.

Requirements

The autism evaluation center must:

1. Complete a thorough and interdisciplinary evaluation of each Blue Cross or BCN member who resides in Michigan and presents for evaluation of a possible autism spectrum disorder.
2. Ensure that the following age-appropriate disciplines are represented on the core team of specialists that's primarily responsible for the evaluation and diagnosis of members:
 - Medical — Family practice physician, pediatrician or developmental pediatrician, internal medicine physician, neurologist (pediatric or adult)
 - Behavioral — Psychiatrist (pediatric or adult), psychologist (pediatric or adult), neurologist (pediatric or adult)
 - Speech and language therapist
3. Have other disciplines available if not represented on the core team to participate in the evaluation on an as-needed basis. Other disciplines include — but aren't limited to — a geneticist, an occupational therapist and a licensed behavior analyst* or licensed master social worker with training in autism treatment principles. These ad-hoc participants don't need to be paid staff at the center but they must be identifiable and available.
4. Use standardized testing as a part of each evaluation. The testing must:
 - Adequately evaluate behavior, communication and social interaction
 - Include both interviews and observations

- Include, at minimum, one of these combinations:
 - The Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale and the Autism Diagnostic Interview, Revised
 - The Childhood Autism Rating Scale, Second Edition and the ADI
 - The ADOS and the Social Communication Questionnaire, Current / Lifetime Version
 - The CARS and the SCQ
- 5. Have the following evaluative components available based on individual assessment needs as determined by the center:
 - Formal cognitive assessment
 - Audiology evaluation
 - Lead screening
 - History and physical examination
- 6. Have the following tests — which aren't needed for the evaluation of autism — available for the diagnosis of associated conditions:
 - Chromosome tests to detect a syndrome such as fragile-X or other genetic etiology
 - Metabolic tests if/when determined to be necessary by history or examination
 - Electroencephalogram, or EEG, test if there's suspicion of seizures based on the member's history
- 7. Provide a complete assessment and treatment plan to the member or the member's parent or legal guardian (as applicable) and to the practitioner from whom the member will receive applied behavior analysis services.
- 8. Complete a short summary of the diagnosis, treatment plan and recommendations using the [Autism diagnostic evaluation results form](#). Provide the completed form to the member or the member's parents or legal guardian (as applicable) and to the practitioner from whom the member will receive ABA services.
- 9. Prior authorization is required for ABA services for all Medicare Plus Blue, BCN commercial and BCN Advantage members. For Blue Cross commercial, prior authorization is required for some members; contact Provider Inquiry to determine whether a specific Blue Cross commercial member requires prior authorization.

For each member for whom prior authorization is required, submit a prior authorization request as described in the document titled [Blue Cross Behavioral HealthSM: Frequently asked](#)

[questions for providers](#); see the section titled “How do I submit requests?” Be sure to attach the *Autism diagnostic evaluation results form* to the request.

10. Follow these billing practices:

Note: These instructions apply only to billing the center’s evaluation services. They don’t apply when billing ABA services.

- Bill evaluation services under either the center’s group NPI or the NPI for the individual who provided the service. The center must be contracted with both Blue Cross and BCN to bill evaluation services. Bill in the same way that the center (or the individual who provided the evaluation) bills for any other services provided under the center’s contracts with Blue Cross and BCN. Refer to the appropriate provider manual for billing instructions. Call Provider Inquiry if you have additional questions.
- For each multidisciplinary evaluation, submit a claim for code **T1023. The claim should reflect the final diagnosis determined by the evaluation team after the multidisciplinary conference has occurred. The diagnosis doesn’t need to be for autism spectrum disorder. When billing procedure code *T1023, use one of the following:
 - The group / NPI for center
 - If the center doesn’t have a separate group NPI, use the NPI of the director of the center

Use the same NPI for each member evaluated and let Blue Cross/BCN know immediately if the NPI changes.

*Effective Jan. 7, 2020, behavior analysts must be licensed by the state of Michigan to be reimbursed by Blue Cross or BCN for services provided to commercial members. For Medicare Advantage members, the licensed behavior analyst must work under the supervision of a licensed master social worker with training in autism treatment principles.

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Letter of intent to request an application to become an AAEC

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to inform you that (facility name) _____ is interested in receiving an application to become a Blue Cross/BCN-approved autism evaluation center.

We can attest that we are one of the following (choose one):

- A fully staffed academic medical center
- A hospital-based center at a facility contracted with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan or Blue Care Network
- A fully staffed behavioral health clinic that is affiliated with a hospital or academic center. The clinic must meet the core staff criteria listed below. The name of the academic center or hospital with which the clinic is affiliated is:

Our core staff of clinicians include the following professionals, who have **significant** experience in the assessment, workup, evaluation and diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders (check all that apply):

- Family practice physician
- Board-certified pediatrician
- Board-certified developmental pediatrician
- Board-certified neurologist (pediatric or adult)
- Fully licensed neuropsychologist (pediatric or adult)
- Fully licensed psychologist (pediatric or adult)
- Board-certified psychiatrist (pediatric or adult)
- Speech and language pathologist

In addition, we can attest that we are able to identify and easily obtain input from other professionals, such as occupational therapists, nutritionists, geneticists, physician therapists and licensed behavior analyst.

We are either able to provide onsite or can easily refer patients to (check all that apply):

- Formal cognitive assessment
- Audiology evaluation



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield
Blue Care Network**
of Michigan

Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees
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Requirements for approved autism evaluation centers

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

June 2024

- Lead screening
- Genetic testing
- Metabolic tests
- EEG

We can attest that our evaluation includes standardized testing to assess members across the domains of behavior, communication and social interaction.

We will be able to provide a written comprehensive diagnostic evaluation that includes diagnosis and treatment recommendations to the patient or their parent or guardian. We are also able to assist the patient and their family in obtaining appropriate treatment.

I attest to the veracity of the above information and request that Blue Cross or BCN send an AAEC application form to me at:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _____

Date _____

To submit this form

Complete this form and email it to AAECBehavioralHealth@bcbsm.com with the subject line "AAEC Letter of Intent."