



Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

# Musculoskeletal procedure code substitutions for orthopedic and spinal surgeries

For Blue Cross commercial, Medicare Plus Blue<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Care Network commercial and BCN Advantage<sup>SM</sup>

April 2021

In some situations, you may not know which orthopedic or spinal procedure will be required in advance of a surgery or the surgical plan may change intraoperatively. As a result, the procedure code TurningPoint authorized may not represent the procedure that was actually performed.

Prior to submitting claims for these procedures, you'll need to determine whether you can substitute the code for the procedure that was actually performed for the code TurningPoint authorized. If you can substitute the code, you won't need to contact TurningPoint to update the procedure coding.

## Determine whether you can submit a claim with a substitute code

Here's what you need to do:

1. Determine whether the procedure code TurningPoint authorized appears in one of the substitution tables later in this document.
2. Do one of the following:
  - If the procedure code TurningPoint authorized **isn't** listed in the "Procedure code authorized by TurningPoint" column, contact TurningPoint to update the procedure coding.<sup>(1)</sup>
  - If the procedure code TurningPoint authorized **is** listed in the "Procedure code authorized by TurningPoint" column, see the "Substitution codes" column and do one of the following:
    - If the code for the procedure that was performed is listed as a substitution code, you don't need to contact TurningPoint. Instead, submit the claim with the code for the procedure that was performed.
    - If the code for the procedure that was performed isn't listed as a substitution code, contact TurningPoint to update the procedure coding.<sup>(1)</sup>

If you file a claim using a substitute procedure code, Blue Cross or BCN will process the claim based on the code for the procedure that was performed.

<sup>(1)</sup>If you need to contact TurningPoint to update procedure coding, complete the [Postservice change request](#) form and fax it to TurningPoint or call TurningPoint toll-free at 1-833-217-9670 or locally at 313-908-6040. You may have to submit additional clinical documentation.

## Orthopedic and spinal procedure code substitution lists

Unless otherwise noted, substitution codes are accepted as follows:

Groups or members	Dates of service on or after	
	Orthopedic	Spinal
Blue Cross commercial fully insured groups, self-funded groups and members with individual coverage <sup>(1)</sup>	1/1/2021	1/1/2021
Medicare Plus Blue members	7/1/2020	1/1/2021
BCN commercial members	7/1/2020	7/1/2020
BCN Advantage members	7/1/2020	7/1/2020



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<sup>(1)</sup>To determine whether you need to submit prior authorization requests for Blue Cross commercial members, see “How do I know if I need to request prior authorization from TurningPoint for members who have coverage through Blue Cross commercial plans?” in the [Musculoskeletal procedure authorizations: Frequently asked questions for providers](#) document.

In most cases, the codes TurningPoint approved (first column) are interchangeable with the substitution codes (second column). However, prior to submitting a claim with a code other than the one TurningPoint approved, be sure to consult this document and verify that the code you plan to submit is allowed as a substitution.

Orthopedic procedure code substitutions	
Procedure code authorized by TurningPoint	Substitution codes
*23130	*23415, *29826
*23410	*23412, *23420, *29827
*23412	*23410, *23420, *29827
*23415	*23130, *29826
*23420	*23410, *23412, *29827
*23455	*29806
*27425	*29873
*29806	*23455
*29820	*23105
*29821	*23105
*29826	*23130, *23415
*29827	*23410, *23412, *23420
*29880	*29881, *29883
*29881 <sup>(1)</sup>	*29882, *29880
*29882	*29881
*29883	*29880, *29881, *29882

Spinal procedure code substitutions	
Procedure code authorized by TurningPoint	Substitution codes
*22551	*22554
*22554	*22551
*22630	*22633, *22612
*22633	*22630, *22612
*63047	*63030

<sup>(1)</sup>Substitutions are allowed only for Medicare Plus Blue, BCN commercial and BCN Advantage members, for dates of service on or after Jan. 1, 2021.

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