



# PROVIDER ORIENTATION

**Blue Essentials<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Essentials Access<sup>SM</sup>,  
Blue Advantage HMO<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Advantage Plus HMO<sup>SM</sup>,  
Blue Premier<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Premier Access<sup>SM</sup>  
& MyBlue Health<sup>SM</sup> Networks**

## WELCOME!

**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) wants to thank you for becoming a participating provider in our network(s). Please take this opportunity to get familiar with the following information that will assist you in servicing your patients, our members:**

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## PROVIDER ORIENTATION

# Blue Essentials, Blue Essentials Access, Blue Advantage HMO, Blue Advantage Plus HMO, Blue Premier, Blue Premier Access & MyBlue Health Networks

You can hyperlink to any [blue](#) text below or copy and paste using the weblinks located on pages 8-10 listed in alpha order.

## What Should You Know As a Provider:

### Network Highlights

**Primary Care Provider (PCP) - Blue Essentials, Blue Premier, Blue Advantage HMO and MyBlue Health require** members to select a PCP to direct their care to utilize in-network benefits. A referral or prior authorization is required for most services. Services rendered by out-of-network providers may not be covered without plan approval.


**Physician Organization (PORG):** Some member ID cards may indicate a PORG. This PORG may indicate that the member should seek care within the PORG's physician organization.

**Limited Provider Networks:** Some PORG's may be affiliated with a capitated IPA/Medical Group. Health care providers who are:

- Contracted/affiliated with a capitated IPA/Medical Group, must contact the Medical Group for instructions regarding referral and prior authorization processes, contracting and claims-related questions. These providers are subject to that entity's procedures and requirements for provider complaint resolution.
- **Not** part of a capitated IPA/Medical Group but who provide services to a member whose PCP is contracted/affiliated with a capitated IPA/Medical Group must also contact the applicable IPA/Medical Group for instructions.

**Blue Essentials Access and Blue Premier Access Plans** - These plans are "open access" and do not require selection of a PCP or referrals to specialists for services to in-network providers in that plan.

**Blue Advantage HMO Plus** - Members in this plan can self-direct their care under their out-of-network benefits at a higher member cost share.

For more information related to PCP requirements and referrals for these plans refer to the [HMO Plans-PCP Selection and Referral Requirements](#)  tool.

**Employee Retirement System of Texas (ERS)/HealthSelect** - Texas ERS participant's benefits plans utilize the Blue Essentials network. ERS participants can select the following benefit plans:

- **HealthSelect of Texas®** requires selection of a PCP and referrals to Blue Essentials providers for in-network services
- **Consumer Directed HealthSelect<sup>SM</sup>** is an "open access" plan which does not require a PCP selection and referrals are not required when accessing Blue Essentials providers for in-network benefits

Providers should refer to the [ERS Tools](#) page for specific plan and other related information.

**Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS)** - TRS participants that select the TRS-ActiveCare Primary or TRS-ActiveCare Primary+ Plans utilize **Blue Essentials** providers for in-network services. Care should be directed by a PCP and referrals are required. Refer to the [TRS Tools](#) page for more information.

Health care providers are strongly encouraged to check eligibility and benefits before rendering care to members in these plans to make sure their services are eligible and covered.



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#### Electronic Options

Go paperless and get new information as well as submit information electronically! Here's how:

Be sure that we have your current email address on file! You can submit email addresses and other demographic changes using our [Demographic Change Form](#). A [User Guide](#) is available for assistance in completing the form. By providing your email address you will get our [Blue Review](#) newsletter monthly in your email. The *Blue Review* provides timely and relevant messaging related to:

- New products, programs and services available
- Notification of changes as required by contract or other mandates
- Member initiatives and patient resources.
- Reminders to make office practices easier using the **Did You Know** section of the *Blue Review*.

[Availity® Provider Portal](#) - Providers can conduct transactions at **no charge** including eligibility and benefits, authorizations and referrals, claim processing and management. Register and get access to this time-saving, **free** tool.

- Eligibility & Benefits - We strongly recommend providers to check patient eligibility and benefits before every scheduled service. Eligibility and benefit quotes include checking membership, coverage status, prior authorization requirements and determination that the provider is in-network for the patient's policy. It also includes other important information, such as an applicable copayment, coinsurance and deductible amounts. Use Availity to submit these 270 transactions.
- Authorizations & Referrals - [Availity's Authorizations & Referrals](#) tool (HIPAA-standard 278 transaction) allows the electronic submission of inpatient admissions, select outpatient services and referral requests handled by BCBSTX. Additionally, providers can also check the status of previously submitted requests and/or update applicable existing requests.
- [Electronic Commerce](#) via EDI, ERA & EFT - Submit claims electronically online via [Electronic Data Interchange \(EDI\)](#). Use [Electronic Funds Transfer \(EFT\)](#) to get your funds quickly by electronically transferring to your bank accounts. [Electronic Remittance Advice \(ERA\)](#) enables your office to receive claim payment and remittance details online and post them to your patient accounting system.

#### Provider Tools

[Provider Tools](#) - We provide online tools to identify members and put all your claim information at your fingertips including claim status, submitting adjustments and refunds and reviewing processing remittances. Many of these tools are available via a single sign-on through Availity.

- [Availity Attachment Tool](#) - Providers can quickly submit predetermination of benefit requests, medical records, itemized billing statements and other forms to assist with more efficient and timely responses.
- [Availity Claim Status Tool](#) - Provides the equivalent of an Explanation of Benefits (EOB), including line item breakdowns and detailed denial descriptions.
- [Claim Inquiry Resolution \(CIR\)](#) & [Electronic Refund Management \(eRM\)](#) - eRM is a method of simplifying overpayment processing. CIR, which is a tab in our eRM system, provides a method for online assistance with specific inquiries on finalized claims and related processes.
- [Clear Claim Connection](#) - Clear Claim Connection (C3) is a free online reference tool, that mirrors the logic behind our code-auditing software ClaimsXten™. Use C3 to help determine how coding combinations on a claim may be evaluated during the adjudication process.



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#### Provider Tools, cont.

- [Patient Care Summary](#) - Uses claim-based information to provide you with a view of a patient's health care history at the point of care. This electronic health record can help you identify gaps in care, missed prescription refills and possible drug interactions, and other "clinical flags" and treatment opportunities.
- [Patient Cost Estimator](#) - Online member liability estimator that can help professional and institutional providers estimate a patient's potential out-of-pocket costs in real-time for office, inpatient and outpatient services.
- [Patient ID Finder](#) - This tool allows providers to obtain the BCBSTX patient ID number and group number by entering patient-specific data elements.

#### Provider Website

The [BCBSTX Provider Website](#) is an important tool to get up to date information on being a provider with BCBSTX. Use the following navigation menus to access the most current information available:

[HOME](#) - Find important links to navigate the site. Get quick links to News and Updates; Government Programs, Provider Finder®, Policies, Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS), Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) and National Drug Codes (NDC) billing tools for contracted providers.

[Network Participation](#) - Learn about our various products, how to join additional networks, credentialing and recredentialing **and** how to update your information.

[Claims & Eligibility](#) - Get information on servicing members from checking eligibility and benefits, determining prior authorization requirements to our electronic options, claim tips, claim adjustments and BlueCard®.

[Education & Reference](#) - Learn how to use our tools, find forms, view [ID card samples](#), get new updates in our News and Updates and **Blue Review** newsletter.

[Clinical Resources](#) - Learn about AIM Specialty Health®, understand our behavioral health program as well as taking advantage of preventive guidelines and quality improvement initiatives including HEDIS® Tip Sheets.

[Pharmacy Program](#) - Locate information about our primary Pharmacy Benefit Manager, Prime Therapeutics L.L.C. and details about our covered drug lists, dispensing limits, specialty drug programs and the Step Therapy Program.

[Standards & Requirements](#) - Find Disclosure Notices and Clinical Payment and Coding Policies and Medical Policies. Under the General Reimbursement Information section, you can locate the provider manuals, request fee schedules and find detailed fee schedule information.

**Note:** For more detailed information in the General Reimbursement section, you will need to enter our secure area via a password. You can obtain the password from your local **Network Management Office Location** located on the [Contact Us](#) page.

[Reference Guides and Quick Links](#) — Bookmark the Reference Guides and Quick Links page for quick links to important information throughout our provider website and our handy Quick Reference Guides by network under the Quick Reference Guides link that provides general claim, eligibility/benefits, prior authorizations and behavioral health information.



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#### Provider Manual

Our Provider Manual is a detailed source of information regarding these networks. You can locate the manual under the **Standards and Requirements** tab, select [Manuals](#), then select the **Blue Essentials, Blue Advantage HMO, Blue Premier and MyBlue Health - Provider Manual**. Below is a summary of the information provided in each section:

- **Support Services** (Section A) - Contact information when you have questions.
- **Physician and other Professional Provider Roles and Responsibilities** (Section B) including:
  - ❖ Various managed care plans
  - ❖ Primary Care Provider role in directing care
  - ❖ Referral requirements
  - ❖ Patient share
  - ❖ How to identify members
  - ❖ Laboratory services
  - ❖ Radiology services - Be sure to check benefits to determine if the services you are providing require prior authorization through AIM Specialty Health® for advanced imaging services.
- **Utilization Management (Prior Authorization and & Predeterminations)** – Sections C, D and E. Review to determine what services may require prior authorization and how to submit requests. Information is also available related to appealing decisions.
- **Filing Claims** (Section F) - Learn about how to submit claims, timely filing guidelines, check claim status. how to handle refunds, recoupments and adjustments including proper forms to submit.
- **Quality Improvements** (Section G) - Learn about best practices and how to improve care to our members and what is required in your medical records to meet BCBSTX and HEDIS® requirements.
- **Disease Management, Case Management Programs and Clinical Practice Guidelines** (Section H) - Get details on disease and condition management services as well as other programs like Special Beginnings® (for OB care), Preventive and Clinical Practice Guidelines.
- **Behavioral Health Services** (Section I) - This section details the behavioral health components as well as how to submit prior authorization requests, claim filing information as well as contacts.
- **Other Information** (Section J) - Includes details on member and provider's responsibilities while treating members, details on continuation of care, how member complaints are handled and process for provider inquiry and complaint resolution.
- **Hospital Acquired Conditions/Serious Reportable Events** (Section K) - See how BCBSTX applies the principles and guidelines of these events to determine provider reimbursements.
- **Pharmacy Services** (Section L) - Learn about the specifics of our Pharmacy benefit manager, Prime Therapeutics as well as details on other Pharmacy programs.
- **Employee Retirement System of Texas (ERS) Participants Benefit Plan using Blue Essentials Network** (Section M) - Get specific details related to ERS plans such as ID cards contact numbers and plan options.



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#### Behavioral Health Program

Refer to the [Behavioral Health Program](#) page on the provider website for guidelines. Certain services may require prior authorization and can be submitted using [Availity Authorizations & Referrals](#) or by calling the number on the back of the member's ID card.

#### Clinical Payment & Coding Policies

[Clinical Payment and Coding Policies](#) (CPCP) serve as a reference to assist providers on reimbursement and coverage information. Be sure to review the various CPCP's when providing services to our members. Also, watch for periodic updates to the CPCP page.

#### Medical Policies and Predetermination of Benefits

[Medical Policies](#) are used to make benefit coverage determinations. They are based on data from the peer-reviewed scientific literature, from criteria developed by specialty societies and from guidelines adopted by other health care organizations. Providers can submit a [predetermination of benefits](#) (voluntary utilization management reviews) when you are not sure about coverage or whether we may or may not consider the service/procedure medically necessary.

#### Provider Finder®

[Provider Finder](#) is a directory of providers participating in the Blue Essentials, Blue Advantage HMO, Blue Premier or MyBlue Health networks. If you need assistance, review the [Provider Finder User Guide](#).

- Providers use it to locate in-network specialists, ancillary or facility providers to refer members for further treatment or services.
- Members use it to find you so providers should verify their own demographic information to make sure it is correct. If you identify updates that need to be made, complete the [Demographic Change Form](#) on the [How to Update your Information](#) page. Refer to the [Demographic Change Form User Guide](#), if you need assistance.

#### Utilization Management

Utilization Management (UM) includes details on prior authorizations, predeterminations and post-service reviews of services for medical necessity.

- Check for authorization requirements online through Availity or your preferred vendor. Authorizations may be required via BCBSTX UM or AIM Specialty Health®.
- Refer to the [Utilization Management](#) page for additional information including:
  - ❖ Lists of services that may require prior authorization
  - ❖ How to submit requests online and by phone
  - ❖ Who to contact for prior authorization

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#### Keep Up to Date

**Disclosure Notices** - Notifications posted to the provider website as required by state or federal regulations or contractual requirements. Providers should periodically check the website for [Disclosure Notices](#).

**Blue Review Newsletter** - We post monthly to the website and email the [Blue Review](#) newsletter. Make sure we have your current email on file to receive this newsletter electronically in your email box.

**News and Updates** - We want to keep you informed on new changes to BCBSTX as well as provide helpful information while treating patients/members. Be sure to check [News and Updates](#) periodically.

**Want to learn more?** We have free webinars every month on Availity tools such as submitting claims, reviewing remittance advices and checking claim status. We also offer periodic training for AIM and CME/CEU sessions. Check out the [Educational Webinar Sessions](#) page for upcoming sessions.

#### Contact Us

If you are unable to find the information you need on the provider website or need assistance with eligibility and benefits or claims and are unable to resolve using the electronic options:

**Contact Provider Customer Service at 1-800-451-0287.**

Utilize [Contact Us](#) on the provider website for contact and mailing information for claims, customer service, utilization management and various external vendors including AIM Specialty Health and Availity. And most importantly, if you have questions regarding this orientation, our networks or your contract, you can locate your local **Network Management Office Location** on [Contact Us](#).



**PROVIDER ORIENTATION WEBLINKS**  
**Blue Essentials, Blue Essentials Access, Blue Advantage HMO,**  
**Blue Advantage Plus HMO, Blue Premier,**  
**Blue Premier Access & MyBlue Health Network**

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>WEBLINK:</b>
Availity	<a href="http://www.availity.com">www.availity.com</a>
Availity Authorizations & Referrals	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/availity-authorizations.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/availity-authorizations.html</a>
Availity Attachment Tool	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/availity-attachments.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/availity-attachments.html</a>
Availity Claim Status Tool	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/availity_claim_status.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/availity_claim_status.html</a>
Behavioral Health Program	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/clinical/behavioral_health.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/clinical/behavioral_health.html</a>
Blue Choice PPO and Blue HPN Provider Manual	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/gri/bluechoice_manual.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/gri/bluechoice_manual.html</a>
Blue Review Newsletter	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/news/blureview.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/news/blureview.html</a>
Claim Inquiry Resolution	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/cir_tool.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/cir_tool.html</a>
Claims & Eligibility	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/index.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/index.html</a>
Clear Claim Connection	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/clear_claim_connection.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/clear_claim_connection.html</a>
Clinical Payment & Coding Policies	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/standards/cpcp.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/standards/cpcp.html</a>
Clinical Resources	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/clinical/index.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/clinical/index.html</a>
Contact Us	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/contact_us.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/contact_us.html</a>
Demographic Change Form	<a href="https://hcscproviderintake.secure.force.com/TXDemographUpdate">https://hcscproviderintake.secure.force.com/TXDemographUpdate</a>
Demographic Change Form User Guide	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/pdf/demographic_change_form_user_guide.pdf">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/pdf/demographic_change_form_user_guide.pdf</a>
Disclosures	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/standards/disclosures.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/standards/disclosures.html</a>
Education & Reference	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/education_reference.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/education_reference.html</a>
Educational Webinar Sessions	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/training/provider_education.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/training/provider_education.html</a>
Electronic Commerce	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/edi_commerce.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/edi_commerce.html</a>
Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/edi_transactions.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/edi_transactions.html</a>





## PROVIDER ORIENTATION WEBLINKS

Blue Essentials, Blue Essentials Access, Blue Advantage HMO,  
Blue Advantage Plus HMO, Blue Premier,  
Blue Premier Access & MyBlue Health Network

TOPIC	WEBLINK:
Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) & Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA)	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/era.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/era.html</a>
Electronic Refund Management	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/erm.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/erm.html</a>
ERS Tools	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/ers-tools.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/ers-tools.html</a>
HMO Plans- PCP Selection and Referral Requirements	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/pdf/hmo-pcp-referral-req.pdf">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/pdf/hmo-pcp-referral-req.pdf</a>
ID Card Samples	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/training/id_card_samples.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/training/id_card_samples.html</a>
Medical Policies	<a href="http://www.medicalpolicy.hcsc.net/medicalpolicy/disclaimer?corpEntCd=TX1">http://www.medicalpolicy.hcsc.net/medicalpolicy/disclaimer?corpEntCd=TX1</a>
Network Participation	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/network/index.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/network/index.html</a>
News & Updates	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/news/index.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/news/index.html</a>
Patient Care Summary	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/careprofile.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/careprofile.html</a>
Patient Cost Estimator	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/carecost_estimator.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/carecost_estimator.html</a>
Patient ID Finder	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/patient_id_finder.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/patient_id_finder.html</a>
Pharmacy Program	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/pharmacy/index.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/pharmacy/index.html</a>
Provider Finder	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/find-a-doctor-or-hospital">https://www.bcbstx.com/find-a-doctor-or-hospital</a>
Provider Finder User Guide	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/pdf/provider-finder-user-guide.pdf">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/pdf/provider-finder-user-guide.pdf</a>
Provider Tools	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/index.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/tools/index.html</a>
Provider Website	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider</a>
Predetermination of Benefits	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/clinical/predetermination_requests.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/clinical/predetermination_requests.html</a>
Quick Reference Guides	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/training/product_group_ref.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/training/product_group_ref.html</a>

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<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>WEBLINK:</b>
Reference Guides and Quick Links	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/training/reference_guide.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/training/reference_guide.html</a>
Standards & Requirements	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/standards/index.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/standards/index.html</a>
TRS Tools	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/trs-tools.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/trs-tools.html</a>
Utilization Management	<a href="https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/um.html">https://www.bcbstx.com/provider/claims/um.html</a>



AIM Specialty Health is an independent medical benefits management company that provides utilization management services for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX).

Availity is a trademark of Availity, LLC, a separate company that operates a health information network to provide electronic information exchange services to medical professionals. Availity provides administrative services to BCBSTX.

BCBSTX makes no endorsement, representations or warranties regarding any products or services provided by third party vendors such as Availity or AIM Specialty Health. If you have any questions about the products or services provided by such vendors, you should contact the vendor(s) directly.

Please note that checking eligibility and benefits, and/or the fact that a service or treatment has been prior authorized or predetermined for benefits is not a guarantee of payment. Benefits will be determined once a claim is received and will be based upon, among other things, the member's eligibility and the terms of the member's certificate of coverage applicable on the date services were rendered. If you have questions, contact the number on the member's ID card.

 By clicking this link, you will go to a new website/app ("site"). This new site may be offered by a vendor or an independent third-party. The site may also contain non- Medicare related information. In addition, some sites may require you to agree to their terms of use and privacy policy.

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