



BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Corporate Medical Policy

Specialists Role in Managed Care

File name: Specialists Role in Managed Care

Origination: 01/1998

Last Review: 11/2009

Next Review: 11/2010

Effective Date: 01/1998

Description

In our managed care products, each member has a Primary Care Physician (PCP), who typically provides basic care and guides the member through the continuum of health care services through coordination of medically necessary specialty services. The role of the PCP is to ensure access to quality health care services as needed.

Specialty services are available upon consultation typically from the PCP, to allow the specialist to have adequate information and prior clinical evaluation to provide appropriate care. The referral for specialty services may be very specific (i.e. consultation on a specific problem, one visit) or they may be very general for longer periods of time and include visits, diagnostic testing, procedures or recommendation for other services such as durable medical equipment or physical therapy.

Some unique cases may work best if the specialist functions as a PCP. In order for this to happen, the member must request that this be considered and the specialist must be willing to accept the PCP responsibilities as well as the Plan's financial arrangement. In this situation there will no longer be another PCP. Financial arrangements will depend upon the Plan's current arrangements and might involve various mechanisms from capitation or case rates to fee for service payments. The specialist acting as PCP must adhere to the Plan's credentialing criteria and performance review. In most instances, a case manager would be assigned to facilitate the process.

Policy

Benefits are subject to the terms and conditions of the subscriber's contract.

"Primary care services" include services provided by providers specifically trained for and skilled in first-contact and continuing care for persons with undiagnosed signs, symptoms or health concerns, not limited by problem origin (biological, behavioral or social), organ system or diagnosis. Primary care services include health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, counseling, member education, case management, and the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses in a variety of health care settings. The provider functioning as Primary Care Provider is responsible for oversight of the healthcare needs of the member as a whole person rather than for a specific set of diseases.



BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Requirements for a Contracted Specialist or Contracted Specialty Facility to act as a member's PCP:

1. The member has a *life-threatening condition or disease, or degenerative or disabling condition or disease*, according to the following Plan definitions:
 - *Life-threatening*: the disease or condition is likely to be the proximate cause of death
 - *Disabling*: the disease or condition alters or will alter the individual's ability to a) function in his or her occupation, b) control his or her activities of daily living, and/or c) function within society
 - *Degenerative*: the disease or condition is recognized in the medical literature for progressive deterioration of any body part, organ, or system.
2. The member's *life-threatening condition or disease, or degenerative or disabling condition or disease* requires specialized medical care over a prolonged period of time and the member has:
 - Identified the contracted specialist or contracted specialist facility who shall be responsible for and capable of providing and coordinating the member's primary and specialty care,
 - Notified the Plan of the proposed change in status of the contracted Specialist or contracted specialist facility to the PCP
3. The Contracted Specialist or Contracted Specialty Facility must have expertise in treating the condition or disease and has agreed to accept PCP duties and responsibilities which must include:
 - Serving as the member's primary care provider, and providing comprehensive primary care services
 - Arranging referrals for other specialty care and medically necessary services, including coordination of care for ancillary services such as laboratory studies, radiology requests, and physical or occupational therapy
 - Maintaining a current medical record for the member
 - Meeting time frames for urgent and routine appointments
 - Providing preventive and screening services
 - Signing a member specific PCP contract with the Plan
4. The Plan agrees that the contracted Specialist or contracted specialist facility has the requisite education, training and experience to both manage the member's specific condition, and the member's general healthcare and wellness needs.



BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Policy Application

Provider contracting will furnish the Contracted Specialist or contracted specialist facility a member specific contract to function as that member's PCP. This contract will require the contracted Specialist or contracted specialist facility to perform all of the duties of a PCP as well as managing the specific member condition. Reimbursement will be negotiated as either a capitated or fee for service reimbursement for the primary care duties. Provision for monitoring of compliance will be established.

The Medical Director or his or her delegate may approve a request pertaining to an individual who meets the criteria for *life-threatening, disabling, or degenerative conditions* unless the Medical Director, or his or her delegate:

- Determines that the member does not qualify as meeting the criteria for *life-threatening, disabling, or degenerative conditions* or
- Determines that the provider lacks the requisite education, training and experience with the with the member's condition,

Upon approval:

Medical Services will provide the member and provider written notice of the approval for the contracted Specialist or contracted specialist facility to serve as PCP.

Enrollment Services will revise the member record to reflect the Specialist as PCP, in accordance with the contractual arrangement.

Upon Denial:

Medical Services shall inform the member and provider of the decision in writing, and the right to appeal the decision through the Plan's formal appeals process.

Annual Review:

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually (defined as 12 consecutive months), by the Medical Policy Committee, to ensure that it is consistent with current business practice and to incorporate the latest regulatory and accreditation standards.

Eligible Providers

Allopathic (M.D.) and Osteopathic (D.O.) physicians with American Board of Medical Specialties recognition in a field other than primary care.
Specialty Care Clinics or other similar organizations

Policy Implementation/Update information

New policy 01/08/1998

Updated 07/2000, 02/2005, 05/2006, 11/2009



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Vermont**

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Approved by BCBSVT Medical Policy Committee: Date Approved

Robert F. Griffin, M.D.
Chairman, Medical Policy Committee

APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Allen J. Hinkle, M.D.
Chief Medical Director

Date Approved: _____