



other more commonly occurring types of cancers, such as breast, colon, prostate and lung cancers. Development of community-based Blue Distinction Center programs for these more common cancers is a future priority.

In determining the selection criteria for Blue Distinction, we collaborated with physician experts and medical organizations such as the National Comprehensive Cancer Network<sup>®</sup> (NCCN).<sup>\*</sup> Potential Blue Distinction Centers submit clinical data to establish they meet our selection criteria, which include:

- an established cancer program, actively providing cancer services and performing a required minimum surgical volume for at least five of the designated complex and rare cancer types
- appropriate experience of its complex and rare cancer team
- an established acute care inpatient facility, including intensive care, emergency services and outpatient care
- full facility accreditation by a CMS-deemed national accreditation organization.
- a comprehensive quality management program

Detailed selection criteria are publicly available at [www.BCBS.com/bluedistinction](http://www.BCBS.com/bluedistinction), providing consumers with support for their healthcare decisions and facilities with a clinically established path for quality improvement.

To maintain its Blue Distinction Center designation, each facility must reapply periodically for re-designation. This not only encourages continuing quality at the facility level, but it also provides an opportunity for The Blues<sup>®</sup> to work with expert physicians and medical organizations to determine if any of the Blue Distinction quality thresholds should be raised to reflect current clinical practice. This process fosters ongoing opportunities for improving the overall quality of care.

Blue companies continue to work proactively with facilities that do not receive the Blue Distinction designation, providing feedback reports detailing areas for improvement. Our goal is to improve quality for the entire Blue network, which includes 90 percent of the nation's hospitals.

Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers, along with the Blue Distinction Centers for Bariatric Surgery<sup>®</sup>, Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care<sup>®</sup> and Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants<sup>®</sup> are a key part of the Blues' efforts to collaborate with physicians and facilities to improve the overall quality, and resulting affordability, of specialty care.

#### **For additional information:**

To obtain more information about the Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers, please contact your local Blue Cross and Blue Shield company or visit [www.BCBS.com/bluedistinction](http://www.BCBS.com/bluedistinction).<sup>\*\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> These organizations have provided information and input but do not formally endorse the Blue Distinction Centers program.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Some Blue companies may already participate in local complex and rare programs. The Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers do not disrupt or replace these existing programs. Blue members (who have coverage for cardiac care) may not necessarily be required to use facilities that are part of this program.

Note: Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading professional organizations' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at any facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan.



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