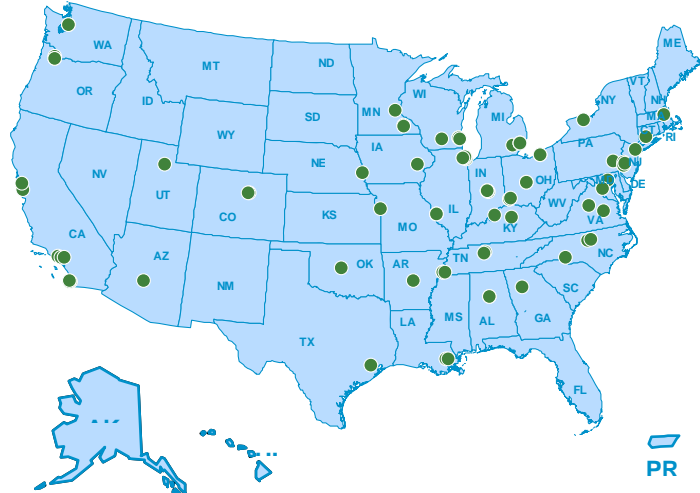


## Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants® Program Description

Blue Distinction® recognizes facilities that meet objective, evidence-based thresholds for clinical quality, developed in collaboration with expert physicians and medical organizations. At the core of Blue Distinction are the Blue Distinction Centers for Specialty Care®, providing Blue members with a credible, easily identifiable means of selecting facilities that meet their individual healthcare needs.

Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants have demonstrated their commitment to quality care, resulting in better overall outcomes for transplant patients. They offer comprehensive transplant services through a coordinated, streamlined transplant management program. To date, we have designated more than 80 facilities nationwide – representing more than 280 transplant programs – that meet our evidence-based selection criteria. Each of these facilities is designated for one or more of the following types of transplants:



- heart
- lung (deceased and living donor)
- combination heart /lung
- liver (deceased and living donor)
- simultaneous pancreas kidney (SPK)
- pancreas (PAK/PTA)
- bone marrow/stem cell (autologous and allogeneic)

In determining the selection criteria for Blue Distinction, we collaborated with physician experts and medical organizations such as the the Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR), the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) and the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (FACT).\* Potential Blue Distinction Centers® submit clinical data to establish that they meet our selection criteria, which include:

- an established transplant program, actively performing these procedures for the most recent 24-month period and performing a required minimum volume of transplant procedures
- appropriate experience and credentialing of its transplant team
- an established acute care inpatient facility, including intensive care, emergency and a full range of services \*\*
- full facility accreditation by a CMS-deemed national accreditation organization.
- evaluation of patient and graft aggregate outcomes, including sufficiently low graft failures and mortality rates
- a comprehensive quality management program
- documented patient care and follow-up procedures at admission and discharge, including referral back to primary care physicians

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.

To date, more than 80 of the nation's transplant facilities have been designated as Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants. They were nominated by local Blue companies for potential designation and submitted an application for consideration.

Additional value-added features for Blue accounts, unique to the Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants, include global pricing, which provides added predictability in pricing; analyses of financial savings at the individual and aggregate levels; and global claims support and case management, including referrals as needed.

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 Transplants, along with Blue Distinction Centers for Bariatric Surgery<sup>®</sup>, Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care<sup>®</sup> and Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers<sup>SM</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 Transplants, please contact your local Blue Cross and Blue Shield company or visit [www.BCBS.com/bluedistinction](http://www.BCBS.com/bluedistinction).\*\*\*

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

\*\* Certain bone marrow transplant programs meet this requirement by affiliation with a full-service, accredited inpatient hospital facility.

\*\*\* Some Blue companies may already participate in local transplant programs. The Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants do not disrupt or replace these existing programs. Blue members may not necessarily be required to use institutions 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.