Blue Distinction® Centers for Transplants Evaluation Components

The Blue Distinction Specialty Care Program is a national designation program recognizing healthcare facilities that demonstrate expertise in delivering quality specialty care safely, effectively and cost-efficiently. The goal of the program is to help consumers find both quality and value for their specialty care needs, while providing a credible foundation for employers to design benefits tailored to meet their quality and cost objectives. The Blue Distinction Specialty Care Program includes two levels of designation:

- **Blue Distinction Centers (BDC):** Healthcare facilities recognized for their expertise in delivering specialty care.
- **Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+):** Healthcare facilities recognized for their expertise and cost-efficiency in delivering specialty care. Quality is key: only those facilities that first meet nationally established, objective quality measures for Blue Distinction Centers will be considered for designation as a Blue Distinction Center+.

**Program Design**

The 2017 Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants program consists of nine transplant program designations, with the bone marrow/stem cell transplant (BMT) program continuing to be a combined autologous and allogeneic BMT program. Facilities may apply for any of the following Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants program designations:

- Adult Heart
- Adult Lung
- Adult Deceased Donor Liver
- Adult Living Donor Liver
- Adult Pancreas
- Pediatric Heart
- Pediatric Liver
- Adult Autologous/ Allogeneic Bone Marrow/ Stem Cell
- Pediatric Autologous/ Allogeneic Bone Marrow/ Stem Cell

The Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants program will continue to use information provided by a facility in the Provider Survey and public data available from the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR), Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN), and the Transplant Center-Specific Survival Report publicly reported by the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP).

The following quality, business and cost components are to provide Plans and Providers an understanding of the how the evaluation components will be used to evaluate an applicant facility. Specific scoring thresholds required for eligibility as a Blue Distinction Center and Blue Distinction Center+ for Transplants, based on its selection criteria for quality and cost, will be published separately and posted on the Blue Distinction’s public website at [www.bcbs.com](http://www.bcbs.com).

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association is an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies.
**Quality**

Blue Distinction Specialty Care programs establish a nationally consistent approach to evaluating quality and safety, by incorporating quality measures with meaningful impact, with criteria that evolve over time with medical and quality measurement advances in that specialty area. Facilities may be evaluated for quality in the following domains for the Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Metrics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Facility</td>
<td>Provider Survey</td>
<td>• National Accreditation</td>
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<td>• Comprehensive Inpatient Facility</td>
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<td>• Transplant Program Guidelines, Accreditation, and Certification, where applicable:</td>
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<td>- United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) Guidelines and Bylaws;</td>
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<td>- Centers for Medicare &amp; Medicaid Services (CMS) Certification; and</td>
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<td>- Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (FACT) Accreditation</td>
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<td>Solid Organ Transplant Program Volume</td>
<td>Registry</td>
<td>Publicly Reported Volumes from the Organ Procurement Transplant Network (OPTN).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solid Organ Transplant Outcomes</td>
<td>Registry</td>
<td>December 2016 Publicly Reported Outcomes from the Scientific Registry for Transplant Recipients (SRTR):</td>
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<td>- 1 Month, 1 Year, and 3 Year Graft and Patient Survivals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bone Marrow/ Stem Cell Transplant Program Volume</td>
<td>Provider Survey</td>
<td>Facility reported autologous and allogeneic bone marrow/stem cell transplant program volume for the most recent 12 month time period.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bone Marrow/ Stem Cell Transplant Outcomes</td>
<td>Registry</td>
<td>December 2016 Transplant Center-Specific Survival Report publicly displayed on National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP):</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 1 Year Allogeneic Patient Survival</td>
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**Business**
The following components are evaluated to determine if the facility and its program meet the business selection criteria:

- Facility’s participation in the local Blue Plan’s BlueCard Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) Network.
- Surgeon participation in the local Blue Plan’s BlueCard PPO network.
- Local Blue Plan Criteria, if applicable.
- Facility and its corporate family conflict with BCBSA logos and trademarks.

**Cost of Care**
The process to incorporate cost of care measures into the program’s selection criteria is designed to provide a nationally consistent, equitable, and objective evaluation. The following components will be evaluated to determine if a facility meets the cost efficiency criteria:

**Cost Data Source**
Evaluation metrics and national thresholds are determined based on analysis of existing global contract agreements and Blue claims data. In some service areas eligibility decisions are based upon the summed costs incurred during an episode of care using Blue claims data only. Cost of care is not evaluated for transplant procedure types where there is insufficient availability of data nationally.

**Risk and Geographic Adjustments**
Cost metrics may be adjusted for patient-level risk factors, including co-morbidities. Additionally, a geographic adjustment factor may be applied to each episode to account for geographic cost variations in delivering care.

**Deriving a Cost Measure and Setting the Cost Thresholds**
National Blue claims data are aggregated into episodes and the distribution of costs is evaluated to determine thresholds. Statistical trimming or winsorizing of outlier cases may be applied. Global contracts are compared against the thresholds to determine criteria eligibility. Cost data in some service areas will be aggregated and conformed to a facility cost index. Facility level cost indexes are then evaluated in comparison to a National Cost Threshold for each procedure type which is established with consideration for both geographic accessibility and cost savings.

**Use of Facility-level Cost Information**
Information displayed on Blue Distinction’s public website at [www.bcbs.com](http://www.bcbs.com) will confirm that the facility is designated as a Blue Distinction Center or Blue Distinction Center+ and that it met the program’s transparent national selection criteria. BCBSA may share a facility’s individual Provider Survey responses (Raw Data) and results (Scores) with BCBSA’s member Plans and, pursuant to a confidentiality agreement, Member Plans’ current and prospective accounts, for purposes of evaluation, care management, quality improvement, and Member Plans’ design of customized products and networks. BCBSA may combine a facility’s Raw Data and Scores together with other facilities’ data to create aggregate information for public dissemination, provided that such aggregate information will not identify the facility by name, and will not contain any Protected Health Information (PHI).