

## BlueDistinction® Centers for Cellular Immunotherapy – CAR-T

Blue Distinction is a national designation awarded by Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) Plans to recognize providers that demonstrate expertise in delivering quality specialty care – safely, effectively, and cost-efficiently. The goal of the program is to help patients find both quality and value for their specialty care needs, while providing a credible foundation on which employers may customize their employee benefits.

### Distinction in Local Communities and Nationwide

The Blue Distinction Centers for Cellular Immunotherapy program aims to improve patient outcomes and cost for members beginning with individuals undergoing chimeric antigen receptor T cell (CAR-T) therapies, which are genetically-modified autologous T cell immunotherapies that may bring new treatment options for certain cancer patients. The treatment involves the genetic re-engineering of a patient's white blood cells. Two CAR-T therapies have been approved recently by the FDA to treat certain patients with leukemia (Kymriah™) and lymphoma (Yescarta™ and Kymriah). The complexity and expertise needed to deliver these treatments supports identifying centers of excellence, through this program. Providers that have been identified by a product manufacturer certification program to deliver CAR-T therapy will be invited to participate in this Blue Distinction program's designation process. The program will continue to expand in the future, as new treatments become FDA approved.

Since these new CAR-T therapies have been recently introduced into clinical use, current insight into the episode of care and optimal clinical pathways is limited. As the Blue Distinction program and its selection criteria evolve, we will continue to work with the medical community to identify meaningful clinical measures of quality and establish outcomes data to guide quality improvement for patient care.

Designation as a Blue Distinction Center for Cellular Immunotherapy differentiates providers locally, as well as nationally. This highly respected designation acknowledges the expertise providers have demonstrated and their commitment to improving quality and affordability. Designations are awarded based on quality criteria that support delivery of timely, coordinated, multidisciplinary, evidence-based care with a focus on quality improvement and patient-centered care.

In addition to meeting quality and business criteria, each designated facility is required to have a payment model for CAR-T specialty pharmacy products with their local Blue Plan that meets the value criteria, which includes protection against mark-up over the wholesale acquisition cost (WAC). Although a BDC+ designation is not offered at this time, the initial BDC designation incorporates an expectation of cost value; a BDC+ level may be added in a future designation enhancement, once episode based cost of care may be measured and risk adjusted meaningfully.

As the program evolves for a re-designation cycle, targeted for 2021, a global episode based payment model including medical care services is anticipated to be added as an additional requirement.

While the new Blue Distinction Centers for Cellular Immunotherapy program launches in January 2019, designations will be awarded on an ongoing basis, and the program will continue to expand as new providers become certified and eligible for designation.

For more program information, please visit [Blue Distinction Specialty Care](#) page on [bcbs.com](#).