



BlueDistinction® Centers for Gene Therapy – Ocular Disorders

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 Gene Therapy program aims to improve patient outcomes and cost for members beginning with individuals with ocular disorders, (initially, including confirmed retinal dystrophy associated with a certain inherited genetic mutation). This program focuses on a new gene therapy (Luxturna™) which has been approved by the FDA to treat patients with a specific type of inherited blindness. The treatment introduces a genetically modified healthy version of the gene and offers a new treatment option for patients where none existed in the past. The complexity and expertise needed to deliver this treatment supports identifying centers of excellence, through this program. Providers whose program has been identified and publicly listed as qualified to provide ocular gene therapy, under the relevant ocular gene therapy program of at least one manufacturer of an FDA approved ocular gene therapy, will be invited to participate in this Blue Distinction Program's evaluation process. The program will continue to expand in the future, as new treatments become FDA approved.

Since gene therapy for this ocular disorder therapy has been recently introduced into clinical use, current insight into the episode of care and optimal clinical pathway 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 Gene Therapy 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 provider is required to have a payment model for Gene Therapy for Ocular Disorder 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 Blue Distinction Center+ (BDC+) designation is not offered at this time, the initial BDC designation incorporates an expectation of cost value; a BDC+ level designation 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 Gene Therapy program launches in January 2019, designations will be awarded on an ongoing basis, and the program will continue to expand as new providers become eligible for designation.

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