Blue Distinction Specialty Care Program is a national designation program, awarded by local Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies, recognizing healthcare providers that demonstrate expertise in delivering quality and affordable health care to meet consumers’ specialty care needs—safely, effectively, and cost-efficiently.

Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants consists of a national network of transplant centers that provide comprehensive transplant services through a coordinated, streamlined referral management program. The Transplants program will continue to focus on helping consumers find both higher quality and more affordable healthcare for their specialty care needs through the Blue Distinction national designation.

Program Design

The 2019 Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants - Bone Marrow/Stem Cell programs consist of two transplant program designations and continues to be a combined Autologous and Allogeneic Bone Marrow/Stem Cell program. Providers may apply for either of the following Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants - Bone Marrow/Stem Cell programs:

- Adult Autologous/Allogeneic Bone Marrow/Stem Cell
- Pediatric Autologous/Allogeneic Bone Marrow/Stem Cell

The Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants - Bone Marrow/Stem Cell programs will continue to use information provided by a facility in the Provider Survey and public data available from the Transplant Center-Specific Survival Report from the Stem Cell Therapeutic Outcomes Database (SCTOD) publicly reported by the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP).

The following information explains how quality, business and cost evaluation components will be used to evaluate an applicant provider. Final selection criteria for quality, business, and cost, including specific scoring thresholds required for eligibility as a Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants – Bone Marrow/Stem Cell programs will be published separately and posted publicly at www.bcbs.com.

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. Providers may be evaluated for Quality in the following domains for the Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants - Bone Marrow/Stem Cell programs:
## Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants - Bone Marrow/Stem Cell Programs

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## Business

The following components are evaluated to determine if the Provider and its program meet the business selection criteria:

- Participation by Provider in the local Blue Plan’s BlueCard Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) Network.
- Participation by physicians who perform transplant procedures in the local Blue Plan’s BlueCard PPO network.
- Provider and its corporate family meet BCBSA criteria for avoiding conflicts with BCBSA logos and trademarks.
- Local Blue Plan Business Criteria*, if applicable.

*Local Blue Plan Criteria may consist of additional business criteria beyond the national criteria, at the discretion of the local Blue Plan.
Cost of Care

The process to incorporate cost of care measures into the selection criteria is designed to provide a nationally consistent, equitable, and objective evaluation. If a provider meets quality and business selection criteria, then the following components will be evaluated to determine if a provider meets the cost of care criteria. Additionally, a local Blue Plan may establish additional cost criteria beyond the national criteria, at the discretion of the local Blue Plan.

Cost Data Source
Evaluation metrics and national thresholds are determined based on analysis of existing global contract agreements and Blue Plan claims data. In some service areas, eligibility decisions are based upon the summed costs incurred during an episode of care using Blue Plan 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 Plan 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 Provider-level Cost Information
Information displayed on Blue Distinction’s public website at www.bcbs.com will confirm that the provider is designated for Transplants and that it met the program’s transparent national selection criteria. BCBSA may share a provider’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 provider’s Raw Data and Scores together with other providers’ data to create aggregate information for public dissemination, provided that such aggregate information will not identify the provider by name, and will not contain any Protected Health Information (PHI).