

## Out-of-Area Services

### OVERVIEW

Blue Care Network has a variety of relationships with other Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Licensees referred to generally as “Inter-Plan Arrangements.” These Inter-Plan Arrangements operate under rules and procedures issued by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. Whenever the member, accesses health care services outside the geographic area we serve, the claim for those services may be processed through one of these Inter-Plan Arrangements. The Inter-Plan Arrangements are described generally below.

Typically, when accessing care outside the geographic area BCN serves, the member obtains care from health care providers that have a contractual agreement (“participating providers”) with the local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Licensee in that other geographic area (“Host Blue”). In some instances, the member may obtain care from providers in the Host Blue geographic area that do not have a contractual agreement (“nonparticipating providers”) with the Host Blue. BCN remains responsible for fulfilling our contractual obligations to the member. Our payment practices in both instances are described below.

BCN covers only limited health care services received outside of our Service Area. As used in this section “Out-of-Area Covered Healthcare Services” include, emergency care, urgent care, and/or follow-up care obtained outside the geographic area we serve, subject to BCN coverage rules. Any other services will not be covered when processed through any Inter-Plan Arrangements, unless authorized by the member’s primary care physician or BCN.

### INTER-PLAN ARRANGEMENTS ELIGIBILITY – CLAIM TYPES

All claim types are eligible to be processed through Inter-Plan Arrangements, as described above, except for all dental care benefits except when paid as medical claims/benefits, and those prescription drug benefits or vision care benefits that may be administered by a third party contracted by BCN to provide the specific service or services.

#### A. BlueCard® Program

The BlueCard® Program is an Inter-Plan Arrangement. Under this Arrangement, when the member accesses out-of-area covered health care services outside the BCN Service Area, the Host Blue will be responsible for contracting and handling all interactions with its participating providers.

The financial terms of the BlueCard Program are described generally below.

### LIABILITY CALCULATION METHOD PER CLAIM

Unless subject to a fixed dollar copayment, the calculation of the member liability on claims for out-of-area covered health care services processed through the BlueCard program will be based on the lower of the providers billed charges for out-of-area covered health care services or the negotiated price made available to us by the Host Blue.

Host Blues determines a negotiated price, which is reflected in the terms of each Host Blue’s health care provider contracts. The negotiated price made available to BCN by the Host Blue may be represented by one of the following:

(i) An actual price. An actual price is a negotiated rate of payment in effect at the time a claim is processed without any other increases or decreases.

(ii) An estimated price. An estimated price is a negotiated rate of payment in effect at the time a claim is processed, reduced or increased by a percentage to take into account certain payments negotiated with the provider and other claim- and nonclaim-related transactions. Such transactions may include, but are not limited to, anti-fraud and abuse recoveries, provider refunds not applied on a claim-specific basis, retrospective settlements and performance-related bonuses or incentives.

(iii) An average price. An average price is a percentage of billed charges for out-of-area covered health care services in effect at the time a claim is processed representing the aggregate payments negotiated by the Host Blue with all of its providers or a similar classification of its providers and other claim- and nonclaim-related transactions. Such transactions may include the same ones as noted above for an estimated price.

The Host Blue determines whether or not it will use an actual price, an estimated price or an average price. The use of estimated or average pricing may result in a difference (positive or negative) between the price the member pays on a specific claim and the actual amount the Host Blue pays to the provider. However, the BlueCard Program requires that the amount paid by the member is a final price; no future price adjustment will result in increases or decreases to the pricing of past claims.

## **B. Nonparticipating Providers Outside the BCN Service Area**

### **1. Member Liability Calculation**

When out-of-area covered health care services are provided outside the BCN Service Area by nonparticipating providers, the amount the member pays for such services will generally be based on either the Host Blue's nonparticipating provider local payment or the pricing arrangements required by applicable state law. In these situations, you may be responsible for the difference between the amount that the nonparticipating health care provider bills and the payment BCN will make for out-of-area covered health care services as set forth in this paragraph. Payments for out-of-network emergency services will be governed by applicable federal and state law.

### **2. Exceptions**

In some cases, BCN may pay claims from nonparticipating providers for out-of-area covered health care services based on the provider's billed charge. This may occur in situations where you did not have reasonable access to a participating provider, as determined by BCN in our sole and absolute discretion or by applicable state law. In other cases, BCN may pay such a claim based on the payment BCN would make if BCN were paying a nonparticipating provider for the same covered health care services inside the BCN Service Area. This may occur where the Host Blue's corresponding payment would be more than the BCN in-service area nonparticipating provider payment. BCN may choose to negotiate a payment with such a provider on an exception basis.

Unless otherwise stated, in any of these exception situations, the member may be responsible for the difference between the amount that the nonparticipating provider bills and the payment BCN will make for the covered services as set forth in this paragraph.

## **C. Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core**

Members outside the United States, (the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) may be able to take advantage of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core when accessing covered health care services. The Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core is available in the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and is unlike the BlueCard Program in certain ways. For instance, although the Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core assists the member with

accessing a network of inpatient, outpatient and professional providers, the network is not served by a Host Blue. As such, when a member receives care from providers outside the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the member will typically have to pay the provider and submit the claims to obtain reimbursement for these services.

- **Inpatient Services**

In most cases, if a member contacts the Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core Service Center for assistance, hospitals will not require payment for covered inpatient hospital services, except for any cost sharing owed. In such cases, the Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core contracting hospital will submit the member claims to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core Service Center to initiate claims processing. However, if the member paid in full at the time of service, the member must submit a claim to obtain reimbursement for Covered Services. **The member must contact BCN to obtain authorization for nonemergency inpatient services.**

- **Outpatient Services**

Physicians, urgent care centers and other outpatient providers located outside the BlueCard service area will typically require payment in full at the time of service. The member must submit a claim to obtain reimbursement for covered health care services.

- **Submitting a Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core Claim**

Members who pay for covered services outside the BlueCard service area, must submit a claim to obtain reimbursement. For institutional and professional claims, the member should complete a Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core claim form and send the it with the provider's itemized bill to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core Service Center (the address is on the form) to initiate claims processing. The claim form is available from us, the Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Core Service Center or online at [bcbsglobalcore.com](http://bcbsglobalcore.com). Members who need assistance with the claim submissions should call the Blue Cross Blue Shield Global Service Center at 1.800.810.BLUE (2583) or collect at 1.804.673.1177, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.