



Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

# Transitioning to the Availity® provider portal

## Frequently asked questions for providers

For Blue Cross commercial, Medicare Plus Blue<sup>SM</sup>, Blue Care Network commercial and BCN Advantage<sup>SM</sup>

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In September 2020, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network announced in [The Record](#) and in [BCN Provider News](#) that we're moving to the Availity® provider portal. This is expected to occur towards the end of 2021 or in early 2022. This document contains frequently asked questions about this transition.

## General information

### What is Availity?

Availity® is a company that operates a multi-payer provider portal with easy-to-use online tools for health care providers. Established in 2001, Availity connects over a million providers and health plans in the United States with tools for patient eligibility and benefits, claims status and authorization to facilitate the business side of health care.

### What is a multi-payer provider portal?

A multi-payer provider portal is a website where health care providers can find information for multiple health plans. This means a health care provider can look up member eligibility and benefits or the status of a claim for patients with coverage from different health plans all while logged into the same system. Near the end of 2021 or in early 2022, Availity will have member information for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Blue Care Network, Aetna® and Humana® in Michigan. In fact, 82% of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's out-of-state members live in states with a Blue Cross plan that is already using Availity.

### Why are Blue Cross and BCN moving to Availity?

Blue Cross and BCN providers responded to a survey in 2019, providing feedback on what they like about our current provider portal and areas where we can improve. We looked closely at our opportunities to offer an enhanced online experience and found that Availity meets many of the criteria that you told us matter to you.

In addition to offering enhanced security to maintain compliance with federal privacy and security laws and reduce opportunities for fraud and abuse, Availity can offer the following improvements:

- Consistent benefit and eligibility functionality across product lines, including an enhanced patient ID card image
- The ability to check referral and authorization requirements by patient
- An automated claims appeal process

- The ability to upload documents
- A search function for content on the website

## The transition and registration

### When are Blue Cross and BCN moving to Availity?

We expect the transition will occur near the end of 2021 or in early 2022. We don't have specific dates yet. We're working to test the tools and ensure your experience is positive before opening access to Blue Cross and BCN information on Availity. Read our provider publications, *The Record* and *BCN Provider News*, to learn the latest information about the transition to Availity. We encourage you to [subscribe to our publications](#) if you haven't already.

### What do providers need to do for this transition?

Providers who already use Availity with other payers don't need to do anything. When Blue Cross and BCN information is available on Availity, you'll have access to it.

Providers who are not currently registered with Availity will need to register.

### Our office already uses Availity. When can we start using it for Blue Cross and BCN?

We ask that you continue to use Blue Cross and BCN's Provider Secured Services, including the tools within web-DENIS, until we announce that our information within Availity is ready for use. We want to make sure that everything is working correctly before you transition to using Availity for your online Blue Cross and BCN information needs. Please watch our provider newsletters, *The Record* and *BCN Provider News*, for more information.

### Will we sign in with the same username and password?

If you're already registered with Availity, you will use your same Availity username and password you use today. Your username and password for Blue Cross and BCN's Provider Secured Services will continue until this system shuts down in 2022.

### How soon should providers register for Availity?

Watch for information in our provider publications, *The Record* and *BCN Provider News*. When it's time to register, we'll announce it there.

## What is the Availity contact information for registering?

With Availity, an individual in your office or facility serves as the administrator. That individual can register with Availity online. The office administrator can begin the registration process at [availity.com](https://availity.com)\* by clicking on *Register* in the upper right corner of the screen. After registering an organization, the administrator can add other users from the administrator's organization.

To learn more about registering and getting started with Availity, go to [Get Started with Availity Provider Portal](#).\*

If you need assistance with an existing account or have started the registration process and are experiencing issues, you can contact 1-800-AVAILITY (282-4548), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

While you can register with Availity at any time, you will not be able to view Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network information until we go live later in 2021 or early in 2022.

## Is there anything providers need to do now?

Providers who don't currently use Availity, can prepare for Availity by doing two things:

1. Select someone in your organization (office, practice or facility) to serve as the primary administrator. This person will handle access to Availity for other users, speeding up the enrollment process. The primary administrator will be able to add team members or change access with just a few keystrokes.

The organization should also delegate some team members to assist the primary administrator. These individuals can handle requests when the primary administrator is not available. For more information, see the January issues of *The Record* and *BCN Provider News*.

2. For the best experience and a smooth transition to Availity, review the technical requirements for optimum performance. You can find these requirements on the [Availity website](#).\* Scroll down and click on the *Requirements* tab.

## Can there be one administrator for multiple providers who each bill under their own NPI and are not a group?

Yes. In Availity, one person can be the administrator for multiple organizations, but each individual user within the organization will need to have their own unique username and password.

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## Availity functionality

### **Will providers be able to use Availity to review Medicare and Medicaid eligibility for Blue Cross and non-Blue Cross patients statewide?**

Medicare and Medicaid benefit eligibility will be available in the Availity portal for any patient. You will need to select the appropriate payer (Medicare or Medicaid) in transaction dropdowns.

### **Will providers be able to search by name and date of birth for existing contracts?**

The Availity eligibility tool allows users to view active and inactive contracts with the ability to search for eligibility by the member's first name, last name, and date of birth.

### **Is there a limit to the number of claims viewable in Availity by NPI?**

Search results in Availity are returned with 50 per page. There is no limit to the number of pages.

### **Will providers be able to access payment and denial information through Availity?**

Yes, payment information, including the check number, date and amount, and denial information will be available within the check and claim payment tabs. You will continue to have access to Blue Cross and BCN remittance advice statements and electronic vouchers.

### **Will providers be able to access electronic vouchers on Availity?**

Yes, electronic vouchers and remittance advice statements will be available on Availity.

### **Will providers be able to email claim questions and receive a response through Availity?**

No. At this time, the process for claim inquiries is not changing. Please follow the same processes as you do today.

### **Will providers use Availity to perform enrollment and credentialing tasks?**

No. Enrollment and credentialing will be conducted using the same tools you use today. The Blue Cross and BCN enrollment and credentialing requirements and processes will

not change with the introduction of the Availity portal. The only exception is how you access the Provider Enrollment and Change Self-Service tool. While the tool will not change, after we transition to the Availity portal, you'll need to access it through Availity.

## Provider Secured Services and web-DENIS

### Is web-DENIS going away?

Yes. Once all of Blue Cross and BCN's online tools have successfully moved over to Availity, web-DENIS will be shut down.

### When will web-DENIS be shut down?

The plan is to keep web-DENIS in operation during the transition. It will not be shut down until sometime in 2022. We'll announce the closing of web-DENIS in our provider publications, *The Record* and *BCN Provider News*.

### Is Blue Cross and BCN's Provider Secured Services going away?

Many of the tools within Blue Cross and BCN's Provider Secured Services will continue, but you'll get to them a new way once we transition to Availity. In the future, you'll log in to Availity and then click on our Payer Space site where you'll find these tools.

### Which of Blue Cross and BCN's online tools will not change with the transition to Availity?

The following tools will continue after the transition to Availity. The only change will be that you'll access them through Availity. In the future, you'll log in to Availity and then click on our Payer Space site where you'll find these tools.

- e-referral (for managing referrals and authorization requests)
- BCBSM Pharmacy Benefit – Medication Prior Authorization
- BCBSM, BCN and Medicare Advantage PPO Medical Benefit – Medication Prior Authorization/NovoLogix
- Health e-Blue<sup>SM</sup> (patient data registry and treatment opportunities for primary care physicians and groups)
- Benefit Explainer (benefit detail for PPO commercial members with coverage from employer groups located within Michigan)
- Provider Enrollment and Change Self-Service

- BCBSM Behavioral Health Preservice Review
- Clear Claim Connection™ (for Michigan providers to view claim edits)
- Internet Claims Tool
- BCN Negative Balance Reports
- BCBSM Qualification Form

### Which of Blue Cross and BCN's online tools will change with the transition to Availity?

Many of the tools you access through web-DENIS will change, with the exception of Benefit Explainer which you'll still be able to access. After transitioning to Availity, you'll use Availity's applications for eligibility and benefits and claims status inquiry. There will be training available to help you use these tools if they're new to you.

## Questions

### I have additional questions that aren't answered in this FAQ document. How can I get them answered?

If your question is about the transition to Availity, you can submit it to [ProviderPortalQuestions@bcbsm.com](mailto:ProviderPortalQuestions@bcbsm.com). Questions received through this email will be considered for adding to this FAQ document.

If you need immediate assistance or have a question specific to a certain member or situation, use our website resources or contact Provider Inquiry.

Web resources:

- Log in as a provider at [bcbsm.com](http://bcbsm.com)
- Find prior authorization information for Michigan providers at [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](http://ereferrals.bcbsm.com)
- Find prior authorization information for non-Michigan providers and medical policy information by going to [bcbsm.com/providers](http://bcbsm.com/providers) and clicking on [Quick Links](#)

Provider Inquiry numbers are available at [bcbsm.com/providers](http://bcbsm.com/providers). Click on [Contact Us](#). Then click on the type of provider you are; then click *Provider Inquiry*.

Call the Blue Cross Web Support Help Desk at 1-877-258-3932 if you have problems with the current Blue Cross provider portal.



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\*Clicking this link means that you're leaving the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network website. While we recommend this site, we're required to let you know we're not responsible for its content.