

# Blue Advantage Insight Newsletter

December 2023

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Louisiana

Blue adVantage (HMO) | Blue adVantage (PPO)

## New Provider Types Eligible to Participate in Blue Advantage

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is expanding provider type eligibility in Medicare Advantage networks. Beginning January 1, 2024, the following provider types and specialties are eligible to participate:

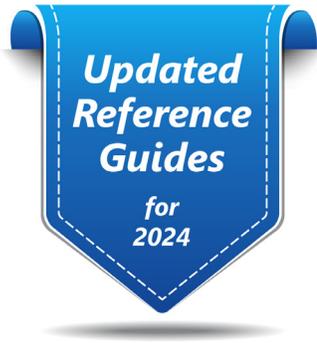
- Addiction Counselor
- Drug & Alcohol Counselor
- Licensed Professional Counselor
- Marriage & Family Counselor

Blue Advantage (HMO) and Blue Advantage (PPO) are our Medicare Advantage networks. If you are one of the above provider types currently not participating in Blue Advantage and wish to join, please contact our Provider Contracting Department at [provider.contracting@bcbsla.com](mailto:provider.contracting@bcbsla.com) or call 1-800-716-2299, option 1.

## Required D-SNP Training in 2024

CMS requires training for providers in the Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNP). In 2024, Blue Advantage will make this training available to providers. Be on the lookout for new information on this soon.





## Provider Resources are Online

Blue Advantage released updated versions of its provider manual, multiple forms and other reference guides for use in 2024. We encourage providers to review these documents carefully to understand the changes that will apply for services on and after January 1, 2024.

The following updated documents include a “2024” marker:

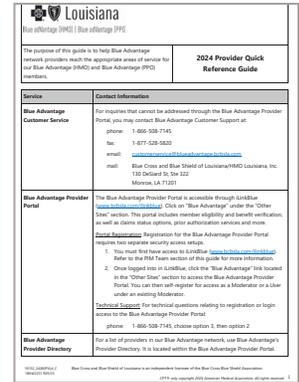
### Blue Advantage Provider Administrative Manual

Our provider manual includes contact information, billing guidelines, general policies and more. In the back of the manual there is a Summary of Changes that outlines changes that apply for January 1, 2024, and after.



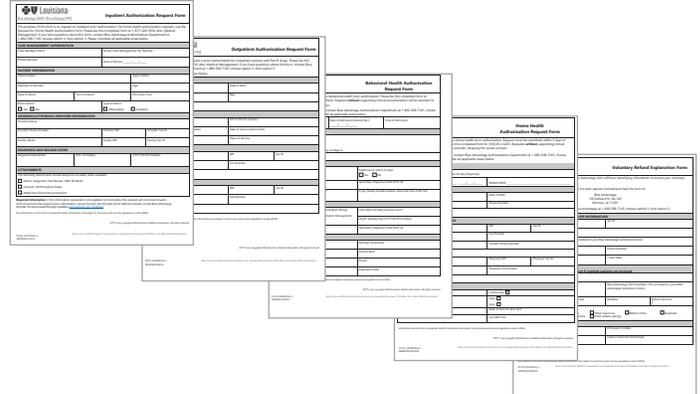
### Blue Advantage Provider Quick Reference Guide

This guide includes the full lists of services that require prior authorization, including Part B drugs.



### Updated Blue Advantage Provider Forms

- Inpatient Authorization Request Form
- Outpatient Authorization Request Form
- Behavioral Health Authorization Request Form
- Home Health Authorization Request Form
- Voluntary Refund Explanation Form



### Available Online

Blue Advantage materials can be found online in two places:

- On the Blue Advantage Provider Portal – log into iLinkBlue ([www.bcbsla.com/ilinkblue](http://www.bcbsla.com/ilinkblue)) then click on “Blue Advantage” under the “Other Sites” section.
- On our Provider page – visit [www.bcbsla.com/providers](http://www.bcbsla.com/providers) and click on “Go to BA Resources” at the bottom of the page.

## Winter Means Respiratory Illness Season

The holiday season is here, which can mean the peak time for respiratory and seasonal illnesses.

“We usually see a spike in colds, flu, COVID-19 and other diseases like strep throat and stomach viruses during the wintertime,” said Blue Advantage Medical Director Dr. Lawrence Simon. “That’s because cooler weather tends to make people spend more time indoors and participate in larger gatherings to celebrate holidays. These factors create an environment where contagious illnesses can spread easily.”

Encourage your patients to think about protecting themselves and their families from getting sick or spreading illness. That includes being up to date on vaccines and wellness visits. Talk through the latest flu and COVID-19 vaccines with your patients, as well as the new vaccine for RSV. Find out who needs which vaccines, schedule future appointments to get them, and discuss risk factors.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated COVID-19 and RSV vaccine clinical considerations. You can find these recommendations, including guidance on potential side effects, at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/current-vis.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/current-vis.html).

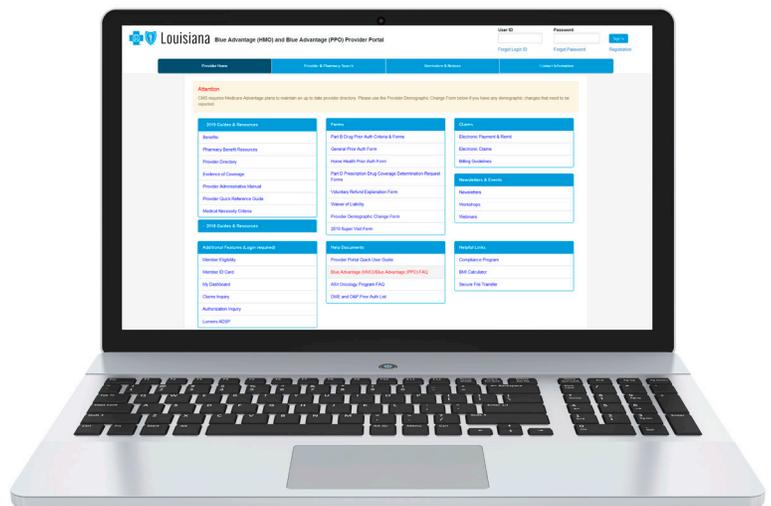
Currently, the CDC recommends the RSV vaccine for adults age 60 and older, and the updated COVID-19 vaccine for everyone six months and older. This includes the updated 2023-2024 formula for those that have previously received the vaccination.

Encourage flu shots for your older patients, as well as those with long-term conditions like heart disease, diabetes or asthma.

Blue Advantage covers flu shots and COVID-19 vaccinations/boosters at \$0. If you have questions about vaccine coverage for a patient, contact Customer Service at the number on the member ID card.

## Things to Remember When Using the Blue Advantage Provider Portal

- Cookies must be enabled for the portal site in order to log in and access all portal features.
- Google Chrome is the best browser to access the Blue Advantage Provider Portal.
- The portal requires multi-factor authentication (MFA) when logging in.



## Pay for Performance Medicare Advantage Star Rating Incentive

Blue Advantage primary care providers (PCPs) play an important role closing gaps in care for preventive wellness and chronic diseases. Blue Advantage is optimizing reimbursement for Blue Advantage PCPs through a Pay for Performance Medicare Advantage Star Rating Incentive (P4P MA SI) module, related to outcomes surrounding population health measures.

All PCPs participating in a Blue Advantage network were eligible to receive performance incentive payments for calendar year 2023 and subsequent calendar years based on closing gaps in care for population health measures. Blue Advantage administers the P4P MA SI, and will be distributing performance reports and payments.



We structured the P4P MA SI like the Blue Advantage Primary Care Provider Pay for Performance (QB BA PCP P4P) module that is part of the Quality Blue (QB) program. For BA PCPs in the QB program, self-contracted or contracted with another QB Provider, your QB BA PCP P4P exhibit, if applicable, remains the same.

The MA P4P module measures and cut points for Performance Year 2024 were delivered via email to all QB Program and Contract functional representatives on November 1.

We continue to look for opportunities to improve outcomes on the population health measures for our Blue Advantage members. Please reach out to [provider.relations@bcbsla.com](mailto:provider.relations@bcbsla.com) if you have any questions.

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## Advanced Beneficiary Notices

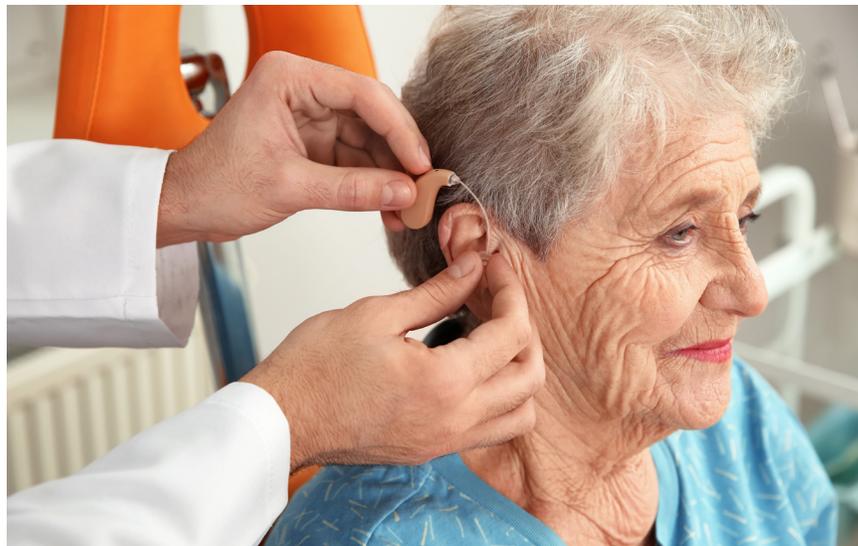
Advanced Beneficiary Notices (ABNs) cannot be used for Medicare Advantage plans like Blue Advantage HMO and PPO plans. To hold members financially liable for non-covered services not clearly excluded in the member's Evidence of Coverage (EOC), Blue Advantage providers must do the following:

- If the provider knows, or has a reason to know that a service may not be covered, request a prior authorization from Blue Advantage.
- If the coverage request is denied, an Integrated Denial Notice (IDN) will be issued to the member and requesting provider.
- If the member desires to receive the denied services after the IDN is issued, the provider may collect from the member for the specific services outlined in the IDN after services are rendered.

## Flex Cards for Blue Advantage Members are Available

Blue Advantage members receive a Blue Advantage Flex Card to use for out-of-pocket costs on approved medical products. This prepaid debit card has different amounts based on the individual member's contract benefits, but can be used for items such as:

- Prescription hearing aids.
- Eyewear like eyeglasses and contact lenses.
- A quarterly allowance\* for other over-the-counter health-related products at major retailers or online.



Claims for exams and visits must be separate from Flex transactions. For medical claims, use the Blue Advantage member ID card and bill claims to Blue Advantage. Use the Flex Card for other purchases.

For example, if a member has a scheduled eye exam and wishes to purchase new glasses or contacts, file the eye exam as a claim through Blue Advantage. The member can use the Flex Card when selecting their frames or contacts. If the cost of a member's eyewear purchase is more than their Flex Card's eyewear allowance, the member is responsible for the remaining amount owed.

Being an in-network provider does not guarantee Flex Card transactions will process. To ensure Flex Card funds debit properly, you must have the following merchant category codes in your point-of-sale system:

### Vision

- 8042 – Optometrists & Ophthalmologists
- 8043 – Opticians, optical goods and eyeglasses
- 8044 – Optical goods and services

### Hearing

- 5975 – Hearing aid sales, service and supply stores
- 8011 – Doctors not classified elsewhere
- 8099 – Medical services and health practitioners not classified elsewhere

If you are unable to process these transactions, advise members to request a reimbursement form from Blue Advantage by calling the Flex Card Help Line at 1-833-952-2772 (TTY 711) Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

If you have questions about this program, please contact Blue Advantage Customer Service at 1-866-508-7145 (TTY 711), or email [customerservice@blueadvantagela.com](mailto:customerservice@blueadvantagela.com).

\* For 2024 D-SNP members will have a combined monthly allowance for over-the-counter health-related products and healthy foods.

## Talking Medication Adherence with Patients

Blue Advantage members—your patients—face a variety of barriers to their health and well-being. One of those barriers is following and sticking to the medication regimens that they are prescribed.

Patients struggle with medications for any number of reasons. Maybe they do not understand how to take their medication. They may be experiencing side effects, or do not like how the medication makes them feel. Maybe they are not seeing the expected results. Maybe they have been taking the medication for some time, and do not feel the need to continue.

Your ability to talk to your patients as their healthcare provider is vital in helping them adhere to medication regimens.

Here are some things to think about that might help your patients improve their medication adherence:

- If possible, prescribe 3-month supplies of medications.
- Consider prescribing lower-cost generics medications when available.
- Discuss any changes in doses or instructions, and update prescriptions with the patient's pharmacist as necessary.
- Talk through questions with your patients about their prescription: why you prescribed it, potential side effects, specific instructions (such as whether to take it with meals) or the what and why of the regimen duration.
- Encourage auto-refills, refill reminders and medication synchronization at their pharmacies.
- Make your patients aware of in-network, mail-order pharmacy options, which are often lower-cost.

Discuss barriers your patients may have to medication adherence. It may not only benefit their health, but also help to broaden their trust and relationship with you as their provider.



## Who Do I Contact if I Have Questions?

For claims status, member eligibility, benefit verification and care management inquiries that cannot be resolved through the Blue Advantage Provider Portal, contact Blue Advantage Customer Service at 1-866-508-7145.

For questions specific to the Blue Advantage quality program, contact your Provider Relations representative or send an email to [provider.relations@bcbsla.com](mailto:provider.relations@bcbsla.com).



## Looking For Blue Advantage Resources?

Blue Advantage consistently reviews and updates its provider resource materials. This ensures that you have access to current information. We have our Blue Advantage Resources page, which can be accessed through the Blue Advantage Provider Portal, under "Blue Advantage Resources."

You may also access Blue Advantage Resources through the Blue Cross Provider page, [www.bcbsla.com/providers](http://www.bcbsla.com/providers), by clicking "Go to BA Resources" at the bottom of the page.

The Blue Advantage Resources page contains:

- The *Blue Advantage Provider Administrative Manual* and the *Blue Advantage Provider Portal User Guide*.
- Past issues of this newsletter.
- Webinar and workshop presentations, including the 2023 "New to Blue Advantage" and "Blue Advantage PCP Incentive Coupon" webinar presentations.

## Looking For Blue Advantage Providers?

If one of your Blue Advantage patients needs care from another provider, <https://blueadvantage.bcbsla.com/provider/providersearch> allows you to search for Blue Advantage network providers by category and specialty, with filters by city, parish/county, and ZIP code.

## Do We Have Your Current Contact Information?

Use the Provider Update Request Form to submit updates or corrections to your practice information. The form is available online at [www.bcbsla.com/providers](http://www.bcbsla.com/providers) > Resources > Forms.

View this newsletter online at [www.bcbsla.com/ilinkblue](http://www.bcbsla.com/ilinkblue), then click on “Blue Advantage” under Other Sites.

## Blue Advantage Insight

*Blue Advantage Insight* is a publication to keep our network providers informed on the latest Blue Advantage news. We encourage you to share this newsletter with your staff.

The content in this newsletter is for informational purposes only. Diagnosis, treatment recommendations and the provision of medical care services for Blue Advantage members are the responsibilities of healthcare professionals and facility providers.

## What's on the Provider Portal

### [www.bcbsla.com/ilinkblue](http://www.bcbsla.com/ilinkblue) > Blue Advantage

- Member Eligibility
- Claims Inquiry
- Authorization Inquiry
- Forms
- Help Documents
- Helpful Links
- Updated Manual
- Updated Quick Reference Guide

## Blue Advantage Resources

Visit the Blue Advantage Resources page to view reference materials, forms, past webinar and workshop slides, plus copies of this newsletter. Go to [www.bcbsla.com/providers](http://www.bcbsla.com/providers), then click “Go To BA Resources” at the bottom of the page.

## Important Contact Information

### Authorizations (including Case and Medical Management)

1-866-508-7145, choose option 3, then option 3

### Behavioral Health

1-866-508-7145, choose option 3, then option 3

### Blue Advantage Customer Service

1-866-508-7145

[customerservice@blueadvantagela.com](mailto:customerservice@blueadvantagela.com)

### Blue Advantage Provider Portal

1-866-508-7145, choose option 3, then option 2

### Provider Credentialing & Data Management

1-800-716-2299, option 2 (provider record information) [PCDMstatus@bcbsla.com](mailto:PCDMstatus@bcbsla.com)

### Pharmacy

1-800-935-6103/TTY:711

*For additional contact information on Blue Advantage services, please refer to our Provider Quick Reference Guide found on the Blue Advantage Provider Portal.*

**Please share this newsletter with your office staff.  
This and past newsletters are available on the Blue Advantage Provider Portal  
([www.bcbsla.com/ilinkblue](http://www.bcbsla.com/ilinkblue) > Blue Advantage).**