

## **Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q. What are Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care?**

**A.** The Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care are designated facilities that meet stringent quality criteria, as established by national organizations and expert clinician panels. Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care provide a full range of cardiac care services, including inpatient cardiac care, cardiac rehabilitation, cardiac catheterization and cardiac surgery. The program is voluntary and facilities may be subject to periodic reevaluation as criteria for the program continue to evolve.

### **Q. When is the Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care being launched?**

**A.** The Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care are being launched in Texas during 2007.

### **Q. How do you select a facility?**

**A.** The criteria used to designate the centers were designed by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association in collaboration with expert physician panels and national organizations. Criteria for Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care evaluate:

- Full-service, accredited inpatient hospital facility;
- Program must be performing a required volume of percutaneous coronary interventions and coronary artery bypass graft surgeries and provide a full range of services including inpatient cardiac care and cardiac rehabilitation;
- Sub-specialty board certification of cardiac team;
- Ongoing quality management and improvement programs; and
- Cardiac care processes and outcomes for acute myocardial infarction, heart-failure, percutaneous coronary interventions and coronary artery bypass graft surgery including evaluation of complication and mortality rates.

### **Q. Why is Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas launching the Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care?**

**A.** There is great variation among providers in terms of how specialty cardiac patients are evaluated and treated. The Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care are designated facilities that meet stringent quality criteria, as established by national organizations and expert clinician panels. By meeting these requirements, the Centers demonstrate better outcomes and consistency of care and provide greater value for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas members.

### **Q. What is the goal of the Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care program?**

**A.** The goal of the program is to give consumers the information they need about complex conditions and procedures and specialty care resources, empowering them to make more effective healthcare decisions.

### **Q. What does this say about hospitals that are not on the list? Are they not good quality facilities?**

**A.** Hospitals are not on the list because they either did not meet the minimum requirements or opted not to apply. Also, some hospitals don't perform enough heart procedures to be evaluated. There may be other high-quality institutions that chose not to be considered.

### **Q. What happens if a facility under the Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care program drops out of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas network?**

**A:** That facility would no longer be part of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas network and would therefore no longer be considered a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care.