

Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants?

A. The Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants are designated facilities that meet stringent quality criteria, as established by national organizations and expert clinician panels.

Q. Why were Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants needed?

A. There has been growing demand for transplants nationwide and considerable variation is seen in patient management, clinical outcomes, and costs for transplant services. The Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants 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 provide greater value for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas members.

Q. How do you select a facility?

A. Institutions are selected based on their ability to meet defined clinical criteria that are unique for each type of transplant. Panels of nationally recognized transplant researchers and physicians advise on selection criteria that are periodically updated in response to medical advances. Institutions are surveyed for the information in many areas, including:

- Volume of procedures
 - Duration of the transplant program
 - Patient outcome specific to the particular procedure
 - Transplant team training and experience
 - Facility licensure, accreditation, and transplant program certification
 - Patient selection process
 - Patient management protocol (treatment protocols for managing the patient's disease beginning with the pre-transplant evaluation through one-year follow-up post-transplant)
 - Education plan and support programs available for patient/family
 - Quality Assurance/Improvement program
 - Procedures for patient follow-up for at least 12 months post-transplant
- Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants provides institutions with written surveys to initiate the credentialing process. Fulfillment of the Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants eligibility requirement for one type of transplant does not qualify an institution for participation for other types of transplants. Each institutional transplant program is evaluated independently against established criteria and is required to have an initial on-site evaluation prior to selection.

Q. What transplant types does the Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants program examine?

A. The Blue Distinction Centers for Transplants program examines 8 transplant types: heart, heart/lung, lung, bone marrow (autologous and allogeneic), liver, liver/kidney, pancreas and kidney-pancreas.

Q. What are the benefits to a member for receiving treatment at one of these centers?

A. By meeting stringent quality criteria, the Centers demonstrate better outcomes and consistency of care and provide greater value for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas members.

Q. What happens if a facility under the Blue Distinction Center for Transplants 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 Transplant facility.