



**BLUE DISTINCTION SPECIALTY CARE**

# Centers of Excellence

Program Overview | 2022

## What is Blue Distinction Specialty Care?

Helping members find quality care at the right price is especially important when it comes to high-cost, complex care. Blue Distinction, **our national centers of excellence program**, makes it easier for employers to maximize quality and savings through benefit designs that encourage employees to choose providers who are delivering higher-quality care at a lower cost.

Blue Distinction focuses on doctors, hospitals and other health care facilities that excel in delivering safe, effective treatment for specialty procedures. The goal of the program is to help members find both quality and value for their specialty care needs, while providing a credible foundation for employers to design benefits tailored to meet quality and cost objectives.

### Blue Distinction Centers

Blue Distinction includes two levels of designation:

- **Blue Distinction Centers (BDC)** demonstrate quality care, treatment expertise and better overall patient results.
- **Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+)** meet BDC quality criteria, **plus** demonstrate more affordable care per episode on average.



#### Quality is key:

Only those providers that first meet Blue Distinction Centers' nationally established, objective quality criteria will be considered for designation as a BDC+.

### The Blue Distinction Difference

Blue Distinction is rooted in proven results, recognizing providers across 11 high-impact areas:

- Bariatric Surgery
- Cellular Immunotherapy—CAR-T \*
- Knee and Hip Replacement
- Substance Use Treatment and Recovery \*
- Cancer Care \*
- Fertility Care
- Maternity Care
- Transplants
- Cardiac Care
- Gene Therapy \*
- Spine Surgery

\*BDC designation level only

These specialty care areas were chosen because they involve procedures or episodes of care in areas of high or increasing demand with variation in quality and cost across providers.

Blue Distinction Centers are embedded in our broad PPO network, so all members have access to the BDC/BDC+ in their network.

## Proven Results: Better Quality, Greater Efficiency

Results confirm that Blue Distinction Centers offer meaningful quality differences for procedures in designated care categories, such as lower complication and readmission rates, when compared to non-designated providers. Overall, BDC+ providers are also more cost-efficient than non-designated providers, delivering significant cost savings across specialty areas, with more than 20% savings per episode on average.<sup>1</sup>

Bariatric Surgery	Cardiac Care	Fertility Care	Knee & Hip Replacement	Maternity Care	Spine Surgery	Substance Use Treatment and Recovery	Transplants
<b>Better Quality</b>							
<b>10% lower</b> ER visits	<b>17% lower</b> in-hospital mortality rate	<b>38% higher</b> single, live birth success rate	<b>7% lower</b> 30-day readmissions	<b>75% lower</b> early elective deliveries	<b>48% lower</b> reoperation rate (90-day lumbar)	<b>27% lower</b> readmission rate 90 days post-treatment	<b>14%+ better</b> 1-year graft survival rate on avg for adult solid organ transplants
<b>21% lower</b> readmissions	<b>12% lower</b> inappropriate procedure rate		<b>9% fewer</b> complications	<b>49% lower</b> episiotomy rate	<b>26% lower</b> readmission rate (30-day lumbar unplanned)	<b>14% better</b> prescribing patterns of MAT	<b>12%+ better</b> 1-year patient survival rate for adult and pediatric bone marrow/stem cell transplants
<b>29% lower</b> surgical site infection rate	<b>12% lower</b> bleeding complication rate			<b>24% lower</b> cesarean deliveries	<b>55% lower</b> reoperation rate (90-day cervical)	<b>9% better</b> continuation of care 90 days post-treatment using MAT	
<b>Greater Savings with Blue Distinction Centers+</b>							
<b>23%</b> average savings across procedure types	<b>21%</b> average savings across procedure types	<b>22%</b> average savings across procedure types	<b>21%</b> average savings across procedure types	<b>20%</b> average savings across procedure types	<b>27%</b> average savings across procedure types	<b>67%</b> average savings compared to non-BDC*	<b>34%</b> average savings across adult procedure types

\* BDC designation only

## Custom Benefit Designs

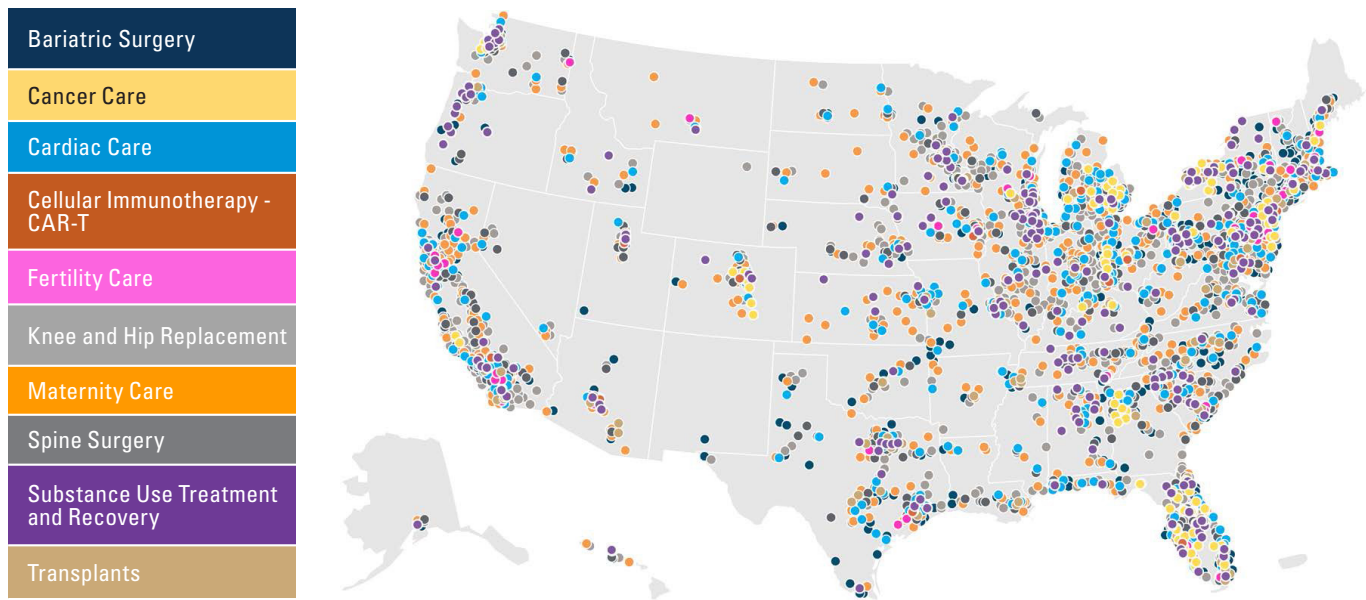
Self-funded employers can use the Blue Distinction program to emphasize these high-performing providers, using strategies like employee education, travel benefits and customized tiering within BDC/BDC+.

Sample Tier	Blue Distinction Designation	Sample Benefit Design	Sample Travel Benefit
Tier 1	BDC/BDC+	Highest benefit level (lowest cost-share and/or deductible)	Travel benefit included
Tier 2	In-network (Non-BDC)	Standard in-network benefit level	N/A
Tier 3	Out-of-network	Standard out-of-network benefit level	N/A

<sup>1</sup> BCBSA and registry data (where applicable), BDC/BDC+ eligible facilities vs. relevant comparison group. Results based on most recent designation cycle for each specialty. Savings based on BDC/BDC+ total episode cost.

## Blue Distinction Centers Across the U.S.

Today, more than 5,370 BDC and BDC+ designations have been awarded to more than 2,480 providers and facilities across all the top 100 metropolitan statistical areas.<sup>2</sup>



### Easy-to-Use Tools for Member Engagement

We make it a priority to give members the best-in-class tools they need to take an active role in their own health care decision-making.

**To look for available Blue Distinction Centers:**

- Visit the Blue Distinction Center Finder<sup>SM</sup> at **bcbs.com/blue-distinction-center/facility**.
- Use the Find Care tool at **bcbst.com** and use the **Blue Quality Programs** drop-down filter to see available BDC/BDC+ providers within Tennessee.
- Visit the National Directory and Hospital Finder<sup>SM</sup> at **provider.bcbs.com** to search for providers outside of Tennessee.
- Call the number on the back of your Member ID card.

<sup>2</sup>BCBSA data, January 2021

Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for providers located in its own service area; for details, contact your Local Blue Plan. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers’ need for affordable healthcare. Each provider’s cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Providers in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two Local Blue Plans’ areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on [www.bcbs.com](http://www.bcbs.com). Individual outcomes may vary. For details on a provider’s in-network status or your own policy’s coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plans are responsible for noncovered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.



1 Cameron Hill Circle | Chattanooga, TN 37402 | [bcbst.com](http://bcbst.com)