



BlueAdvantage Administrators of Arkansas

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

P.O. Box 1460
Little Rock, AR 72203-1460
blueadvantagearkansas.com

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Greetings!

Beginning January 1, 2013, BlueAdvantage Administrators of Arkansas (BlueAdvantage) will begin working with Carelon Medical Benefits Management (Carelon) on a new Integrated Imaging Program for outpatient diagnostic imaging procedures for **Walmart associates and Tyson team members** and their covered dependents throughout the United States. Walmart associates and Tyson team members residing in your area will be included in this national care management program.

The program, administered by Carelon, includes clinical appropriateness review of advanced imaging services and assists members in finding a “best value” site for MRI and CT exams using the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association’s National Consumer Cost Tool (NCCT) data set.

In preparation for the launch of this program, we wanted to provide you with key details to share with your contracted providers prior to January 1, 2013.

There are three primary components included in the imaging management program described below.

1. **Clinical appropriateness review:** Carelon will provide prospective clinical review for elective, outpatient CT, MRI, Nuclear Cardiology, PET and Echocardiography exams.
2. **Provider transparency:** During the clinical review process Carelon will share NCCT cost information with the ordering physician’s office.
3. **Member transparency:** Carelon will make outbound phone calls to members if there is an opportunity for the member to maximize their benefits by selecting a different facility for their MRI or CT exam. These conversations will be supported by the NCCT cost information as well.

Clinical appropriateness review

For procedures scheduled on or after January 1, 2013, physicians ordering elective, outpatient diagnostic imaging exams for the members listed above will be asked to obtain an order number from Carelon before scheduling the procedure. These services include:

- Computed Tomography (CT/ CTA)
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI/MRA)
- Nuclear Cardiology
- Positron Emission Tomography (PET)
- Stress Echocardiography (SE)
- Resting Transthoracic Echocardiography (TTE)
- Transesophageal Echocardiography (TEE)



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Imaging studies performed in conjunction with emergency room services, inpatient hospitalization, outpatient surgery (hospitals and free standing surgery centers), urgent care centers, or 23-hour observations are excluded from this requirement.

Physicians in your service area will find out about the program when checking benefits and eligibility through BlueAdvantage. Messaging will instruct the physicians to contact Carelon to request or verify an order number one of two ways:

1. Online through Carelon's ProviderPortalSM at www.aimspecialtyhealth.com/goweb or
2. Via the toll-free telephone number displayed on the back of the member's ID card, or direct to Carelon at 1-866-688-1449.

The member also may call Carelon to initiate the process.

Provider transparency

To support national transparency efforts and through partnership with its Blue clients, we are leveraging the NCCT cost values for Blue imaging providers. During the clinical review process, we will be sharing MRI and CT costs with ordering providers in an effort to promote transparency and increase awareness.

Member engagement

Using the clinical appropriateness approval as the trigger, we also will be engaging members in their site of service selection through the Specialty Care ShopperSM program. When a *CT or MRI/MRA exam is scheduled on or after January 1, 2013*, a customer service specialist will proactively reach out to members to inform them of the imaging facility options available to them. During this outreach, members will have an opportunity to maximize their healthcare benefits by selecting an alternative imaging facility. Members will not be denied access to benefits if they decide to stay with their existing facility. Our goal is simply to provide members with information to make informed choices about their healthcare.

BlueAdvantage appreciates your assistance in informing your providers of this new requirement before January 1, 2013. Enclosed with this letter are three reference documents you may find useful in communicating with your providers and internal staff – a draft provider announcement letter, a Quick Reference Guide and FAQ.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at 501-301-7389.

Sincerely,

Patricia Fields, Manager
BlueAdvantage National Accounts
Enclosures