Primary Care Select Physicians Frequently Asked Questions/Answers

The relationship developed between the patient and the primary care physician is the cornerstone of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama Primary Care Select Program. There are a number of different plans available for members to choose from that require the designation of Primary Care Select physicians. The following frequently asked questions/answers will help you better understand.

1. Who are Primary Care Select physicians?
   Primary Care Select physicians are providers in the specialty of general practice, family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics or geriatrics who participate in Blue Cross’ Primary Care Select Program.

2. What is the Primary Care Select Program?
   The Primary Care Select Program sets a new standard of support and collaboration between Blue Cross, primary care physicians and members looking to improve their health. Primary care physicians are supported through our customizable support model that serves to reinforce physicians who are engaged in improving the quality of care in Alabama. Read more about advantages of having the Select status in our Primary Care Select Program brochure.

3. What are the copayments, coinsurance, out-of-network and/or non-covered details for the Select Plans?
   Member liabilities and coverage requirements vary by plan. Due to the variety of plans available on and off the exchange, individual or group coverage and varying levels of complexity, always check Eligibility & Benefits for each Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama member to determine member liability and coverage differentials. Use your practice management software or go to ProviderAccess Eligibility & Benefits.

4. Are members who have one of these plans required to designate a Primary Care Select physician?
   Members may or may not be required to designate a Primary Care Select physician depending on the plan. Always check Eligibility & Benefits specific to each of your patients. One plan may require the designation of a Primary Care Select physician and referrals for certain visits, whereas other Plans may only recommend them and then offer a tiered copayment system based on visits to designated Primary Care Select physicians versus undesignated physicians.
5. How do members know I am a Select physician?
Physicians currently participating in Blue Cross’ Primary Care Select Program are recognized as Primary Care Select by the “Select” icon within Doctor Finder on our website, AlabamaBlue.com. This online tool can be accessed from “Find a Doctor” on the main menu. Effective December 28, 2015, Select provider status and recognition on Doctor Finder is based on qualification for the Primary Care Select program.

When Doctor Finder users hover over the icon, this explanation will appear:

*Primary Care Select physicians are doctors who are certified as value-based providers in family practice, general practice, internal medicine, pediatrics or geriatrics. Value-based certification may include meeting criteria in quality and efficiency measures and obtaining recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) in their clinician recognition programs dedicated to improving healthcare quality, and/or meeting drug utilization performance measures and/or meeting process of care and patient satisfaction criteria.*

6. How do I know if a member has designated a Primary Care Select physician?
If a member is required to designate a Primary Care Select physician for benefit coverage or for potential savings, that information will be returned in Eligibility & Benefits via your practice management software or ProviderAccess on the “Alerts/Messages” tab. The Primary Care Select physician name will also be returned if one has been designated.

7. What is a Primary Care Select referral?
Primary Care Select referrals are notifications sent to Blue Cross and the referred-to physician that outline start and end dates and the number of visits needed. Referrals are electronically submitted to Blue Cross and are viewable by participating physicians. Retroactive referrals are not permitted. The referral must be sent prior to the visit. For instructions on how to create referrals and designate covering physicians, choose either “How to Submit, Review and Cancel Referrals” or “How to Designate Covering Physicians.”

8. Are referrals required?
Sometimes. Some Plans require patients to get referrals from their designated Primary Care Select physician to see any other provider in the state of Alabama. You should always check Eligibility & Benefits for each Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama member. A message will be returned that explains referral requirements if there are any for the service type. If a referral requirement message is not returned for a particular service type, that service does not require referrals. A referral requirement message only appears in Eligibility & Benefits if a referral is required. Below is one example of how referal requirement messages are returned.
9. I am a Primary Care Select physician. How do I submit a referral?
Only electronic referrals are permitted. Electronic referrals can be submitted through ProviderAccess or through some practice management software systems. For detailed instructions on how to create referrals, see “How to Submit, Review and Cancel Referrals.” For additional information on submitting referrals through your practice management software, contact your software vendor or Provider eSolutions at 1-205-220-6899 or Ask-EDI@bcbsal.org.

10. I am a specialist. How do I know if I have received a referral from a Primary Care Select physician?
All providers have access to view referrals through ProviderAccess. See “How to Submit, Review and Cancel Referrals.”

11. Are referrals transferrable?
No. Referrals are not transferrable to physicians outside of the practice of the original referral. However, the referral is good for any provider under the tax ID of the original “referred-to” provider. If the patient needs to change to a physician in a separate provider practice (tax ID), a new referral must be submitted by the Primary Care Select physician.

12. I am a Primary Care Select physician. How do I add a covering physician?
Primary Care Select physicians can go to ProviderAccess to designate covering physicians to care for their patients in their absence. Blue Cross will automatically consider a primary care provider as a covering physician if he or she is under the Select provider’s Tax ID.* If additional covering physicians are needed (non-primary care providers under the same tax ID or a provider at another Tax ID) the Select provider will need to update his or her list on ProviderAccess. For detailed instructions on how to designate a covering physician, see “How to Designate Covering Physicians.”
*Note: Physician assistants and nurse practitioners are not automatically considered as “covering” and should be manually added to the covering provider list.

13. How can I become a Primary Care Select physician?
Blue Cross invites you to participate in our Primary Care Select Program based on requirements listed in our Primary Care Select Program Participation Criteria. Also, if you meet additional criteria as outlined in our Value Based Terms and Conditions, you may be eligible for an extra reimbursement up to 30 percent for value-based payment (VBP) initiatives.

14. Where can I go for more information?
For questions or more information, contact your Provider Networks Consultant at 1-866-904-4130.