



**BlueCross BlueShield
Association**

An Association of Independent
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans

News Release

Blue Cross and Blue Shield
Association
225 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60601-7680
www.BCBSA.com

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Contact:
Lisa Johnson
312.297.6358
lisa.johnson@bcbsa.com

Blue Cross And Blue Shield's Blue Distinction® Designation Improves Healthcare By Focusing On Quality

*Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies designate Blue Distinction Centers for Complex
and Rare CancersSM*

CHICAGO – As part of ongoing efforts to raise the overall quality of healthcare in America, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) is expanding the Blue Distinction® designation.

Today, Blue Cross and Blue Shield members have national access to more than 80 Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers across 33 states. With this expansion, more than 780 Blue Distinction CentersSM are available to members nationwide, providing quality care in the areas of cardiac care, bariatric surgery, transplants as well as complex and rare cancers.

“In our recently released ‘The Pathway to Covering America’ report, we identify Blue Distinction as being a prime example of how we are collaborating with leading providers to recognize outstanding achievements in healthcare for our more than 100 million members,” said Scott P. Serota, BCBSA president and CEO. “In the current healthcare system, 30 cents of every dollar is spent on care that is ineffective, inappropriate or redundant. A key

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goal of Blue Distinction is to promote better healthcare by expanding the number of providers delivering safe and effective care based on objective, evidence-based criteria.”

Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers

The expansion of the Blue Distinction designation to include the treatment of complex and rare cancers will help a very specific patient population in need of skilled and dedicated facilities that treat these complicated cancers.

Complex and rare cancers comprise approximately 15 percent of new cancer cases each year, making it difficult for consumers to locate or research an oncologist or surgical team that is experienced in treating these specific malignancies.

Designation of Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers focuses on multidisciplinary treatment planning and complex, major surgical treatments for the following malignancies:

- acute leukemia (inpatient/non-surgical)
- bladder cancer
- bone cancer
- brain cancer – primary
- esophageal cancer
- gastric cancer
- head and neck cancers
- liver cancer
- ocular melanoma
- pancreatic cancer
- rectal cancer
- soft tissue sarcomas
- thyroid cancer – medullary or anaplastic

Selection criteria for Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers set objective, evidence-based criteria for clinical care. All Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers feature:

- multidisciplinary team input, including sub-specialty trained teams for complex and rare cancers and demonstrated depth of expertise across cancer disciplines in medicine, surgery, radiation oncology, pathology and radiology;
- ongoing quality management and improvement programs for cancer care;
- ongoing commitment to using clinical data registries and providing access to appropriate clinical research for complex and rare cancers; and,
- sufficient volume of experience in treating rare and complex cancers.

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National Comprehensive Cancer Network Collaboration

Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers were developed in strategic collaboration with the National Comprehensive Cancer Network* (NCCN) and input from leading clinicians and professional organizations.

“The NCCN is pleased to collaborate with Blue Cross and Blue Shield on the development and the implementation of this important program,” said Bill McGivney, PhD, NCCN CEO. “We applaud and support the efforts of Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies in dissemination of this information. It is critical that experts establish and share criteria for the treatment of complex cancers to improve care for patients whom we serve.”

Looking ahead, Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies anticipate expanding the list of facilities designated as Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers, as well as developing future designations for facilities that treat more common forms of cancer.

For a complete listing of Blue Distinction Centers for Complex and Rare Cancers or for more information on all designated Blue Distinction Centers for bariatric surgery, cardiac care and transplants, go to www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction or call 1.800.810.BLUE.

The Pathway to Covering America

By identifying Blue Distinction Centers that meet rigorous, objective, evidence-based criteria for clinical quality, established in collaboration with leading medical specialists and professional organizations, the Blues® are working to improve the quality of healthcare for all Americans. Blue Distinction is a key component to BCBSA’s recently released report entitled, “The Pathway to Covering America”. The report, a five-point plan to improve access and healthcare quality, can be viewed at www.bcbs.com/issues/uninsured/pathway-to-covering-america/.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 39 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide healthcare coverage for more than 100 million individuals – one-in-three Americans. For more information on Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and its member companies, please visit www.BCBS.com.

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About the National Comprehensive Cancer Network

The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), a not-for-profit alliance of 21 of the world's leading cancer centers, is dedicated to improving the quality and effectiveness of care provided to patients with cancer. Through the leadership and expertise of clinical professionals at NCCN Member Institutions, NCCN develops resources that present valuable information to the numerous stakeholders in the health care delivery system. As a leader of high-quality cancer care, NCCN promotes the importance of continuous quality improvement and recognizes the significance of creating clinical practice guidelines appropriate for use by patients, clinicians, and other health care decision-makers. The primary goal of all NCCN initiatives is to improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of oncology practice so patients can live better lives. For more information, visit www.nccn.org.

Note: Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading professional organizations' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at any facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan; and call your provider before making an appointment, to verify the most current information on their Network participation status. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any of its Licensees are responsible for any damages, losses, or non-covered charges that may result from using this website or receiving care from a provider listed in this website.

* This organization has provided information and input, but does not formally endorse the Blue Distinction Centers program.

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