

Primary Doctor Matching:

Summary and FAQs

The purpose of this document is to provide you with updates on Blue Shield of California's primary doctor matching for our members.

Summary

1. Beginning January 2021, Blue Shield of California fully-insured PPO plan members will be matched with a primary doctor, otherwise known as a primary care physician (PCP), when enrolling or renewing.
2. Through this initiative, members will be meaningfully matched with a primary doctor who will provide for the member's care. Factors such as member demographics, claims history (if available), Blue Shield provider quality metrics, costs, and retention will be considered in the matching algorithm.
3. As previously, members enrolled in a PPO plan are not required to seek care from their matched primary doctor, and will not be required to obtain a referral before seeing another primary doctor or specialist.
4. This initiative will enable Blue Shield to promote innovative programs that improve our members' health and support our mission – to offer affordable and quality health care that is worthy of our family and friends.

FAQs

1. What changes will the member experience as a result of Primary Doctor Matching for fully-insured PPO members?

- a. Effective January 2021, fully-insured PPO members across all lines of business will be matched with a primary doctor. Members will be matched with a primary doctor after they enroll or renew in 2021. For members who belong to an employer group with an off-cycle enrollment or renewal, matching will take place at the time of enrollment or renewal.
- b. Members are not required to receive care from their matched doctor and can still self-refer to other primary doctors, specialists, and other healthcare professionals.

- c. Members will be able to search for and select a new primary doctor using *Blue Shield's Find a Doctor* online tool.
- d. There will be no changes to member ID cards. Unlike primary doctor matching for HMO benefit plan products, the matched doctor's name will not appear on member ID cards for PPO benefit plan members. The member will be able to find the name of their primary doctor in the member portal at blueshieldca.com or by using the Blue Shield of California mobile app.

2. What is the purpose of a matched primary doctor to PPO members?

Primary doctors play an integral role in maintaining preventive care and recommending high quality specialty care for their patients. Assigning well-matched primary doctors to members helps encourage collaboration between patients and their care providers. Blue Shield's goal is to provide the best match for members so they will keep and utilize their primary doctor.

3. Are members required to receive care from their matched primary doctor?

No, members can change their primary doctor at any time and can self-refer to another primary doctor, specialist, or other healthcare professional. Members can use *Blue Shield's Find a Doctor* online tool to search for other doctors.

4. What if a member primarily seeks care from a non-participating doctor?

The algorithm used to match members to primary doctors will identify the most appropriate in-network physician for each member, including members who primarily receive their primary healthcare services from a non-participating physician.

5. Will the matched PPO Network primary doctor be expected to function in the same way as a primary doctor does for HMO members?

No, unlike primary care doctors for HMO benefit plan enrollees, a member does not need their primary doctor's referral to see any other clinicians, including other primary care or specialty care physicians.

6. Will the member be able to select a primary doctor of their choice?

Yes, members will have the opportunity to select their primary doctor during enrollment. If the selected primary doctor is not in-network or is no longer working, then Blue Shield will match the member with another primary doctor.

7. Will members with a PPO benefit plan continue to have access to non-participating physicians?

Yes, there is no change to PPO benefit plan structures as a result of Primary Doctor Matching.

8. Will the name of the matched or selected primary doctor be on the member's Blue Shield ID card?

Primary doctor names will not appear on PPO members' ID cards.

9. How will the member know which primary doctor has been matched to them?

The member will be able to find the name of their primary doctor in their member portal at blueshieldca.com or in the Blue Shield of California mobile app.

10. What is the process for primary doctor matching?

Each member will be meaningfully matched with a primary doctor who will primarily provide for all the member's healthcare needs. First, the matching algorithm looks to see if the member is already seeing a primary doctor based on claims. If so, the match is to the doctor they are already seeing. If there are no claims with a primary doctor, then the algorithm creates a match based on the provider's retention, cost and quality to find the best match for the member. Member demographics such as age, gender, and location are also taken into consideration.

11. What happens if the member already has a primary doctor?

Members can select their primary doctor during enrollment or switch over to their existing primary doctor at any time. Members do not need to notify Blue Shield of their primary doctor choice if it is different than the one they were matched with.

12. Will members in the Tandem PPO plan be matched with their existing primary doctor?

Existing Tandem PPO members will not have their primary doctor changed. Anyone who has a primary doctor in our system today, will not be matched with a new primary doctor.

13. Are there any member communications that will go out notifying the member of their primary doctor match?

Members will be notified of the primary doctor match when they log into blueshieldca.com through a message on their dashboard after their effective date in the 2021 plan year. Members may receive additional communications, based on their communications delivery preference, about the value of primary doctor matching and the importance of primary care visits as part of member engagement communications through 2021.

14. Will members enrolled in HMO, Tandem PPO, and IFP ePPO benefit plans, which already matches members to a primary doctor, be affected by this change?

- a. No, members who are currently enrolled in an HMO, Tandem PPO, or IFP ePPO benefit plan will not experience any changes on their end.
- b. Members who already have an assigned primary doctor will not be changed through this process.