

Questions and answers about primary care physician matching for PPO members

Effective January 1, 2021, Blue Shield of California will match all PPO members with a primary care physician (PCP) from within their network, unless they already have one selected. We have created the following document to anticipate and answer questions providers may have about this matching process.

Eligible specialties

Physicians practicing the specialties of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, General Practice, or Pediatrics may be matched as PCPs for PPO members. Blue Shield will also apply additional business rules to identify eligible physicians. Not every physician who practices these specialties in the PPO network will necessarily be designated as eligible to be matched as a PCP for PPO members.

Auto-assignment of PCPs has already taken place during 2020 for members of the Blue Shield IFP PPO and Tandem PPO plans. Similar PCP matching standards and processes will apply.

No different operational requirements or payments for PPO network PCPs

Operationally, nothing will be different for participating physicians who are eligible for PCP matching, nor for any PPO medical group under which they are contracted to provide services for Blue Shield PPO members. The physicians and/or groups bill, and are paid, at their contracted rate for services provided to PPO members with whom they have been matched.

1. What is the purpose of matching a PCP with a PPO member?

Matching a PCP with a PPO member is intended to encourage coordination, management, and continuous care by the PCP to enhance the overall quality of the PPO patient's care. Our goal is to provide the best match PCP for members so they will keep and utilize them.

2. Which Blue Shield PPO plans will require members to have a PCP matched with them?

All members who access our fully insured PPO networks will be matched with PCPs. This is already in effect for IFP PPO and Tandem PPO plans.

- Members with federal employee plans (FEP), out of state, and self-funded employer plans (card says "Administrative Services Only") will not be matched with PCPs.

3. Are PPO network PCPs expected to function in the same way as a PCP does for HMO members?

No. For example, PPO members are not required to see their PPO PCP to get a referral. They may see any physician or healthcare provider in their PPO network and apply their PPO benefits for the care they receive. Their cost-sharing responsibilities for receiving care are based on their specific PPO benefit plan. The PPO physician's provider agreement, billing practices, and contracted reimbursement rate for the PPO physician operate as usual.

4. Does the member's PCP match have any impact on other existing programs or payment arrangements Blue Shield offers?

No, the PCP match does not affect other programs or reimbursement structures currently in place.

5. Does the PPO member proactively choose their PCP when they enroll?

No, a member who is enrolling for PPO coverage through Blue Shield is first matched with an eligible PCP from within their Blue Shield PPO network.

Here is how it works:

- First, Blue Shield matches an eligible PPO network physician to the PPO member, with the support of a third-party vendor. The process will match PCPs based on the following:
 - Physician visit history (if any) – The matching process first evaluates a member's prior physician history. Previous visits to an eligible PCP may increase the likelihood of a match.
 - Member demographics (geographic location, age, gender)
 - PCP efficiency, quality and propensity to retain members
 - Physician practices in the eligible specialties of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, General Practice, or Pediatrics
 - Physician is accepting new members
- The PPO member will be informed of their PCP match.
- If a PPO enrollee wishes to select a different PCP, they may choose an eligible PCP from the list available at Blue Shield's Find a Doctor tool, or call Member Services for assistance.
 - Blue Shield full PPO members may select an OB/Gyn as their PCP, unless they are IFP PPO plan members.

6. Will the name of the matched or selected PCP be on the PPO member's Blue Shield ID card?

No, the matched PCP's name is not displayed on the member's ID card. This is different from an HMO member's ID card, which displays a PCP's name.

7. Is a physician able to get a list of members who have been matched with him or her?

We are not able to generate such a list, currently, due to member privacy requirements. It is at the member's discretion to request services from the PCP.

8. How will I know if a member has been matched with my practice?

You can look up a member's PCP match using the *Verify Eligibility* tool on [Provider Connection](#). (Login required.)

9. Can a PPO network participating physician refuse to be available for PCP matching?

Yes. Please carefully review the information below on how physicians may opt out of being on the list of physicians eligible for PCP matching. It will not affect their participation in the PPO network.

- An individually contracted physician in the PPO network who is practicing in the specialties of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, General Practice, or Pediatrics may contact Blue Shield directly to opt out of being available to be matched as a PCP to PPO members.
- **Physicians who are practicing under a PPO medical group contracted for the PPO Network may not opt out individually.** They must notify their respective PPO medical group administrator. It will be the responsibility of the medical group administrator to notify Blue Shield that the physician is opting out of this role. Again, this will not impact the physician's or group's participation in the PPO network.

How to opt out of eligibility to be matched as a PCP to PPO members

A written communication must be sent by email, FAX or postal mail to our Provider Information and Enrollment Department to inform Blue Shield of the decision to opt out of eligibility for matching as a PCP with PPO members.

Email	BSCproviderinfo@blueshieldca.com
FAX	Provider Information and Enrollment at (916) 350-8860
Postal mail	Provider Information and Enrollment P.O. Box 629017 El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-9017

10. How will a PPO member know which PCP has been matched with them?

Blue Shield will communicate the name of the PCP to each PPO enrollee. Enrollees are instructed to visit Blue Shield's member website and select a different PCP if they wish to do so. Enrollees may also call Blue Shield's Member Services for assistance.

11. What if a member wants to select a PCP whose practice is not eligible, either by approved practice specialty or Blue Shield's additional business rules?

The member will not be allowed to select a PCP of record that does not fit the business requirements for practice specialty and other business rules. As a reminder, the PPO member will still be able to seek care from any PPO network provider and apply in-network benefits for covered services.

12. Why can't a PPO member choose a PCP that practices in other specialties?

The specialties of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, General Practice, and OB/Gyn are aligned with business decisions by Blue Shield that will support consistent and accurate operations.

13. Whom should I contact if I have any questions about requirements for matching an eligible PCP with PPO members?

If you have questions about eligibility for being matched as a PCP that are not addressed in the letter or in this FAQ, please contact our Provider Customer Service Department at **(800) 541-6652.**