



BlueCross BlueShield of Texas

Bridges to Excellence Cardiac Care Link Provider Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Bridges to Excellence Cardiac Care Link Program?



Founded in 2002, Bridges to Excellence (BTE) is a not-for-profit company whose mission is to create significant progress in the quality of care in a variety of areas. This is achieved by recognizing and financially rewarding physicians who demonstrate that they provide quality care that meets established guidelines.

BCBSTX has collaborated with BTE to implement the Cardiac Care Link (CCL) program. Additional details are available on BTE's Web site at www.bridgestoexcellence.org

Is BTE a national program?

BTE is a national program offered in more than 20 states and recognizes thousands of physicians across the United States. Please refer to BTE's Web site for additional details on all programs offered at www.bridgestoexcellence.org.

Why should I become a BTE CCL recognized physician?

BCBSTX's CCL program offers you the opportunity to evaluate and demonstrate the quality of care you deliver. Participating in the program gives you tools to continuously improve your practice, receive national recognition and earn financial incentives. In addition, your patients will know they receive care from a physician who has demonstrated delivery of excellent care. If you are BTE CCL recognized you are assured participation in the BCBSTX cardiac program.

Does obtaining BTE recognition improve the quality of health care?

The BTE CCL program is designed with an understanding that patients seek care for cardiac conditions from both primary care physicians (PCPs) and specialist physicians (SCPs), usually cardiologists.

BTE's CCL requirements assess process measures and outcomes representing high standards of care for patients with cardiac conditions. BTE believes that the CCL program has the potential to improve the quality of care for many patients with cardiac conditions and to reduce the financial and human burden of unnecessary hospitalizations and complications.

BTE believes that when physicians participate in programs where they follow proven, evidence based guidelines and submit data to validate performance, the quality of care of patients with chronic disease will improve.

What is the eligibility criterion to become BTE recognized?

1. Physicians must execute a data use agreement with the data aggregator partner through which they plan to submit data for BTE's automated performance assessment process (see additional information on submitting data below).
2. The BTE physician eligibility requirements are:
 - ✓ Must be licensed as a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO)
 - ✓ Must provide continuing care for people with the condition of measurement and be able to meet the minimum patient sample sizes
 - ✓ Must submit the required data documenting their delivery of care for all eligible patients in their full patient panel when available, otherwise, submit data for a specified sample of eligible patients with the condition of measurement
 - ✓ Applicants must use PAO-supplied or approved methods for submitting data electronically
3. Learn the specifications and BTE measures
4. Determine whether to apply as an individual physician or physician group

What are the differences between applying as an individual physician or physician group?

An individual physician applicant represents one licensed physician practicing in any setting who provides continuing care for patients with cardiac conditions (or the condition of measurement). A physician group applicant represents any group with three or more licensed for a common panel of patients and practice at the same site, defined as a physical location.

Are there any payout incentives differences if you are BTE recognized as an individual or physician group?

Physicians are eligible to receive \$100 per patient, per physician OR group, per program year, up to 150 patients for a maximum payout of \$15,000. BSBCTX strongly encourages physicians to become BTE recognized as individual physicians in order to receive the individual maximum benefits and to allow the claims to identified in our processes.

How do I become BTE CCL recognized?

To attain recognition in the BTE CCL program, eligible physicians voluntarily submit medical record data demonstrating that they provide high levels of cardiac care. There are three different paths available to physicians for CCL recognition. The following table shows the Performance Assessment Organization (PAO) options, plus the PAOs' respective Web sites where additional information can be found.

1. **NCQA:** Physicians or practices that qualify for NCQA's [Heart Stroke Recognition Program \(HSRP\)](#) assessment program will be recognized by BTE for the Cardiac Care Link (CCL) program at the corresponding level (i.e. HSRP Level I= CCL Level I). To achieve HSRP Recognition, physicians submit data on outcome and process measures for a sample of their patients with cardiac conditions. Level I and II assessments are available through the NCQA.
2. **Automated Performance Assessment System:** Physicians or practices connected to a BTE participating data aggregator (i.e. EMR vendor, Health Information Exchange, Care Management Software) may have their data submitted on their behalf to an independent Performance Assessment Organization (PAO) for an automated evaluation of their cardiac care. Physicians or practices who demonstrate that they provide high levels of cardiac care are recognized in the BTE Cardiac Care Link (CCL) program at [Levels I-III](#).
3. **Direct Data Submission Portal:** Physicians or practices may submit their data directly to IPRO, one of BTE's independent Performance Assessment Organizations (PAOs), through its Clinical Data Portal. Data is entered into a standard file format and uploaded to the web portal for assessment of their cardiac care. Physicians or practices who demonstrate that they provide high levels of cardiac care are recognized in the BTE Cardiac Care Link (CCL) program at [Levels I-III](#).

Performance Assessment Pathway	BTE Programs Available	Level of Assessment	Mode of data submission	Recognition Term	Cost/Fees
NCQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cardiac Care Link ▪ Diabetes Care Link ▪ Spine Care Link ▪ Physician Office Link ▪ Medical Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Care Links</u>: Levels I and II ▪ <u>Physician Office Link</u>: Levels I, II, and III ▪ <u>Medical Home</u>: Level II or III for any two Care Links + Level II or III for Physician Office Link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Via NCQA's recently launched Data Collection Tool ▪ For more information, visit http://www.ncqa.org/ under Programs>Recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NCQA recognition is 3 years ▪ BTE recognition is 2 years, beginning January 1, 2010 ▪ If BTE recognition is achieved prior to January 1, 2010, recognition is 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ~\$360 per physician ▪ Check the NCQA website for details
EMR/registry (Minnesota Community Measurement/ IPRO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asthma Care Link ▪ CAD Care Link ▪ Cardiac Care Link ▪ CHF Care Link ▪ COPD Care Link ▪ Diabetes Care Link ▪ Hypertension Care Link ▪ Medical Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Care Links</u>: Levels I, II and III ▪ <u>Physician Office Link</u>: automatically awarded to physicians who achieve recognition in a Care Link by submitting data from a CCHIT-certified system ▪ <u>Medical Home</u>: Level II or III for any two Care Links + Level II or III for Physician Office Link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct electronic submission by vendor ▪ For more information, visit http://www.bridgestoexcellence.org/ under Participation>Physicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BTE recognition is 2 years, beginning January 1, 2010 ▪ If BTE recognition is achieved prior to January 1, 2010, recognition is 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No fee
IPRO Direct Submission Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asthma Care Link ▪ CAD Care Link ▪ Cardiac Care Link ▪ CHF Care Link ▪ COPD Care Link ▪ Diabetes Care Link ▪ Hypertension Care Link ▪ Medical Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Levels I, II, and III for all programs ▪ <u>Physician Office Link</u>: automatically awarded to physicians who achieve recognition in a Care Link by submitting data from a CCHIT-certified system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Downloadable template from website: http://pao/ipro.org/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BTE recognition is 2 years, beginning January 1, 2010 ▪ If BTE recognition is achieved prior to January 1, 2010, recognition is 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$95 submission fee for individuals ▪ \$295 for groups of 3 or more

What is the duration of BTE recognition?

For CCL recognitions achieved on or before Dec. 31, 2009, recognition status remains in effect for three years from the date on which a Performance Assessment Organization (PAO) awards recognition. Beginning Jan. 1, 2010, the CCL recognition duration will be shortened to two years from the date on which a PAO awards recognition.

What are the plans to grow the number of physicians that are BTE CCL recognized?

BCBSTX will identify physicians who treat its member with cardiac conditions and encourage those physicians to become BTE CCL recognized so they can receive rewards through the program.

How does the BCBSTX BTE program work?

Once a physician becomes BTE CCL recognized, BCBSTX will identify its members with cardiac conditions who the physician manages. BCBSTX will communicate with the physician to obtain biometric information on the member. When that information is received, BCBSTX will advise the physician that he/she can submit a claim with a specific code for incentive payment.

Are members assigned to multiple physicians during a program year?

No, a member is assigned to only one physician during a program year.

How much is the physician incentivized for the BCBSTX cardiac program?

Physicians are eligible to receive \$100 per patient, per physician or group, per program year, up to 150 patients or \$15,000.

Are Blue Card members included in BCBSTX' cardiac program?

Blue Card members are not included in the program at this time.

Are FEP members included in BCBSTX' cardiac program?

FEP members are not included in the program at this time.

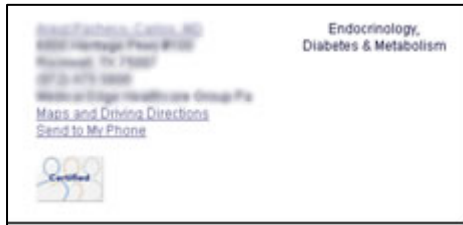
How often will BCBSTX acknowledge new BTE CCL recognized physicians and include them in the program?

BTE will send BCBSTX a file on a monthly basis of the newly recognized physicians. BCBSTX will identify the patients for these physicians and send communications to the physician to initiate the process for this program.

Who should I contact for additional information about BCBSTX' BTE cardiac program?

Additional information can be obtained by calling your PPN Network Representative; or by contacting Jill Brooks, RN, Medical Program Specialist at 972-766-6397, Jill_Brooks@bcbstx.com; or by contacting Rebecca Ford, RHIA, Senior Manager, Network Performance Management, 972-766-8234, Rebecca_Ford@bcbstx.com.

How do BCBSTX members know if a physician is BTE recognized?



When members use the Provider Finder tool on the BCBSTX Web site, BTE recognized physicians are indicated with the BTE logo beneath their certifications and recognitions listing.

Additionally, all BTE recognized physicians are promoted on BTE's physicians list on the [HealthGrades Physician Quality Ratings Web site](#). Physicians who completed NCQA's Heart Stroke Physician Recognition Program (HSRP) are promoted as recognized practices and physicians through [NCQA's Recognized Physician Directory](#).