Blue Cross and Blue Shield Federal Employee Program Waives Cost Shares and Prior Authorization to Support Members’ Care for Coronavirus

FEP® to eliminate restrictions on prescription drug refills, waive pre-authorization, deductibles and copays for diagnostics, treatment

WASHINGTON – The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Federal Employee Program® (FEP®) announced that it will waive cost-sharing for coronavirus diagnostic testing, waive prior authorization requirements for treatment and take other steps to enhance access to care for those needing treatment for COVID-19 to ensure its members can swiftly access the right care in the right setting during the outbreak.

These changes, which have been approved by the Office of Personnel Management, will ensure that nearly 6 million federal employees, retirees and their families have comprehensive, accessible care. They include:

1. FEP will waive prior authorizations for diagnostic tests and for covered services that are medically necessary and consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance if diagnosed with COVID-19.

2. Similarly, FEP will waive any copays or deductibles for diagnostic tests or treatment that are medically necessary and consistent with CDC guidance if diagnosed with COVID-19.

3. FEP will increase access to prescription medications by waiving early medication refill limits on 30-day prescription maintenance medications. FEP will also encourage members to use 90-day mail order benefit.

4. FEP will also eliminate any cost share for prescriptions for up to a 14-day supply.

5. FEP will waive copays for telehealth services related to COVID-19.

FEP and Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) companies are following CDC prevention guidelines and other federal recommendations and will continue to support and protect the health and well-being of its members, their families and the community. These actions will apply to all FEP members of the 36 U.S. and Puerto Rico-based BCBS companies, including those members located overseas, when applicable.

For more information on FEP’s policy changes, please visit www.fepblue.org for details on the expansion of benefits and services. Members can also call the National Information Center at 1-800-411-BLUE (2583). If you are not an FEP member and have questions about your health plan, please contact your local BCBS Company: bcbs.com/memberservices.

TELEHEALTH

As of March 10, 2020 and until further notice, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, member cost share will be waived for ALL telehealth services received through the Teladoc network. To allow for quicker access, it is encouraged for members to set up their Teladoc account prior to using the service. To access this benefit, members call or go online and get connected to a Teladoc provider: dial 855-636-1579 or www.fepblue.org/telehealth (TTY 855-636-1578).
GET OUT AND GET ACTIVE

Kick off spring right by getting active and making the most of the warmer weather. Studies have shown that people who spend more time outside tend to live active lifestyles and enjoy more benefits of physical activity.

WALK FOR A HEALTHIER HEART

You don’t need to be an elite runner to have a healthy heart—walkers also enjoy similar benefits. In fact, walking as little as 30 minutes a day can improve your heart health. The best part? It can be done just about anywhere. All you need is a comfortable pair of sneakers to get started. Here are a few ways you can easily add steps to your daily routine:

- Walk to nearby errands instead of driving
- Be a tourist in your own city
- Park your car farther away from your destination
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Catch up with friends by walking together
- Talk to people in-person at work instead of sending emails

Remember that the American Heart Association recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day, at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week or 75 minutes of intense activity per week to see the benefits.

STAYING ACTIVE WITH JOINT PAIN

Joint pain can sometimes make physical activity feel difficult and not worth doing at all. Many exercises are high impact and can hit your joints with about 2.5x your bodyweight, making things worse. Low-impact exercises like walking are easier on your joints because one foot always stays on the ground. Make no mistake, even though these exercises are low impact, you can still get a great workout. Low-impact exercise may also relieve pain for those with chronic joint-related conditions, according to some studies.
AGENCY-BASED INITIATIVES — 2020

Your Group Consultants are ready to assist with agency-based initiatives. Therefore, if you are affiliated with an employee organization that is officially recognized by your federal agency and would like to solicit our participation for an event hosted by that organization, please contact us.

Here’s a list of events we participate in each year. We’d love to hear from you if you or your agency participate in a program that is not listed here. Our contact information is included in this newsletter.

LIST OF EVENTS

APRIL
NC/SC UPMA State Convention - Postponed

MAY
Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW)
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
NC/SC NAPUS and NC/SC League of Postmasters Convention
NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive - Postponed
NoCASCOE - Cancelled

JUNE
National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS)

NOV/DEC
2020 Open Season

FIGHT BACK AGAINST ALLERGIES

Grass, weeds, tree pollen and mold are all common culprits of seasonal allergies. These can all make their way into your home, causing you to have flare-ups even when you’re not outside. The good news is you can minimize your symptoms by following these tips:

• Turn on your kitchen fan when you cook. Turn on your bathroom fan when bathing or showering.
• Clean kitchen and bathroom surfaces weekly to limit mold. Check for appliance leaks, too.
• Use dust mite-proof covers on all bedding. Wash your sheets, pillowcases and blankets weekly.
• If you have carpets, be sure to use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
• Keep windows closed and use air conditioning when possible. Be sure to clean around window air conditioners regularly.

Consider visiting your doctor for allergy tests if you suspect you have seasonal allergies. Your results will tell you what you’re specifically allergic to, so you can create a targeted treatment plan with your doctor.
Federal Employee Program.

FEP Sales
P.O. Box 2291
Durham, NC 27702-2291

Sales Contacts

Group Consultants
Sonja Smith
(919) 867-5793
sonja.smith@bcbsnc.com

Patsy Zeigler
(919) 765-4324
patsy.zeigler@bcbsnc.com

Kimberley Jones-Scott
(919) 765-3678
kimberley.jones-scott@bcbsnc.com

Data Analyst
Jaynita Shah
(919) 765-2644
jaynita.shah@bcbsnc.com

Healthcare Consultant
Abel Simutami
(919) 765-7056
abel.simutami@bcbsnc.com

Director
Myra Shobande
(919) 765-3846
myra.shobande@bcbsnc.com

Important Numbers

24/7 Nurse Line
1-888-258-3432

Behavioral Health Hotline
1-800-288-3976

FEP BlueDental® Customer Service
1-855-504-BLUE (2583)

FEP BlueVision® Customer Service
1-888-550-BLUE (2583)

FEP Case Management
1-888-234-2415

Healthy Endeavors Care Management Program
1-888-392-3506

Mail-Order Prescription Drug Program
1-800-262-7890

Pre-Admission Certification
1-800-672-7897

Retail Pharmacy Program
Mon. – Fri., 8 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Sat., 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
1-800-624-5060

Vision Care Affinity Discount Program
1-800-551-3337

Customer Service

FEP Customer Service:
Mon. – Thu., 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Fri., 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.
1-800-222-4739

Mailing Addresses

For Correspondence:
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
P.O. Box 2291
Durham, NC 27702-2291

For Medical Claims:
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
P.O. Box 35
Durham, NC 27702-0035

FEPBlue.org