

## Update: Kidney-only transplants to require prior authorization through the Human Organ Transplant Program, starting Jan. 1

*In the October 2023 Record and the November-December 2023 BCN Provider News, we announced that prior authorization will be required for kidney-only transplants starting Jan. 1, 2024. Since then, a couple things have changed; this provider alert reflects the following changes:*

- *We removed information about BCN Advantage because we'll no longer require prior authorization for any transplants for BCN Advantage members starting Jan. 1. We announced this change in a [Nov. 6, 2023, provider alert](#).*
- *We updated the steps for submitting outpatient prior authorization requests to show that providers should include procedure code \*50380, in addition to procedure codes \*50360 and \*50365.*

For dates of service on or after Jan. 1, 2024, hospital transplant financial coordinators must submit prior authorization requests for kidney-only transplants through the e-referral system for:

- Blue Cross fully insured group and individual commercial members
- BCN fully insured group and individual commercial members

As with other transplants that already require prior authorization — including simultaneous pancreas-kidney, or SPK — it's a two-step process in the e-referral system:

1. Submit an **outpatient** prior authorization request that includes:
  - Procedure codes \*50360, \*50365 and \*50380
  - The facility — Enter a Blue Distinction<sup>®</sup> Center for Transplants.
  - The completed questionnaire — The questionnaire automatically opens in the e-referral system for you to fill out.
  - Clinical information — Include the history and physical, the letter of intent and clinical documentation to support the need for the transplant.

The request will pend for clinical review. In addition, the request will require medical director review if the facility **isn't** a Blue Distinction Center for Transplants or the member doesn't meet medical policy criteria.

If the authorization is approved, it will be valid for one year.

2. When a kidney becomes available, submit a prior authorization request for the inpatient stay. **Include the outpatient authorization number for the transplant procedure codes in the Case Communication field.** This will enable us to issue an approval quickly as it makes the connection between the inpatient request and the already-approved outpatient authorization.

You'll be able to start submitting requests through the e-referral system for kidney-only transplants on Jan. 1, 2024.

We'll update the [e-referral User Guide](#) for kidney-only transplants before Jan. 1. The pertinent information will be in "Section IV: Referrals and Authorizations," in the subsection titled "5. Submit an Outpatient Authorization." (The *e-referral User Guide* also includes information about submitting a re-authorization request, if the authorization obtained through Step 1 expires before a kidney becomes available.)

#### Notes:

- For more information about Blue Distinction Centers, see the [Blue Distinction Centers](#) webpage on our [ereferrals.bcbsm.com](https://ereferrals.bcbsm.com) website.
- If the e-referral system isn't available or isn't performing as expected, see the document titled [e-referral system maintenance times and what to do](#).
- This prior authorization requirement for kidney-only transplants is already in place for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Federal Employee Program<sup>®</sup> members.

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