

# An Integrated, Holistic Approach to Care Management

## Blue Care Connection

With health care costs continuing to rise, both employers and health plans need innovative solutions to help employees manage their health care. **Blue Care Connection** – Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas' portfolio of integrated care management programs – provides that solution.

**With each encounter, the goal of Blue Care Connection is to help your employees and their family members return to or achieve their optimal level of health and wellness.**

By focusing on early identification of members at risk, changing behaviors and improving medical outcomes, our total care approach engages members across the health continuum – from wellness and prevention through complex and catastrophic care.

Using education, support, rewards and multiple touchpoints, Blue Care Connection works to improve members' health and reduce claims, *so you get the results you need:*

- Healthier outcomes for employees and their families
- Employee satisfaction with the health care benefit plan
- And ultimately, a healthier and more productive workforce

Blue Care Connection ... from the trusted name of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. For more than 70 years, we've been helping companies provide their employees with access to dependable and affordable health care benefit plans.



## Program Overview

Blue Care Connection offers guidance at every level of health to help employees and covered dependents make more informed, responsible decisions and take charge of their health.

By integrating technology and medical management with consumer resources, education, one-on-one coaching and health advocacy, Blue Care Connection helps your employees and their dependents work toward this goal.

Our program looks at how your employees fit into the overall continuum of health care, using predictive modeling and other tools to identify members who are at risk. By detecting members' health care needs early, appropriate interventions can be initiated through a variety of outreach approaches that can be monitored and measured for success. And we engage health care providers in the process to work together toward improved health outcomes.



## Engaging Members

To meet the diverse health needs and lifestyles of members, Blue Care Connection offers a variety of integrated services and levels of intervention to engage members. Whether members initiate contact, trigger a response when identified at risk or accept our outreach, there are multiple ways and opportunities to take advantage of Blue Care Connection, including:

- **Personal Health Manager** – our online suite of wellness resources that helps members manage their health and adopt healthier behaviors, with a Health Risk Assessment and Blue Points<sup>SM</sup> rewards to encourage healthy activities
- **24/7 Nurseline** – registered nurses offer health information by telephone day or night in English or Spanish; an audio library of health topics is also available
- **Special Beginnings** – a maternity program that offers support and education from prenatal to postpartum care
- **Blue Care<sup>®</sup> Advisors** – registered nurses and other health care professionals reach out to members at risk or with certain chronic conditions, providing education and coaching to guide them toward adopting healthier behaviors
- **Care and Condition Management** – Blue Care Advisors provide education and support to higher-risk members with specific conditions, helping them enhance their self-management skills and change their behaviors so they can improve their overall health and help prevent or delay disease progression
- **Episodic and High-Risk Care/Utilization and Case Management** – utilization review/case and medical management services identify and help high-risk members cope with complex care or catastrophic health events



# A Commitment to Wellness and Prevention

## Personal Health Manager

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death. An estimated 44.5 million American adults smoke cigarettes and more than 8.6 million people have at least one serious illness caused by smoking.<sup>†</sup>

Estimates suggest that 5 percent to 20 percent of Americans catch the flu each year – resulting in more than 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths. Getting a flu vaccination every year is the single best way to prevent the flu – particularly important for people at high risk.<sup>†</sup>

<sup>†</sup>According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### Empowering Employees to Take Charge of Their Health

Regardless of their health status or fitness level, all employees can take advantage of the **Personal Health Manager**. This online suite of health resources helps members maintain their health or work toward a healthier lifestyle, understand and manage a health condition, and make more informed health decisions. Interactive tools and extensive information cover all aspects of health and wellness, including nutrition, fitness, work-life balance, medical conditions and more.

### Putting the Power of the Personal Health Manager to Work

With the Personal Health Manager, members can:

- **Learn about their health status** by completing a confidential **Health Risk Assessment** that identifies risks and opportunities for improving their health. When health risks are revealed, members may also receive targeted online messages or outreach phone calls from Blue Care Advisors to help them improve their health. And they can use other wellness resources on the Personal Health Manager to make positive lifestyle changes and reach their wellness goals.  
  
Recognizing the impact of health on work, the Health Risk Assessment asks about absenteeism and productivity. **Summary reports** provide companies with an overview of their employee population and offer suggestions to tailor wellness programs to employees' needs.<sup>†</sup>
- **Get health and wellness questions answered** by Blue Care Advisors and health professionals via secure e-mail, using the *Ask A Nurse*, *Ask A Trainer*, *Ask A Dietitian* or *Ask A Life Coach* features.
- Create a **medical record** of their health history, track their progress using **Clinical Tracking Tools** by entering values such as cholesterol, blood pressure and diabetes glucose levels, and view results over time in a graph.
- **Adopt healthier behaviors and stay motivated** using the interactive *Get Fit*, *Eat Right* and *Live Well* tools that also let them track activities and results.
- **Learn more about health conditions and medical procedures** by searching the **health care encyclopedia** and receive news on health topics of interest.

#### Wellness and Prevention

Health Counseling

Care and Condition Management

Episodic Case Management

High-Risk Condition Management

Complex Case Management

<sup>†</sup>Reports are provided annually to groups with 100-plus employees when at least 50 employees have completed the Health Risk Assessment.





## Motivating Members

Blue Care Connection encourages and rewards members for engaging in healthy activities. Members earn **Blue Points** every time they use the Personal Health Manager to track a fitness workout, report a meal, use the *Ask A* features, and participate in any *For Your Health* interactive program. Blue Points are redeemable for reward items such as health promotion products, popular merchandise and gift certificates.

We can also work with you to implement company-sponsored incentive programs that reward employees for engaging in wellness behaviors such as taking advantage of preventive care services, completing the Health Risk Assessment, quitting smoking or participating in a condition management program.

## Coordinating with Health Care Providers

Members can use the Personal Health Manager to strengthen relationships with their physicians, as well as other health care providers and their Blue Care Advisors. They can discuss their Health Risk Assessment results and recommendations, and use health content to help talk about their specific concerns. They can also share the Patient Clinical Summary (derived from claims) that includes a health status/risk measure and identifies preventive care and treatment opportunities.<sup>†</sup>



Members access the Personal Health Manager from the *My Health* tab on Blue Access® for Members, our secure Web site at [www.bcbstx.com](http://www.bcbstx.com).

<sup>†</sup>Being introduced in 2007, the Patient Clinical Summary complies with all HIPAA and state regulations.

## Around-the-Clock Assistance

### 24/7 Nurseline

Health concerns don't always follow a 9-to-5 schedule. Fortunately, members can call the **24/7 Nurseline** 24 hours a day, seven days a week to get the information they need.

The 24/7 Nurseline is staffed by registered nurses who can answer general health questions and direct members to their doctor or encourage them to seek emergency services, if necessary. In a matter of minutes, a nurse can help identify options and provide information to assist members in choosing appropriate care for their concerns. The nurse also refers members to Blue Care Advisors when the need for additional assistance is identified.

Members are encouraged to call when they have questions about health problems, such as minor accidents like cuts or burns, a sick child, headaches, fever, asthma, back pain and other chronic conditions.

When they call, members also have the option to access an audio library of more than 1,000 health topics – from allergies to women's health – with more than 600 topics available in Spanish.

More than eight out of 10 members indicating their intent to seek emergency room care were redirected by the 24/7 Nurseline to a less intense, less costly health care setting.

Wellness and Prevention

**Health Counseling**

Care and Condition Management

Episodic Case Management

High-Risk Condition Management

Complex Case Management

# A Healthy Start for Mothers and Babies

## Special Beginnings

Our prenatal program, **Special Beginnings**, helps expectant mothers and their babies get a healthy start. Special Beginnings is a voluntary, confidential maternity program that offers expectant mothers the support and guidance they need through every stage of pregnancy. Members enrolled in the program will receive:

- A pregnancy risk assessment to determine the risk level of their pregnancy and monitoring through a series of follow-up calls from an experienced obstetrical nurse
- Pregnancy-related educational materials on topics such as prenatal and postpartum nutrition, healthy life choices, fetal development, newborn care, and post-pregnancy and well-child information that's helpful for new parents
- Personal telephone contact with an experienced obstetrical nurse from the time of enrollment until six weeks after delivery
- Assistance in managing high-risk care such as gestational diabetes and preeclampsia
- A welcome packet full of congratulatory gifts, which may include baby bath and soap samples, cleansing cloths, nursing pads, coupons for baby products, and magazines to help learn more about pregnancy and parenting

Special Beginnings provides frequent, personal contact with a nurse case manager. During scheduled follow-up calls, the case manager will assess health and lifestyle factors, provide guidance on prenatal care, education on possible pregnancy risks and assistance on how to use other pregnancy-related resources.



## Reaching Out to Members At Risk

### Condition Management Programs

Diabetes affects nearly 10 percent of Americans age 20 or older.<sup>†</sup> Over time, high blood glucose levels can damage the eyes, nerves, kidneys, heart and blood vessels. Reducing blood glucose to near normal levels can help decrease the risk of developing eye problems by 76 percent, nerve damage by 60 percent and severe kidney problems by 56 percent.

More than 70 million Americans live with a cardiovascular disease. By decreasing high blood pressure by 12 to 13 points, the risk of heart attack can be lowered by 21 percent and stroke by 37 percent. Reducing total blood cholesterol levels by 10 percent may decrease the incidence of coronary heart disease by as much as 30 percent.<sup>†</sup>

<sup>†</sup>According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

#### Blue Care Advisors

Blue Care Connection addresses the widespread prevalence of chronic conditions that:

- Result in high utilization of health care resources over time and dramatically affect the cost of health care
- Have tremendous impact on members' health, productivity and quality of life, yet usually respond positively to behavioral changes and appropriate medical intervention

Our **Blue Care Advisors** – registered nurses and other health care professionals – reach out to members at moderate risk to engage them in our condition management or behavioral management programs. By providing health counseling, coaching and support, Blue Care Advisors work with members to help them change their behaviors and adopt healthier lifestyles.

#### Identifying Members At Risk

Members are identified from multiple sources: Health Risk Assessments and Ask A features from the Personal Health Manager, the 24/7 Nurseline, predictive modeling, and medical and pharmacy claims. If members choose to participate, Blue Care Advisors work with them along with their physicians to:

- Assess health status, identify needs and gauge readiness to change
- Offer health information and resources to help them understand and manage their conditions
- Provide education on daily care and long-term condition management, facilitate compliance with treatment plans and medications, and monitor outcomes
- Promote healthy lifestyles, discuss wellness strategies, explain preventive care screenings and help them set and achieve health improvement goals

For example, Blue Care Advisors work with members with asthma to make sure they have an asthma action plan and understand what to do when their asthma is worsening. Prompt response with appropriate medications can often relieve asthma symptoms and help avoid emergency treatment.

Wellness and Prevention

Health Counseling

**Care and Condition Management**

Episodic Case Management

High-Risk Condition Management

Complex Case Management





## Care and Condition Management

Members with certain chronic conditions who are at moderate health risk – experiencing gaps in care that could be addressed through intervention and counseling – are targeted for our care and condition management program. To help prevent or postpone complications and disease progression, Blue Care Advisors help members understand and manage their medical conditions and change unhealthy behaviors.

Following nationally recognized practice guidelines, our care and condition and behavioral management programs specifically target:

- Asthma
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Congestive heart failure
- Coronary artery disease
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease
- Hypertension
- Low back pain
- Metabolic syndrome
- Migraine headaches
- Oncology
- Tobacco cessation
- Weight management

The health care needs of our member population are evaluated on an ongoing basis to identify opportunities for additional condition management programs.

## Closing Gaps in Care

Blue Care Advisors work with members as often as needed to promote healthy behaviors, self-care skills, preventive care and appropriate treatment. They primarily help members with:

- Taking medications properly
- Getting recommended preventive health screenings, vaccinations and services
- Understanding how to manage their conditions
- Preventing unnecessary emergency room visits

For example, members with diabetes are advised about standards of care, such as testing their blood glucose every day and discussing their care with their doctors. Recommended office visits, lab tests and preventive screenings are also reviewed.

# Managing Complex Care and Catastrophic Health Events

## Case Management

### Providing Episodic, High-Risk Condition Management, and Complex or Catastrophic Care

When members experience an acute medical situation such as an inpatient hospitalization, develop high-risk or multiple diseases or require complex or catastrophic care, our systems help identify those members needing more intensive intervention. **Our goal is to help members obtain the appropriate care in the right setting at the optimal time and avoid unnecessary care and expenses.**

While condition management focuses on members with targeted medical conditions, **case management services** assist any member needing expanded outreach, pre-admission and discharge planning, and follow-up contact. Members are identified through predictive modeling and claims analysis, inbound calls, concurrent medical peer review and referrals.

Our **case management nurses** – registered nurses with specialized training and clinical experience – work with members and their families, doctors and other health care providers to help coordinate treatment plans. From pre-admission planning to discharge planning, case managers assist with transitions between levels of care and from one care setting to another, and even make welcome home calls. They help members understand their health care benefits, and identify and promote the use of network providers to help them receive the highest benefit level. Also, they help members obtain medical equipment, health care services and other resources.

Our experience has shown that 11 percent of our Blue Care Connection members – those with high-risk, multiple conditions or requiring complex or catastrophic care – account for 52 percent of claims.<sup>†</sup>

Wellness and Prevention

Health Counseling

Care and Condition Management

**Episodic Case Management**

**High-Risk Condition Management**

**Complex Case Management**

<sup>†</sup>Based on Health Care Service Corporation claims history.

Our **Episodic and High-Risk Condition Management Care** program works with members to enhance their self-management skills and reduce the intensity and frequency of medical symptoms. Case managers help members understand and manage their conditions, and serve as members' advocates. Improving members' medical outcomes and quality of life, decreasing the number of missed work or school days, and enhancing communications among care providers are the goals.

**Episodic case management** typically focuses on short-term interventions with members who have sustained injuries or experienced illnesses from which recovery is expected. Transition of care services, such as rehabilitation or skilled nursing care, are usually involved.

A case manager could, for example, assist a member who undergoes knee replacement surgery. The member may need a short stay in a skilled nursing facility while recuperating and continued rehabilitation therapy after returning home. The case manager would assist with transition of care between settings and help the member obtain home health care services and equipment.

**Complex Case Management** supports members experiencing severe, acute or advanced illnesses, progressive medical conditions or catastrophic medical events, on an ongoing basis. The case manager regularly reassesses the member's health status, and provides education, support and assistance to help the member and family cope as his or her condition changes.

Our collaborative process includes evaluating, coordinating and monitoring services to meet the member's health care needs to promote the most positive, cost-effective outcomes. The case manager can help arrange home health care services, medical equipment and other community resources.

For example, case management services may help a member, who has heart disease and has suffered a stroke, cope with multiple medical problems. The case manager may assist in arranging rehabilitation services and discharge planning from one level of care to another, as well as help with caregiver issues. The case manager keeps in regular contact to provide support, evaluate the member's health status and provide services as needed.



## Putting Knowledge into Practice

### Wellness and Prevention

Our initiatives also foster collaboration with providers and other health care professionals – helping them use resources more efficiently to optimize health care benefits.

Member outreach is the cornerstone of our wellness and prevention program. We strive to increase member awareness and encourage members to get involved and take responsibility for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Through **Blue Care Connection**, your employees will have access to extensive health and wellness resources and coaching to help them succeed in improving their health. Our **Blue Points** program provides rewards to help them get motivated to adopt healthier behaviors or stay motivated to reach their wellness goals.

We encourage members to have recommended age-specific or family history-specific preventive screenings and immunizations. To help them, *Wellness Guidelines* are available to all members. Following these guidelines can help members prevent certain conditions, or help identify conditions or diseases in early stages, when they are usually most easily treatable. Early treatment can help keep members healthier and costs under control.

In addition to screenings and immunizations, members receive information that helps them learn how to stay well and be more active. Communications include:

- Outbound calls
- Educational materials
- Birthday cards with important wellness reminders
- *Wellness Guidelines*

#### Communications

We provide communications to encourage your employees to take advantage of **Blue Care Connection** and take charge of their health.

Materials inform your employees about the many health and wellness resources available to them.

#### Engaging Members

Whether members are healthy or in need of complex case management, Blue Care Connection engages them and their health care providers, so you get the results you've been looking for – healthier employees and lower costs.

Wellness and Prevention

Health Counseling

Care and Condition Management

Episodic Case Management

High-Risk Condition Management

Complex Case Management

For more information on how Blue Care Connection can work for your company, talk to your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas representative.