



PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALING AND RE-CREDENTIALING REQUIREMENTS

PURPOSE

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (Blue Cross) credentials all primary care providers (PCPs), specialty care physicians (SCPs), oral and maxillofacial surgeons, and licensed clinicians (together, “Practitioners”) who have applied for enrollment in our networks and who have met all contractual requirements.

Once the credentialing process is complete, we execute an Agreement and send a welcome letter that includes the **effective date** of network participation and confirms the **networks** in which the provider is participating.

RE/CREDENTIALING IN THE UNIVERSAL PROVIDER DATASOURCE

To streamline the process and reduce work for practitioners, Healthcare Administrative Solutions, Inc. (HCAS) coordinates the initial and recredentialing process and primary source verification for practitioners applying to participate or become recredentialed with Blue Cross and other health plans that participate with HCAS.

- HCAS provides a single point of credentialing data shared by all HCAS-participating health plans.
- The practitioner must register with **Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH)** and submit credentialing information and supporting documentation to CAQH. After the practitioner registers and submits their information and documentation, the HCAS-participating plans will add the practitioner to their plan’s CAQH roster.
- The **Credentialing Verification Organization (CVO)** verifies the information, and then passes it to Blue Cross for further review and final determination. The CVO used by Blue Cross is Verisys.

For detailed instructions on the credentialing process, please view the HCAS Credentialing Training Manual on the [HCAS](#) website.

You must supply the following information to CAQH:

- Completed, signed, and dated **CAQH credentialing application**, including:
 - History of loss or limitation of license and felony convictions
 - Disclosure of any criminal offense, disciplinary actions, or professional liability claims history
 - Malpractice history (most recent 10 years)
 - Disclosure of any physical/mental health issue or any chemical dependence
 - Clinical activity
 - Work history (5 years)
 - Explanation of gaps in practice (6 months or more)
 - If you have prescriptive authority, copy of Federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Certificate or Massachusetts Controlled Substance Registration (MCSR). Non-prescribing practitioners who have prescriptive authority may be credentialed without a DEA. In these cases, the applicant must provide the name of the Blue Cross practitioner who will write prescriptions for medications.
- Updated **Authorization and Release** form with re/credentialing application
- A current, valid, and unrestricted **Massachusetts license** or (if applicable) New Hampshire license in the field of practice in which the practitioner will be treating Blue Cross members
- A copy of the practitioner’s current **curriculum vitae**

- Evidence of professional **malpractice insurance** maintained (minimum of \$1 million per occurrence/\$3 million in the aggregate)
- No federal sanctions

Blue Cross prefers that Massachusetts-licensed physicians be credentialed by a **network hospital**. A physician who is not credentialed by a Massachusetts hospital, pursuant to MGL 243CMR 3.05, may be credentialed by Blue Cross in accordance with regulatory requirements.

ADDITIONAL PRACTITIONER INFORMATION

Practitioners in certain specialties must meet the following additional requirements. Note that all certifications must be current and valid.

ACUPUNCTURIST

- Graduate training from an approved acupuncture school with no less than 1,905 hours of study in acupuncture
- Effective July 1, 2021, certification in the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM)
- Coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner for absence during posted business hours

AUDIOLOGIST

- Coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner for absence during posted business hours
- Master's or Doctoral Degree in Audiology

CERTIFIED NURSE MIDWIFE (CNM)

- Certification by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB)
- Graduation from a Nurse Midwife program
- An admitting arrangement with a Blue Cross-credentialed physician who has privileges at a Blue Cross-participating acute care hospital
- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner

CERTIFIED NURSE PRACTITIONER (CNP)

- Certification by one of the following: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB), American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), Dermatology Nursing Certification Board (DNCB), National Certification Corporation for Obstetric, Gynecological and Neonatal Nursing Specialties (NCC), Pediatric Nurse Certification Board (PNCB), or Oncology Nurses Certification Corporation (ONCC)
- A graduate degree in Advanced Practice Nursing
- An admitting arrangement with a Blue Cross credentialed physician who has privileges at a Blue Cross-participating acute care hospital or hospitalist program, unless the physician is an emergency medicine physician, radiologist, pathologist, or anesthesiologist (ERAP)
- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner
- A collaborating practitioner is **not** required unless the Certified Nurse Practitioner has less than two years of supervised practice under a qualified professional following their certification
 - If a collaborating practitioner is required, they must be a Blue Cross-credentialed physician or nurse practitioner with independent practice authority

CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETIST (CRNA)

- Certification by National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA)
- Graduation from a Nurse Anesthetist program
- A collaborating physician is **not** required unless the CRNA has less than two years of supervised practice under a qualified professional following their certification

- If a collaborating physician is required, the physician must be Blue Cross-credentialed (if engaged in prescriptive practice)

CHIROPRACTOR (DC)

- Coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner for absence during posted business hours
- Four-year chiropractic education accredited by the Council of Chiropractic Education

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST (PHD, PSYD, EDD)

- Doctorate degree in psychology
- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross credentialed behavioral health practitioner

DENTIST (DDS, DMD)

- Please refer to the [Dental Credentialing and Recredentialing Guidelines](#)

LICENSED ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELOR 1 (LADC1)

- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed behavioral health practitioner
- Bachelor's, Master's or Doctorate degree in Behavioral Science

LICENSED APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYST (LABA)

- Coverage by an LABA for absence during posted business hours
- Master's or Doctorate degree related to the study of Behavior Analysis or another field of human services

LICENSED DIETITIAN NUTRITIONIST (LDN)

- Coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner for absence during posted business hours
- Minimum of bachelor's degree, its equivalent or higher in dietetics and nutrition, human nutrition, nutrition education or public health nutrition from an accredited college

LICENSED INDEPENDENT CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER (LICSW)

- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed behavioral health practitioner
- Master of Science in Social Work

LICENSED MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPIST (LMFT)

- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed behavioral health practitioner
- Masters or Doctorate or its equivalent in LMF Therapy or a related field from an accredited college

LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR (LMHC)

- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed behavioral health practitioner
- Master's degree from an accredited college program in a human services related field

CERTIFIED NURSE PRACTITIONER PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER (CNPPCP)

- Certification by one of the following: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB), American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) Dermatology Nursing Certification Board (DNCB)) National Certification Corporation for Obstetric, Gynecological and Neonatal Nursing Specialties (NCC), Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB), Oncology Nurses Certification (ONCC), or Advanced Certified Hospice & Palliative Nurse (ACHPN)
- Graduate degree in Advanced Practice Nursing
- Must be practicing in Massachusetts in family medicine, internal medicine, or pediatrics setting
- Must have an admitting arrangement with a Blue Cross-credentialed physician who has privileges at a Blue Cross-participating acute care hospital

- Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) certificate (no exceptions)
- A collaborating physician is **not** required unless the Certified Nurse Practitioner Primary Care Provider has less than two years of supervised practice under a qualified professional following their certification.
 - If a collaborating physician is required, the physician must be Blue Cross-credentialed in family medicine, internal medicine, or pediatrics

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST (OT)

- Coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner for absence during posted business hour
- Four-year OT program leading to a bachelor's degree or two-year program leading to a Master's degree in OT

OPTOMETRIST (OD)

- Current, valid, and unrestricted optometry license with:
 - Topical Pharmaceutical Agent (TPA) certification (if licensed by examination after January 1, 1994) or
 - Diagnostic Therapeutic Agents (DPA) certification (if licensed by examination after January 1, 1984)
- Current and valid Massachusetts Controlled Substance Registration (MCSR)
- Four-year optometry program after earning an undergraduate degree
- Coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner for absence during posted business hours

ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEON (OMS)

- Please refer to the [Dental Credentialing and Recredentialing Guidelines](#)

PSYCHIATRIC CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST

- Certification by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
- Master's Degree
- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed behavioral health practitioner
 - A collaborating physician is **not** required unless the Clinical Specialist in Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing has less than two years of supervised practice under a qualified professional following their certification. If a collaborating physician is required, the collaborating physician must either be board certified/prepared or have completed training approved by ACGME or RCPSC. The collaborating physician may or may not be credentialed by Blue Cross

PHYSICAL THERAPIST (PT)

- Coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner for absence during posted business hours
- Two-year Master's degree in a PT program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA)

- Certification by the National Commission on Certification for Physician Assistants (NCCPA)
- Bachelor's degree plus 26 months in a PA educational program
- Must have an admitting arrangement with a Blue Cross network physician or hospitalist program unless physician is an emergency medicine physician, radiologist, pathologist, or anesthesiologist (ERAP)

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER (PAPCP)

- Certification by the National Commission on Certification for Physician Assistants (NCCPA)
- Bachelor's degree plus 26 months in a PA educational program
- Must be practicing in Massachusetts in family medicine, internal medicine, or pediatrics setting
- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner
- Must have an admitting arrangement with a Blue Cross network physician or hospitalist program

- Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) certificate (no exceptions)

PHYSICIAN (MD, DO)

- Meet current training requirements for board certification in the specialty for which they are applying, or be certified by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), or the National Board of Physicians and Surgeons (NBPAS) in the appropriate specialty
- Admitting privileges or an admitting arrangement at a Blue Cross-participating acute care hospital.
Exceptions: The specialties listed below are not required to have hospital admitting privileges:
 - Anesthesiology
 - Clinical Genetics
 - Dermatology
 - Emergency Medicine
 - Medical Genetics
 - Pathology
 - Psychiatry
 - Radiation Oncology
 - Radiology
 - Nuclear Medicine

PODIATRISTS

Type	Requirement
All podiatrists (both surgical and non-surgical)	May be board certified or board eligible by one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Board of Podiatric Medicine (ABPM) or • American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery (ABFAS) Must be board certified by the American Board of Podiatric Medicine (ABPM) or the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery (ABFAS)
Non-surgical podiatrists	Coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner for absence during posted business hours
Surgical podiatrist	24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed podiatrist
Surgical podiatrists only	Privileges at a freestanding ambulatory surgery center, or admitting privileges or an admitting arrangement at a Blue Cross network hospital

PSYCHIATRIC NURSE PRACTITIONER (PNP)

- Certification by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) bachelor’s degree in nursing and a nurse practitioner master’s degree with focus on psychiatric nursing
- 24-hour coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed behavioral health practitioner
- A collaborating practitioner is **not** required unless the Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner has less than two years of supervised practice under a qualified professional following their certification
 - If a collaborating practitioner is required, the collaborating practitioner must either be board certified/prepared or have completed training approved by ACGME or RCPSC. The collaborating practitioner may or may not be credentialed by Blue Cross.
- Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) certificate
 - May submit the name of participating Blue Cross provider who will prescribe for the provider.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST (SLP)

- Coverage by a Blue Cross-credentialed practitioner for absence during posted business hours
- Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology

ONGOING MONITORING

Blue Cross queries the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB), reviews reports from Medicare, licensing boards, and other entities for evidence of malpractice settlements, state sanctions, and license limitations as part of the re/credentialing process.

Blue Cross may conduct office site visits for reasons such as (but not limited to):

- Physical accessibility and appearance
- Adequacy of waiting and examining room space
- Availability of appointments
- Adequacy of treatment record keeping

In determining the need for a site visit, Blue Cross considers the severity of the issue.

CREDENTIALS & PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE (COMMITTEE) REVIEW

Blue Cross' corporate credentialing associates reviews all re/credentialing applications for completeness. Please make sure that your application is complete and that all supporting documentation is included. Completed applications will be forwarded to the Committee for approval or denial. At any time, the Committee reserves the right to de-credential a practitioner who does not meet Blue Cross's standards and/or criteria for re/credentialing.

- You will be notified of the Committee's initial credentialing decision within four business days of the decision. This notification is not a contract approval.
- If your recredentialing application is denied, you will be notified of the termination 90 days prior to the effective date of the termination.
- If the Committee denies your application, you will have the opportunity to request reconsideration. The details of the process will be included in the denial letter.

PROVIDERS' RIGHTS

Blue Cross maintains all information submitted as part of the re/credentialing process in accordance with our commitment to confidentiality, subject to, and in accordance with, legal restrictions. You have the right to review information we obtain for the purposes of re/credentialing, including outside sources such as malpractice carriers, insurance carriers, state licensing boards, and an AMA profile. Information we obtain for purposes other than re/credentialing or which is prohibited from disclosure by law is not included. You may address any inconsistencies between information they provided and information we obtain. You have the right to request, in writing or via telephone, the status of your application. Blue Cross does not make credentialing decisions based on a practitioner's race, ethnic/national identity, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, type of procedure in which the practitioner specializes, or product participation, and we reserve the right to review and update re/credentialing policies periodically.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

March 2024 – Updated name of Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor to Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor I

August 2023 - Updated name of Psychiatric Clinical Nurse Specialist, formally known as Registered Nursing Clinical Specialist.

April 2023 – Updated Physician Board Certification options and Providers’ Rights section.

January 2023 – Added certification options for Certified Nurse Practitioner Primary Care Providers. Added DEA information for Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner (PNPs). Minor language edits for clarity.

August 2021 – Made changes to PA and Physician Assistant Primary Care Provider (PAPCP) descriptions

March 2021 – Reduced collaborating physician requirements for ancillary advanced practice nurses

June 2020 - Updated collaborating physician requirements for Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Specialist in Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing.

February 2019 – Updates to certification options for Certified Nurse Practitioners and Certified Nurse Practitioner – Primary Care Providers.

December 2018 - Updated Podiatrist requirements and added Acupuncturist requirements

November 2018 – Updated Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner requirements

May 2018 – Updated Podiatrist requirements

April 2017 – Added education requirements for each provider type in Additional Practitioner Information.

January 2017 – Updated Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) certificate language. We no longer require a Blue Cross waiver in place of the DEA certificate. Instead of the waiver, the applicant must provide the name of the Blue Cross practitioner who will write prescriptions for medications.

May 2016 – Adding Licensed Applied Behavioral Analysts

February 2016 – Updated accrediting body names, and providers that don’t need to have 24- hour coverage

June 2015 – Updated documentations

April 2014 – Added additional details on each provider specialty

September 2013 – Updated documentation of guideline

April 2011 – Original documentation of guideline

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